A Preliminary Evaluation of the Students' Realizing Educational Potential Program

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A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE STUDENTS' REALIZING EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL PROGRAM

by

Frances Y. Tous

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS in Psychology

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

1998
ABSTRACT

A Preliminary Evaluation of the Students' Realizing Educational Potential Program

by

Frances Y. Tous, Master of Arts
Utah State University, 1998

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Department: Psychology

The Students' Realizing Educational Potential Program (REP) was implemented in the 1993-94 academic year to reduce dropout rates for ethnic minority students at Utah State University. This program is currently funded by a 5-year grant, pending renewal upon demonstration of its effectiveness. A formative evaluation was conducted to determine whether the REP program has accomplished its goals thus far, using 157 minority students. Two levels of analysis were conducted. In the first level, admission index scores, college grade point averages, and the average number of quarters enrolled were compared among three REP and non-REP cohorts. The REP program did not satisfactorily retain its students in its first cohort, but in subsequent cohorts REP student retention rates surpassed those of non-REP peers. It was also discovered that Utah State University is exhibiting student population trends that run opposite to national and statewide trends by decreasing in minorities and increasing in Caucasian
students, especially since 1994. In the second level, responses to a questionnaire were qualitatively compared between REP and non-REP students. The REP group had more students from outside of Cache Valley, more students declaring majors and with junior student ranking, higher financial needs, more extracurricular involvement, and more problems integrating into the local community than the non-REP group. In general, the REP program has assisted students in addressing social and academic needs, and has significantly impacted retention rates in its last 2 years. Recommendations for future program development and evaluations were given.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Historically, Utah State University (USU) has been a predominantly Caucasian institution. By 1994, the percentage of American ethnic minority students enrolled was only 4.17% (the highest since 1986), versus 90.31% Caucasians, and 5.52% international or unclassified students (Jones, 1992; Nath, 1994b; Utah System of Higher Education, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1995d). In addition to being underrepresented, ethnic minority students at Utah State University have significantly high dropout rates and low graduation rates. Between 1986 and 1992 the average dropout rate for minorities was 40%. During that same period only 20% of the retained minority students graduated in 4 years. The rate only increased to 33% when students who graduated in 5 years were included. When compared to their Caucasian or international peers, ethnic minorities continue to comprise a relatively low percentage of students who are awarded degrees (91.4% White; 2.4% minorities; 6.2% other, based on all students who graduated between 1986 and 1994).

When minority students drop out or fail to graduate from a predominantly Caucasian university, an environment of cultural diversity can hardly be promoted or maintained in the campus community. In addition, financial resources invested during recruitment are not recovered. Furthermore, the university may develop a reputation for a lack of concern as to how students can fit into the campus environment, for poor institutional effectiveness, and for lack of credibility. At the state level, the inability to retain ethnic minorities in higher education may be a sign of poor state planning and
ignorance, or disregard of population trends. The result is the perpetuation of a less-educated work force in our society, as well as ethnicity-based differences in socioeconomic status.

The Students' Realizing Educational Potential (REP) program was implemented in the 1993-94 academic year to reduce the dropout rates for ethnic minority students at Utah State University and increase their graduation rates. This program is currently funded by a 5-year grant, pending renewal upon demonstration of its effectiveness in accomplishing its objectives. In its first 3 years, three groups of volunteer freshman students received services from the program, and their academic progress was tracked. Several revisions were made, and several administrative changes have affected it. However, to date, no formal evaluations have been conducted to determine whether the REP program is beneficial to its participants and the university. The purpose of this thesis research was to conduct a formative evaluation to determine whether the REP program has accomplished its goals thus far, and to provide an opportunity for program revision and improvements.
A review of the literature on minority student retention in higher education indicates that this issue slowly became a topic of interest in the United States during the latter part of the 1970s and received increased attention during the 1980s. However, despite the fact that many universities have implemented programs to enhance diversity in their campuses, few program directors have published the results of these efforts. In addition, most attempts to obtain unpublished information from different campus officials at universities throughout the nation have only yielded vague, informal reports about program effectiveness. As a state, Utah has not been an exception to this trend. In comparison to the rest of the nation, Utah has been slow to address issues of minority student retention in higher education. The Utah System of Higher Education did not begin to compile such information until 1986 (Utah System of Higher Education, 1990). As a member of this system, Utah State University (USU) has also been affected. Although there is evidence that the practice of reporting the composition of the student population by ethnicity at USU can be traced as far back as 1978 (Utah State University Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity, 1988), all efforts to obtain official reports have been unsuccessful. Information regarding minority retention and graduation rates after the mid-80s at USU is available, but there is little or no information available on this topic prior to 1986 (P. Constance, personal communication, November 21, 1996; J. Li, personal communication, November 19,
1996). Given the low number of available documents and publications covering the subject, the scope of this review is limited, and a significant amount of information has been obtained through interviews with program directors at universities around the United States, as well as present and previous USU faculty and staff.

Minority Student Population: National Trends

A 1985 report from the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that 23% of Caucasians aged 25 to 29 stated they had completed college compared to 11.5% of Blacks in the same age group (USU Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Office, 1988). In 1987, a study conducted by the National Institute of Independent Colleges and Universities revealed that only 41% of all students who enrolled in 4-year colleges obtained their bachelor's degrees. However, only 5% to 30% of these graduates were of Black or Hispanic background (Porter, 1990). Another study conducted at Indiana University at Bloomington revealed that attrition rates at American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASC) institutions were 62% for Blacks, 38% for Hispanics, 30% for Caucasians, and 28% for Asians in the early 1980s. These figures changed to 65% for Blacks, 52% for Hispanics, 27% for Asians, and 21% for Caucasians by 1992 (Manzo, 1994). In 1994, the AASC asked its 364 institution members for information on minority retention. Most of them could not provide accurate figures (Manzo, 1994). Despite an increase in attention to the issue of minority retention, attrition continues to grow and efforts to improve this problem are not well-documented by higher education institutions (Wilson, cited by Manzo, 1994).
The U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, 1993) classifies Hispanics within the different racial groups when reporting by race, as Hispanics can be of any race. Therefore their reports present information of interest by both race, citizenship, and cultural background. According to figures from the 1990 census, there are some important differences between the racial and Hispanic populations for the United States and Utah. Utah’s growth rates between 1980 and 1990 for Black, Asian, and Pacific Islanders exceeded those for the U.S., but for other races, such as Native Americans and people of Hispanic origin, the growth rates for the U.S. were greater than those for Utah. Despite these growth rates, in comparison to the rest of the nation, Utah is still predominantly Caucasian. By 1990, the percentage of racial and ethnic minorities in the United States was 19.7. In Utah, these groups comprised only 6.2% of the population (Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget, 1991). Although to date there are no accurate figures describing the growth of the Utah population by ethnicity since 1990, some authors point to the fact that by 1994 the population in this state grew by almost 50,000 people, of whom 23,000 immigrated into the state (Silvey, 1995). One can only speculate how many of these new residents are ethnically diverse or of college age. However, it is important to keep in mind that even though the population in Utah is growing, the number of minorities completing higher education within the state may not be growing at the same rate.
A closer look at the specific characteristics of minority populations in Utah indicates that by 1990, among the persons 18-24 years of age in each ethnic group, the percentages of those who were enrolled in college were 37% for Blacks; 19.6% for American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut; 53.3% for Asian and Pacific Islanders (grouping made by U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, 1993); 26.3% for Hispanics; and 43% for Caucasians. It is interesting to note that with the exception of Asians and Pacific Islanders, all other groups had less than half of their young adults attending college. Also, a breakdown of the Utah population by ethnicity and socioeconomic status revealed that by 1989 the percentages of families living below the poverty level were 30.5 for Blacks; 43.6 for Native Americans, Eskimos, and Aleut; 20.9 for Asians and Pacific Islanders; and 22.8 for Hispanics (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of Census, 1993). These are striking figures, when compared to only 10% for Caucasian families. This points to a possible barrier to continuing higher education for students of minority background as well as repercussions in the state’s economy.

Minority Students at Utah State University

According to university reports, the majority of Utah State University’s students (13,257 or approximately 66% by 1995) are from Utah (USU Office of University Relations, 1996). Although the student population trends at Utah State University have continued to demonstrate a trend toward an increase in enrollment for minorities
over the last 16 years (255 students in 1978; 321 students by 1987; 903 students by 1994), the vast majority of students continue to be of Caucasian background (Jones, 1992; Manuel-Dupont, Jones, Orner, Heal, & Shook, 1993; Nath, 1994b; Utah System of Higher Education, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1995d). Whereas one may assume that these figures are reflective of the population trends in Utah, when comparing the minority population in the state to the USU minority student population, the latter is still underrepresented. For instance, in 1985 approximately 7.6% of the Utah population were minorities, compared to only 3% of the student population at USU by 1987 (USU Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Office, 1988). Seven years later, in 1994, when minority enrollment at USU hit the highest rate since 1986, this group comprised only 4.42% of the student population versus 6.35% statewide. In addition, data collected from 1989 through 1994 indicated that the average number of ethnic minority students receiving baccalaureate degrees from USU was only 2.69% of those who entered the institution, while Caucasian students had an average graduation rate of 47.39% (Nath, 1994a). Albeit the tendencies towards low enrollment, retention, and graduation rates for ethnic minorities at USU seem to be similar to that at the national level, the situation seems to be exacerbated at Utah State University.

Minority Group Barriers to Receiving Higher Education

The problem of minority student attrition may be better understood by looking at the barriers to higher education these students encounter. Some researchers point out the financial aspects. Broaddus (cited in Wilder, 1992) stated that problems at the
state level, where a lack of concern for population trends may make financial aid inaccessible to some minority students, may be partly responsible for high attrition rates. Given the traditionally small percentage of the population minorities have comprised in the state of Utah, the recent growth in this sector, and the overrepresentation of this sector in the lower socioeconomic ranks of the state's population, this might very well be the case for Utah. Many students may be attempting to stay in college but finding it a great financial burden to continue.

Other researchers have addressed the specific issues that arise when institutions of higher education that have traditionally served the needs of Caucasians try to serve culturally different populations under the same assumptions. Guinta, Bonifacio and McVey (1987) have pointed out that high stress and low self-esteem, due to failure and unmet needs, impact both the students and instructors. Others, such as Astin (cited in Wilder, 1992), Bear (cited in Wilder, 1992), Manzo (1994), and Tinto (cited in Wilder, 1992), maintain that attrition is a reflection of an environment that lacks diversity, thus fostering poor institutional effectiveness. This assertion seems to be supported by Gibbs (cited in Lucas, 1993), who stated that if a student perceives his or her institutional environment as lacking social integration, he or she may cope by withdrawing, which in turn leads to feelings of alienation and depersonalization. Furthermore, Ezeze (1994) declared that a school's attrition level is a reflection of its presence or lack of concern as to how students perceive they will fit into their environment. If we accept these viewpoints, then we may conclude that institutions of higher education with high attrition rates may have academic and administrative
processes that result in low success rates (Fleming, cited by Manzo, 1994). Credibility and student satisfaction may be lower in such institutions (Wilder, 1992).

Consequences of Student Attrition

Newton and Ganther (cited in Wilder, 1992) noted that the universities also pay the consequences of attrition with significant financial losses, as the average public university expends $200-$500 to recruit each new student. Also, universities are finding themselves questioned by the same legislators who provide them with funds (Wilson, cited in Manzo, 1994). At the macro level, Lee (cited in Wilder, 1992) stated that a society with a less-educated work force and a poorly informed citizenry is bound to be increasingly dependent on governmental support. Therefore, the potential benefits of a well-educated minority population may outweigh the losses created by student attrition at all levels (Webb, cited in Wilder, 1992).

Models for Increasing Minority Retention

Two models seem to integrate all the previously mentioned claims into a series of hypotheses related to student attrition or integration: Tinto’s student integration model (SIM), and Bean’s Student Attrition Model (SAM; Bagayoko & Kelley, 1994). The main hypotheses of these models are that there is a direct effect of academic integration on persistence; that academic and social integrations are related, just as institutional and goal commitments are related; and, finally, that there are direct effects of the student’s financial status on courses, college GPAs, and persistence. Cabrera
(cited in Bagayoko & Kelley, 1994) conducted a study that apparently supported 40% to 70% of the hypotheses of both models, and established that programs destined to impact retention should attempt to integrate both theories.

Some concerned academic administrators are attempting to develop comprehensive approaches to the recruitment and retention of minority groups. According to Varhely and Applewhite-Lozano (1985), this effort began with a philosophical commitment to the belief that cultural and racial diversity enhances and enriches the total university community, although more recently this effort seems to be responding to a concern for the potential disadvantages of attrition previously discussed. However, to follow the directions suggested by Cabrera’s (cited in Bagayoko & Kelley, 1994) study, one may hypothesize that in order for an institution to be successful at retaining its minority students, it must, first of all, have an institutionwide commitment to diversity, which is translated into specific goals and financial assignments to support these goals at the departmental level. Secondly, students attending such an institution would have a variety of sources of financial support available in order to facilitate their continuing enrollment. Finally, the academic and social environments in such an institution would be such that minority students could easily make the transition to college life and find that they play an important part within that community. Among the predominantly Caucasian institutions that have successfully implemented these hypotheses, one may mention Winthrop College, Pennsylvania State University, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, and Indiana University-Northwest (Tracy Moore, Joseph Pruss, personal
communications, November, 1996; Mike Blanco, personal communication, December 4, 1996; Irma Burgos, personal communication, December 3, 1996; Barbara Cope, personal communication, December 2, 1996). These universities have as a common factor an institutionwide commitment to diversity that has led to the implementation of special programs to target minority retention and the eventual institutionalization of these programs.

Efforts to Enhance Minority Recruitment and Retention at USU

In February 1987, a University Minority Advisory Council (UMAC) was formed at USU with representation from the student body, administration, faculty, and staff. Within a year of its formation, the UMAC provided USU President Stanford Cazier with recommendations for an institutionwide plan to actively recruit and retain minority students, faculty, and staff (University Minority Advisory Council, 1989). Before the founding of UMAC, Utah State University had no official documents specifying how the university would implement AA/EEO policies and guidelines passed by the federal government between 1975 and 1978 (P. Constance, personal communication, November 23, 1996). In addition, prior to 1992, no university documents specify a campuswide commitment to cultural diversity or mention any institutional efforts to impact retention rates for ethnic minority students (J. Li, personal communication, November 19, 1996; Manuel-Dupont et al., 1993; Manuel-Dupont, Jones, & Tous-Machado, 1994). Although a master program, which
included plans to recruit and retain ethnic minorities in all areas of the academic community, changes to the financial aid resources available, and the development of a Minority Studies program, was submitted to the provost’s office by May of 1989, it is not clear who was accountable for each component of the proposal or whether or not it was approved. Later that year an original version of the REP was submitted by the staff of the Center for Cultural Pluralism (1989) to the provost’s office. This version included visits to local high schools and junior high schools by USU students who spoke about the advantages of a college education, scholarship incentives for junior high school students interested in attending college, and granting tuition and fee stipends, as well as other educational opportunities, to the volunteers who represented USU, after completion of their sophomore year and maintaining a grade point average of 3.0. There is little or no documentation available on the duration or effectiveness of the program, although it was implemented for some time (P. Constance, personal communication, November 23, 1996). There is no information available regarding program development by the UMAC between 1989 and 1992. In the fall of 1992, the UMAC was requested by Karen Morse, USU provost, to develop specific projects to increase the USU minority population at the faculty, administrative, and student levels. The UMAC, then chaired by USU faculty member Sonia Manuel-Dupont, developed a master plan, named the USU Diversity Enhancement Program. The cornerstone for this program would be a retention program for freshman minority students. This new version of the REP program was designed in the 1992-93 academic year by the UMAC and staff of the USU Office of Multicultural Student Affairs for this purpose. The
program is mainly based on Tinto’s SIM, but also adds components such as student progress reports (Burke & Cartwright, 1986) and student mentoring. The program was implemented for a 5-year trial period, beginning the 1993-94 academic year.

Other institutional efforts include USU’s participation since 1993 in the Utah Coalition for the Advancement of Minorities in Higher Education (UCAMHE), a statewide committee of faculty and administrators dedicated to providing training, information, and services to members of institutions of higher education related to helping minority students succeed in college. UCAMHE also provides financial support to minority students who are residents of Utah.

Since 1994, when George Emert became president of USU, Utah State University has promulgated an institutional policy of valuing cultural diversity (Guenter-Schlesinger, 1994; Utah State University, 1994) that apparently responds to the philosophical commitment described by Varhely and Applewhite-Lozano (1985). The task of finding practical applications to this policy has been transferred from the now-extinct UMAC to the President’s Diversity Board, a committee headed by Sue Guenter-Schlesinger, present director of the AA/EEO office, and composed of faculty, administrators, and student representatives.

The Realizing Educational Potential Program

The final version of the retention project, the Realizing Educational Potential (REP; Student Services Division, Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, 1994, Utah State University Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, 1994) program, had five main
components: extended orientation and academic excellence workshops; academic research experience; college survival, leadership, and study skills development; personalized advisement and career counseling; and programs designed to help students connect to campus life and obtain recognition for their achievements. The program has been funded by the provost’s office since its inception. Following is a description of the evolution of the REP program, compiled from the REP Program Proposal, and letters or interviews with past and present USU faculty and staff, the Multicultural Student Affairs staff, professors, and program participants.

Year One--Implementation

The UMAC determined that the program would be implemented by fall 1994, and run by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA). Paul Jones, MSA director, recruited participants and student mentors for the program, provided academic advising, managed the budget, tracked students’ progress, and made revisions to the program as needed in conjunction with Dr. Manuel-Dupont. He was assisted in areas such as academic advising, maintaining statistical records on REP participants and a control group, advising cultural clubs, and developing social activities by a team of four graduate students who worked on a part-time basis. Other staff members included a secretary and one work-study student who did general clerical work.

Jones recruited participants for the REP program in a joint effort with personnel from the Office of High School/College Relations. Prospective students whose academic record and personal qualities distinguished them as potentially benefitting
from USU’s academic programs were visited at their high schools and provided information about Utah State University. Students indicating interest in USU were followed up with letters and family interviews. Once students were accepted to the university, they were invited to participate in a support program for freshman minority students. New freshman students of diverse cultural background that were either citizens of the United States or had resident alien status were eligible to apply for REP once they were admitted to USU. Participation in the REP program was voluntary. The policy for admission to the REP program was that no student was denied participation as long as there was space and he or she applied by the fall quarter deadline. Forty-five students were admitted to the program for the 1993-94 academic year upon completion of the application form, an essay stating their interest, and signing a participation contract in which they agreed to register for the required courses and attend the academic excellence workshops and general assemblies.

The extended orientation component was offered through existing campus resources such as Aggie Fest, and Summer Orientation, Advising and Registration (SOAR), paired with orientation sessions specifically designed for incoming minority students. During this first year the orientation for REP students was offered as a 2-hour workshop. Program participants were informed of the services offered by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, requirements and benefits to participants in the REP program, and a calendar of activities.

The study and college survival skills components were offered as two courses that program participants were required to take during their freshman year:
Psychology (Psy) 173, Personal Study Efficiency; and Management and Human Resources (MHR) 116, Life Skills Management. Psy 173 was offered for 3-credit hours in a seminar format the week prior to that start of the fall quarter (commonly known as “Survival Week”). Students in the REP program attended this class in nonsegregated sections. The Life Skills Management course was offered in two dedicated sections during the fall quarter. It was assumed that leadership skills would be taught as part of the above-mentioned courses and modeled by fellow students.

Opportunities for academic research experience were the primary focus of the course titled Liberal Arts and Science (LAS) 125, Pathways to Knowledge. This is a required course for those students who decide to obtain an area studies certificate in Liberal Arts and Science as they fulfill the general education requirement at USU. Although this course was a component of the original REP program proposal, it was not available in a dedicated section for REP students during the first year of the program.

Academic excellence seminars were offered during this year. Beginning fall quarter, a graduate student from the Mathematics and Statistics Department met twice per week with the students to review and explicate concepts taught in the lectures. The English (Eng) 195, Independent Writing Seminar was added by spring 1994 as another academic excellence workshop that could be taken for 1-3 credits. The seminar was directed by a graduate student from the English Department. This was in response to REP participants’ reports during their progress reviews of difficulties in understanding the standards for passing the Eng 101, College Writing course. Eng 101 is a general
education requirement for all students at USU. In addition, quarterly workshops on topics such as stress or test anxiety were offered by guest lecturers.

The personalized advisement and counseling components of the REP program were shared by the program director and a graduate assistant. These components included revising students' admission packets to ensure students registered for courses appropriate to their skill level during SOAR, conducting midquarter interviews in which each student's performance in all courses was discussed, and helping students select courses during their priority registration window (Irma Burgos, personal communication, December 3, 1996; Trippi & Cheatham, 1989). Additional counseling for issues such as time management, study tips, or housing problems was also provided, with referrals to other Student Services offices as needed. For example, students suspected of having learning disabilities were referred to the Disability Resources Center for assessment, diagnosis, and support services; students who seemed to be struggling with personal issues were referred to the Counseling Center; and students who expressed interest in summer internships and cooperative education were referred to the Cooperative Education Office. After completion of their freshman year, REP participants were encouraged to work more directly with their department advisors. However, they were to continue receiving priority registration, quarterly progress reviews, and personalized advising from REP staff as requested.

In addition to these academic programs, the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs and the Multicultural Center sponsored various cultural clubs and activities targeted at helping minority students connect to campus and community life and obtain
recognition for their achievements. Social activities where REP participants, mentors, and their families or friends could meet with the staff and faculty informally were offered at least once each quarter. REP students were encouraged by their program advisers to join student organizations and participate in volunteer activities. During the spring quarter, the MSA office sponsored an awards ceremony in which minority students of all ranks were recognized for their achievements. At the conclusion of the 1993-94 academic year those students who completed the requirements for the REP program were introduced to the audience and given a standing ovation.

**Year Two--Revisions and Administrative Changes**

Several administrative changes occurred at USU and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs between the conclusion of the 1993-94 academic year and the middle of the 1994-95 year. By spring 1994, three of the graduate assistants graduated, and a new secretary and assistant director were hired. The assistant director was to be mainly in charge of advising the cultural clubs and volunteer programs. Tasks related to the REP program were now shared between the program director and the advising assistant, with support from the other two staff members as needed. Also, Karen Morse, USU provost, accepted a position elsewhere. Funding for continuation of the REP program would not be secure until preliminary figures were provided to the acting provost, Bruce Bishop. Therefore, a new proposal for the REP program had to be developed. REP participants in 1993 were asked to provide feedback about the REP
program to the MSA staff at the end of their freshman year. This information was used to make some adjustments in the requirements and services provided by REP. Although additional funding was requested to make improvements, it was not obtained, but the amount provided was guaranteed through the remaining 4 years of the study. Therefore, further adjustments were needed to accommodate students’ needs, given the assigned budget.

Recruitment was still carried out by the program director in conjunction with Utah State University recruiters. However, in order to provide more personal attention, the number of participants in the program was reduced. Students who were interested in REP were also required to have a personal or telephone interview with the director or advising assistant in order to determine how they could benefit from the program. This type of prescreening significantly reduced the number of potential participants. Faced with the dilemma of having too few program participants to justify operational costs, these recruitment guidelines were relaxed, and a group of 29 students was formed. In response to complaints from students in the 1993 REP program that participation was consuming an inordinate amount of time per quarter, the special topic workshops were moved to the extended orientation for the 1994 group. Two weeks prior to the beginning of the fall quarter, REP participants reported to campus for a general introduction to life at USU. Students were offered presentations on topics of typical concern for minority students, such as financial aid and budgeting, institutional procedures and norms, student services resources, and registration (Trippi & Cheatham, 1989). In addition, workshops regarding interpersonal communication,
stress management, classroom etiquette, developing alliances with faculty members and advanced students, and volunteer opportunities were also offered. Activities designed to help students familiarize themselves with campus and the Cache Valley community included an overnight retreat at the Bear Lake Training Center, a theater night, sports, and tours of downtown Logan and USU facilities. Various leaders and representatives from campus organizations met with the REP students and gave brief presentations about their organizational goals and activities. In order to promote more participation in program activities, a fee of $50 was added to the program requirements. This fee was due on the first day of orientation and was refunded at the end of the year in proportion to the degree of compliance with all other program requirements stipulated in their contracts.

By fall 1994 it was determined that it was in the program participants’ best interests to provide an alternative to the existing format for ENG 101. Therefore, REP participants were given a designated 3-credit hour section of ENG 195 which met regularly as a substitute for ENG 101. The course content was identical to that of ENG 101, but the teaching methodology was different. Topics for the required compositions were modified to be more culturally sensitive. Procedures such as submitting drafts of papers and conducting peer evaluations were modified and incorporated only after providing students with cultural information on why these practices are acceptable in the Anglo culture, and in the college classroom. By this quarter the LAS board granted a section of the 125 course for REP students. In this section, the LAS 125 course was offered in a two-part format. Students would meet
with their instructor for the lecture twice per week, followed by weekly training sessions in word processing with a teaching assistant. The LAS 125 class and lab were also linked to their ENG 195 writing seminar. It was the goal of the program designers that REP students would not only acquire the writing skills needed to comply with the research paper requirement for LAS 125, but also prepare a writing portfolio that could be used to challenge ENG 101.

In response to 1993 students’ comments about having spent too little time on campus to encounter any of the issues discussed in the fall quarter MHR 116 class, the course was moved to the winter quarter. Also, with the implementation of the Supplemental Instruction program across campus, it was determined that students could use their priority registration privileges to select those sections for classes in which they believed they needed additional assistance, instead of requiring all participants to attend academic excellence workshops for mathematics courses. Information on free tutoring services available on campus was disseminated, and for those courses where there was an unmet need, peer tutors were hired by MSA to offer their service on a free, drop-in basis at the Multicultural Center.

The mentoring program was also revised. Many of the students who had originally volunteered to help the participants often found themselves too busy to follow up on their students, or had personal conflicts with them. Other mentors stated they lacked the necessary skills to help their students deal with problems related to adjusting to campus life. In order to address these issues, six volunteers were trained in basic listening and counseling skills. These student mentors were expected to assist
during the orientation and to offer two-to-three weekly office hours to participants.

Before most of the new changes could be implemented into the REP program, Paul Jones, the director, announced he had accepted a position at another institution. Tess Bollinger became the acting director for the office as well as the REP program. She was supported by the graduate advising assistant, who became the REP advisor, the secretary, who became the staff assistant, and three work-study students. These administrative changes presented a challenge for the REP program. Participants initially reacted with a sense of abandonment and rejection when they were informed about the director's resignation. Also, a significant amount of information regarding procedures and policies for REP was lost when records were not transferred to the new REP staff. Therefore, the staff focused on keeping all known programs running, with emphasis on advising and student support. Without sufficient training from the previous director, or advice from the original staff members, the tasks of recruitment, tracking, and maintaining statistical records for both the REP and control groups were kept to a minimum. There were no further administrative changes until a new director was hired during the latter part of the winter quarter. By spring of 1995, April Spaulding, the new MSA director, and Val Christensen, the vice president for Student Services, determined that all duties related to the REP program were to be assigned to the MSA assistant director, with support from the REP advisor and a work-study assistant. The 1995-96 year would then be a transition period, in which the REP advisor would assist both the assistant director and the work-study student as they took over the reigns of the program.
As in the previous year, REP students in 1994 were recognized at the Multicultural Awards Banquet. Each student who completed the requirements of the REP program was presented with a certificate of completion and a check refunding the program fee. Students, as well as professors, were asked to provide feedback regarding the 1994-95 program. There was an interobserver agreement among professors teaching the designated sections regarding a tendency for disruption and lack of discipline among the REP students. They recommended that REP students use their priority registration privileges to access those sections regularly offered on campus for required courses, as opposed to segregating them in “special sections.” In addition, several students in this REP group found the “Survival” format for Psy 173 course repetitive after participating in the week-long REP orientation. Many commented that having only one section of the required REP courses in specific quarters presented a scheduling problem, as the sections often conflicted with those of courses required by their majors. Although all participants enrolled in the ENG 195 writing course, only five students actually developed a writing portfolio to challenge the ENG 101 class. The mentoring program was only in effect during the fall quarter, with most students dropping out as their course demands increased.

Year Three--Additional Changes

Due to factors previously discussed, the MSA staff did not engage in the recruitment efforts originally employed by Paul Jones to solicit participation in the REP program. For the 1995-96 academic year, the recruitment process was limited to mass
mailing information about the REP program to newly admitted freshmen by May of 1995, and following up on replies by phone and mail. This approach to recruitment produced a sample size of eight students for the 1995 REP class.

For this group the extended orientation was reduced to 4 days, but most of the workshops previously offered were retained. Participants registered for a quarterly section of Psy 173 during the fall quarter, and each student was allowed to decide which quarter was more convenient to take the remaining required courses. No dedicated or linked sections were provided for this group. In addition, the mentoring program was modified in several ways. Several students who had previously participated in the REP program were invited to serve as mentors. Of those who responded, eight were chosen and provided with two half-day training sessions. In these training sessions students were first asked to brainstorm ways to better serve the needs of the incoming freshmen based on their own experience. They used these ideas to develop their own mentoring system and two workshops for the orientation. They were then provided training in basic listening and counseling skills, with emphasis on determining when students should be referred for additional services. This mentoring team decided it was unnecessary to provide office hours, as they had contact with the participants on a daily basis by virtue of living on campus. They also decided that the best way to assess students’ needs was through casual social contact. Therefore, over the course of this year, the mentoring team developed various social activities and encouraged the students to join the clubs they were involved with. As the academic year progressed, each mentor developed a personal relationship with at least one REP
'95 student and used it to assist the MSA staff in the advising and tracking process.

All the students in the 1995 REP group completed their freshman year at USU, and several expressed interest in serving as mentors the following year. However, there seemed to be a consensus among this group that given the material discussed during the 1995 REP orientation, the Psy 173 class would have been more beneficial to them as a 1-week seminar. In addition, colleagues from the Academic Services Center expressed concerns having to do with minority student participation in the 1-week Psy 173. Because more freshman students take the 1-week version of the course, not only would REP students benefit from the course itself, but also more Caucasian students would benefit from exposure to people of diverse cultural backgrounds. Therefore, having REP students take the 1-week seminar seemed to be more beneficial to both populations. This feedback was the basis for reinstating the “Survival” version of Psy 173 as a requirement for the 1996-97 and subsequent REP programs. At the conclusion of this academic year, the MSA staff had several options to consider in terms of assigning duties related to the REP program as well as ways to improve the effectiveness of the program itself.

Year Four—New Directions

In an effort to determine whether a summer bridge program might be an alternative to the extended orientation, an additional REP group was recruited from students who were planning to begin studies at USU during the summer 1996 quarter and participants in the Summer Challenge program. The group’s performance and
retention would be compared to that of a regular REP group.

The Summer Challenge program is currently offered by the USU Academic Services Center to students whose admission indexes are slightly below the minimum, but still exhibit potential for success at USU. This program requires students to take MHR 116, Psy 173, ENG 101, as well as an additional elective course. Students are also required to participate in assessment testing for math, English, and study skills, supplementary instruction workshops, and personal interviews with the Academic Services director and staff. Given the similarities between REP program requirements and those of Summer Challenge, it was agreed that REP recruits could participate in this program although they met admission requirements. Five students volunteered to participate in this modified version of REP. Four students are currently on campus and have become part of the REP '96 class.

Sixteen students were recruited for the Fall '96 group, following the recruitment protocol established in 1995. These students were required to take the “Survival” version of Psy 173, as well as MHR 116 during the fall quarter. The REP orientation was modified to provide a 2-hour activity to familiarize participants with campus and community facilities each day of the Survival Week, followed by two half days in which the workshops and presentations usually offered to all REP students were provided.

The mentoring program currently follows the model developed during the 1995-96 year with minor modifications. Peer mentors now receive quarterly supervision, to allow both mentors and the advisor an opportunity to discuss their effectiveness and
purchasing textbooks, is awarded to these students at the end of each quarter, as a reward for their efforts.

Several campuswide and intraoffice administrative changes have continued to affect REP in one way or another. At the conclusion of the spring quarter, the vice president for Student Services retired, with Lynn Poulsen becoming the acting vice president, and Lavell Saunders, the assistant vice president, now supervising the MSA director. The new vice president, Patricia Terrell, took over the position at the beginning of the spring quarter, and, at the time of this thesis, was familiarizing herself with the REP program. At the end of the summer quarter the MSA staff assistant accepted a position at another office on campus. This position was not filled until two weeks into the fall quarter. By fall, one of the work-study students previously hired to support the staff was retained, and the REP advisor position was converted from a graduate assistantship to a 75% professional position in order to provide better services to all participants. Frances Tous, the REP advisor, was then responsible for overseeing and evaluating the program, with support from the MSA staff. Recruitment for 1997-97 was projected to be carried out as a joint effort between the REP advisor, the peer mentors, the MSA director, and the High School/College Relations staff.

As the REP program continues evolving through its fourth year, assessing its strengths and weaknesses as well as its overall effectiveness to date is essential to establish directions for the future.
Evaluation Models

Various approaches have been taken in evaluating the effectiveness of retention programs. Comparison of cohorts seems to be appropriate in order to determine progress or improvement in response to the program (Bagayoko & Kelley, 1994; Boudreau & Kromrey, 1994; Brigham, Moseley, Sneed, & Fisher, 1994; Pascarella, Terenzini, & Wolfe, 1986). The use of questionnaires and/or interviews to assess students' attitudes, satisfaction, and involvement (Arenas & Holtzman, 1995; Pascarella et al., 1986; J. Pruss, personal communication, December 3, 1996; T. Moore, personal communication, November 27, 1996) also seem to correspond to the hypotheses in Tinto’s and Bean’s models, as do the use of grade point averages and retention information obtained from student records (Bagayoko & Kelley, 1994; Bennett & Okinaka, 1990; Boudreau & Kromrey, 1994; Brigham et al., 1994; Trippi & Cheatham, 1989). Although researchers seem to prefer similar methods for collecting data, their methods of analysis are as varied as percentages and descriptive statistics, multiple regression, least-square regression, logistic regression, t tests, and analysis of variance. These methods are not mutually exclusive, but, in fact, provide different perspectives from which to compare two sets of data. Therefore, in order to evaluate a project with as small a scope as the REP program, it may be adequate to utilize a simple comparison of means such as a t test, and then calculate effect sizes.
CHAPTER III
OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this evaluation study was to assess the effectiveness of the REP program in reducing minority attrition from 1993-94 through 1995-96, as well as to determine its overall effectiveness as judged by its participants. The 1996 cohort was beyond the scope of this study. In addition, information on students’ level of satisfaction with the university and the main reason for students dropping out were collected and analyzed, hoping to find characteristics within each group that may contribute to minority student persistence or attrition at USU. Finally, recommendations and future directions for the program were discussed, in light of what areas seem to be of concern to students and what works at other institutions.

The questions addressed by this study were:

1. What are the admission profile characteristics of those minority students who choose to enter the REP program?

2. What are the admission profile characteristics of those minority students who choose not to enter the REP program?

3. Are there any statistical or practical differences between the characteristics of the two groups?

4. How do the academic progress characteristics of REP and non-REP minority students compare after completion of their freshman year?

5. How have minority enrollment rates varied at USU since the establishment
of the REP program?

6. How do retention rates compare between cohorts of the REP program?

7a. What are the reasons for coming to USU for both REP and non-REP minority students?

7b. What are the reasons for leaving USU for both REP and non-REP minority students?

7c. What are the reasons for staying at USU for both REP and non-REP minority students?

8. How do campus involvement and satisfaction with USU compare between REP and non-REP students?

9. How well has the REP program achieved its objectives so far?

10. In what ways can the REP program be improved?

Refer to Table 1 for the operational definition of variables and method of analysis.
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<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>What are the admission characteristics of REP participants?</td>
<td>Student records: ACT composite, high school GPA</td>
<td>mean, modes, standard deviation</td>
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<td>What are the admission characteristics of non-REP minority students?</td>
<td>Student records: ACT composite, high school GPA</td>
<td>mean, modes, standard deviation</td>
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<td>Are there any differences between the students who choose to participate in REP and those who don't?</td>
<td>Questions 1, 2</td>
<td>t test for independent means, effect size estimates</td>
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<td>Are there any differences in achievement at USU between REP and non-REP students?</td>
<td>Student records: GPA by spring quarter of freshman year</td>
<td>t test for independent means, effect size estimates</td>
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<td>How have minority enrollment rates varied since the establishment of the REP program?</td>
<td>USU Planning and Analysis Reports, fall quarter to fall quarter</td>
<td>Percentage increase/decrease</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>How do retention rates compare between REP and non-REP minority students?</td>
<td>Student records: number of quarters attended</td>
<td>mean number of quarters attended per groups, t test for independent means, effect size estimates</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>How do campus involvement and satisfaction with USU compare between REP and non-REP students?</td>
<td>Questionnaire: extracurricular involvement; would they recommend USU, are they planning to continue studies at USU?</td>
<td>Percentages</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>How well has the REP program achieved its objectives thus far?</td>
<td>Results of evaluation question #6, questionnaire responses</td>
<td>Percentages, overall impressions</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Student feedback, review of literature</td>
<td>percentages overall impressions</td>
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CHAPTER IV

METHODS

Participants

The group of participants was composed of all the 82 students who participated in the REP program from 1993 through 1996, and a 75 nonparticipant comparison group, for a total of 157 ethnic minority students. The REP and non-REP groups were divided into three cohorts, according to their year of admission to USU. The 1993-94 cohort consisted of 83 students (45 REP, 38 non-REP); the 1994-95 cohort was composed of 58 students (29 REP; 29 non-REP); and the 1995-96 cohort was composed of 16 students (8 REP, 8 non-REP). Considering the small size of these groups, participants in the three freshman classes of the REP program were considered as three different cohorts only when compared to non-REP students for admission variables, retention, and grades each quarter. For all other purposes, the groups were compared as REP versus non-REP. Refer to Table 2 for their distribution by gender and ethnicity.

Procedure

Phase one of the evaluation consisted of contacting those offices across campus that maintain records of all the student population, admission information, and progress. A letter was sent from the office of Multicultural Student Affairs to Admissions and Records, stating the purpose of the study and requesting cooperation.
Table 2

**Distribution by Gender and Ethnicity**

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In addition, approval was requested from the Institutional Review Board. No concerns were expressed by the Records office, as most of the information may be accessed through the IMS computer system and all staff members who have access to this information are required to sign a confidentiality agreement. However, it was not possible to obtain a list of minority students admitted between 1993 through 1995.

After clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix C), selection of comparison groups for each of the three REP classes took place. Because participation in the REP program is completely voluntary and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA) has a policy of not denying participation in the program to any student who applies by the fall quarter deadline, the REP groups do not have a balanced distribution between males and females, or ethnic background. Therefore, the random samples drawn to compose the comparison group were stratified by sex and ethnicity so that there was a comparable distribution of these variables in both groups. Also, to ensure that both groups had comparable credit loads initially, non-REP minority students were included in the comparison group only if they carried a minimum of 12 credit hours their first quarter at USU, and if that first quarter of their freshman year was summer or fall. These controls significantly reduced the pool of candidates for the comparison group.

To preserve confidentiality, after participants were selected, all identifying data was recorded separately. Students were identified by numbers for all data collection purposes. In other words, the data used in this evaluation cannot be used to personally identify students. Due to time constraints and lack of access to reports on minority
students admitted from 1993 through 1995, students in the comparison group had to be randomly selected from the Multicultural Student Affairs student databases for 1994 and 1996. This means that many of the students in the comparison groups were already retained by 1996. Therefore, when comparing the REP and non-REP groups for retention, one must exercise caution in drawing conclusions.

Phase three involved obtaining data from both the REP and comparison groups regarding ACT scores, high school GPAs, enrollment status, and quarterly GPAs since admission at USU. This information was obtained from the USU IMS system. A list of students who are no longer enrolled for both groups was generated and their last reported permanent and local addresses were obtained.

Questionnaires were mailed to all students in both groups. Copies of these questionnaires are included in Appendix A. Information regarding reasons for leaving, intention to return, involvement in extracurricular activities, and satisfaction with campus facilities was requested of them, in a one-sheet, multiple-choice Likert-scale format. A similar questionnaire was used for currently enrolled students. A self-addressed, stamped envelope, and a pencil were enclosed to facilitate return of the completed questionnaires. All students were offered their choice of a t-shirt, a certificate for Aggie ice cream, or $5 upon receipt of their response. Two weeks were allowed before a reminder postcard was sent. Two weeks later telephone follow-up began.

A structured interview guide was used to allow participants to elaborate their responses to the questionnaire during telephone interviewing. Interviewers were
selected and trained during the waiting period. They were two upper-rank students who have no relation to the REP program. A training session was conducted, followed by two mock interviews that were used to coach each interviewer. Surprise checks were made on a random basis by having the interviewers unknowingly call the evaluator at different numbers, and/or direct observation by walking in and out of the room regularly. Interview questions are provided in Appendix B.

After all data were collected, the program director was informed that data analysis was taking place, and results were discussed as they were obtained to generate possible explanations and to propose recommendations.

Two levels of analysis were conducted. In the first level of analysis, student records were examined and comparisons were made between admission variables and GPAs by the end of their freshman year, between REP and non-REP students in each cohort. Retention rates were also compared both between the two major groups and between cohorts. In the second level of analysis, results from the questionnaires were coded and analyzed to compare satisfaction, extracurricular participation, and reasons for staying or leaving between REP and non-REP students. Finally, students’ responses and suggestions were used to generate recommendations for improvement of the REP program.
CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level I of Analysis: Student Records

Comparison Between Admission Profiles and Academic Progress

The transcript and records information obtained for each student was grouped into three REP and non-REP groups in order to compare by cohorts for admission information, academic progress, and retention. Admission information obtained for students in each of the cohorts in the REP program and their non-REP counterparts was organized by the use of descriptive statistics and compared using \( t \) tests for independent means. Standardized mean difference effect sizes were calculated using the formula for Delta:

\[
\Delta = (\bar{x}_{\text{REP}} - \bar{x}_{\text{non-REP}}) / \sqrt{S^2_{\text{non-REP}}}
\]

The results indicate that upon admission, students in the REP '93 group had no statistically significant differences in ACT composite scores (\( t_{79} = 1.05 \), not significant) or high school GPAs (\( t_{75} = 0.13 \), not significant). However, the REP '93 group was larger than the non-REP '93 group, and had ACT composite scores that fell .24 of a standard deviation below the mean ACT score for the non-REP group. It is possible that students in the REP '93 group may have slightly less academic skills than those in the non-REP group, which could result in an increased difficulty to adjust
to college life and lower levels of persistence. The REP '94 and non-REP '94 groups showed no significant differences in ACT scores ($t_{55} = -0.01$, not significant; $\Delta = -0.002$) or high school GPA ($t_{53} = 0.11$, not significant; $\Delta = 0.021$), which makes both groups very comparable. The REP '95 group had no significant differences in ACT scores ($t_{14} = -0.34$, not significant), but these students' mean ACT scores fell .18 of a standard deviation below the mean, which may again be indicative of slightly less academic ability than the non-REP group. Differences in high school GPAs were also not statistically significant ($t_{14} = 1.10$, not significant). However, the REP '95 students' mean high school GPA was .51 of a standard deviation above the mean high school GPA of the non-REP '95 group, which indicates higher levels of achievement for the REP '95 group. Please refer to Table 3 for a more in-depth comparison of each cohort.

Grade point average information by the spring quarter of each cohort’s freshman year was collected. For these students, analysis of their GPAs yielded no significant differences between the REP and non-REP groups. The 1993 cohort had no statistically significant differences ($t_{69} = -1.94$) in GPAs by spring of 1994. However, the REP group was already performing at an average GPA that was 0.49 of a standard deviation below that of the non-REP '93 group. This information is consistent with admission data about ACT composite scores. The REP '94 and non-REP '94 groups had no significant differences for their spring 1995 GPAs ($t_{49} = 0.34$, not significant; $\Delta = 0.094$), which is consistent with admission data. The REP '95 and non-REP '95 groups had no statistically significant differences in their spring
Table 3

**Admission Information: REP Versus non-REP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Descriptive statistic</th>
<th>REP</th>
<th>non-REP</th>
<th>Independent mean t- value &amp; effect size (ES) estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>20.63</td>
<td>21.63</td>
<td>$\alpha_2 = 0.05$  [df = 79]  [t = -1.05] N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>mode</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>ES = -0.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS GPA</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>$\alpha_2 = 0.05$  [df = 75]  [t = 0.13] N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mode</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>ES = 0.034</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>21.45</td>
<td>21.46</td>
<td>$\alpha_2 = 0.05$  [df = 55]  [t = -0.01] N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>mode</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>18-23</td>
<td>ES = -0.002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS GPA</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>$\alpha_2 = 0.05$  [df = 53]  [t = 0.11] N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mode</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>ES = 0.021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>22.38</td>
<td>$\alpha_2 = 0.05$  [df = 14]  [t = -0.34] N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>mode</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>ES = -0.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS GPA</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>$\alpha_2 = 0.05$  [df = 14]  [t = 1.10] N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mode</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>ES = 0.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SDu</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
'96 GPAs (\(t_{15} = 0.19\), not significant), but their average GPAs were .10 of a standard deviation above that of the non-REP '96 group, which may be reflective of higher high school GPAs. These results indicated that students not only have slightly different levels of precollege preparation but also that the similarities or differences in academic achievement remain constant and are reflected in their academic performance by the end of their freshman year. Please refer to Table 4 for a comparison of grades of each cohort.

How Minority Student Enrollment Has Changed at USU Since the Start of the REP Program

The enrollment rates for undergraduate students at USU have increased for the total student population from 1990 through 1996. By contrast, minority student enrollment reached its highest point in 1994 and has steadily declined since. Refer to Table 5 for a breakdown of the minority student population. Factors such as increases in tuition costs, reduced availability of federal financial aid, and changes in administration that have resulted in a reduction in minority recruitment efforts may be some of the factors influencing this trend.

This increase in Caucasian student enrollment and decrease in minority enrollment are a remarkable contrast to national trends. According to most recent figures (Gose, 1997), by 1995, the latest year reported nationwide, the total number of enrolled minority students nationwide increased by 2.9%. Minority students accounted
Table 4

Grades by Spring Quarter: REP Versus non-REP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Descriptive statistic</th>
<th>REP mean</th>
<th>Non-REP mean</th>
<th>Independent t-value &amp; (ES) effect size estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spring 94 GPA</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>$\alpha_2 = 0.05$ $\bar{t} = -1.94$ N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td>$\Delta = -0.49$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spring 95 GPA</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>$\alpha_2 = 0.05$ $\bar{t} = 0.34$ N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>$\Delta = 0.09$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spring 96 GPA</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>$\alpha_2 = 0.05$ $\bar{t} = 0.19$ N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>$\Delta = -0.10$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

for a quarter of all college students in the United States that year. There were increases in enrollment for all minority groups nationwide (Hispanics: $+4.6\%$; Native Americans: $+3.1\%$; Asians Americans: $+3\%$; African Americans: $+1.7\%$). In contrast, Caucasian enrollment dropped by $1.1\%$ across the nation. If USU were to follow this trend, minority student enrollment would have risen to approximately 582 undergraduate students, instead of 532.

By 1996, the minority enrollment rates for the state of Utah rose by $13\%$ since 1993, (from 6,575 students to 7,435) for a statewide rate of $6.44\%$. If USU were to follow this statewide trend, an increase by $13\%$ would have resulted in a minority student population of approximately 601 students. However, we can observe a drop by
Table 5

How USU Minority Enrollment Rates Have Varied Since the Establishment of the REP Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Native Am.</th>
<th>Asian Am.</th>
<th>African Am.</th>
<th>Hispanic Am.</th>
<th>Total undergrad minority students</th>
<th>Change from previous year</th>
<th>% USU undergrad students</th>
<th>Total USU undergrad students</th>
<th>Change from previous year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1990</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>8642</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1992</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>+33.2%</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>9693</td>
<td>+12.16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Start of the REP Program: Academic Year 1993-94

| Fall 1993     | 56         | 147       | 78          | 164          | 445                               | +26%                     | 4.35                    | 10238                      | +5.62%                    |
| Fall 1994     | 71         | 196       | 77          | 222          | 566                               | +27.19%                  | 4.27                    | 13260                      | +29.52%                   |
| Fall 1995     | 76         | 173       | 68          | 215          | 532                               | -6.00%                   | 3.91                    | 13591                      | +2.5%                     |
| Fall 1996     | 68         | 153       | 64          | 187          | 472                               | -11.28%                  | 3.44                    | 13716                      | +0.92%                    |

Note. No specific information on undergraduate minority enrollment available for 1991 or prior to 1990.


11.28% in minority student population and, at the same time, an increase in the general student population at USU. This indicates that even though the student population continues to grow at USU, this growth does not involve minority representation.

Furthermore, when we compare all universities in the state, USU has the second lowest percentage of minority students (4% total; 3.44% undergraduate). According to these figures, the state of Utah is still underrepresented, but is exhibiting continued growth in minority student enrollment. This information indicates that USU has exhibited a pattern contrary to both national and statewide trends. Utah State University is not
only below the national average minority enrollment rate, it also ranks among the lowest within its own state. The university’s student population is becoming more and more Caucasian each year, which is contrary to what has happened elsewhere.

In light of the growth trend exhibited between 1990 and 1994, the marked contrast between minority population rates up to 1994 and those thereafter, and the divergence these figures show from statewide and nationwide trends, one can safely assume that there must be some specific conditions unique to USU that facilitate situations like this one. Thus, an in-depth analysis about universitywide and departmentwide administrative processes at USU, as well as community variables in Logan, should be helpful in identifying variables that may be fostering this type of situation (Astin, cited in Wilder, 1992; Broaddus, cited in Wilder, 1992; Ezeze, 1994; Guinta et al., 1987; Manzo, 1994; Wilder, 1992). For example, one important area to analyze is what specific administrative changes have taken place at USU since 1994, as minority enrollment rates reached an all-time high that year, but have steadily dropped since that time.

It is also important to note that despite the decline in enrollment rates for minority undergraduate students over the last 2 years, attrition rates have not increased. Thus, we may not be observing an increase in new and transfer minority students, but we are not seeing an increase in dropout rates for the ones who are already in attendance either. Although this is slightly encouraging, it is important to consider how this may affect currently enrolled minority students in the long run. As the institution prepares for a change in its academic calendar (from quarters to semesters)
with related increases in tuition costs, some minority students may feel that the barriers to succeeding at USU are intensifying. With more nonminority students and fewer minority students enrolling, active minority students' feelings of isolation and sense of having reduced support resources may increase. In addition, as minority students who cannot adjust to the semester switch leave, the remaining students may find themselves depending more on campus resources for cultural affirmation and social support. Administrators and planners at all levels should be aware of this possibility and make appropriate adjustments if USU is to achieve enrollment rates comparable to other universities in the state of Utah and successfully reduce its attrition rates for minority students.

Retention rates: REP Versus non-REP

A review of the retention rates for the three groups was also conducted. Students were considered retained if they were in attendance and obtained grades in courses for which they remained enrolled each quarter. Thus, if a student enrolled and later withdrew, he or she was not considered in attendance. A head count was conducted quarterly for each group in every cohort. However, for summarizing purposes, only the head count by the spring quarter of each freshman cohort, then a fall quarter follow-up per year have been used for retention analysis. The 1993-94 cohort had some interesting retention rates. By the end of their freshman year, there were equal numbers of REP and non-REP students on campus. However, this means that 97% of the non-REP students stayed, while only 82% of their REP counterparts did the
same. The differences between these two groups in the 1993 cohort became larger as more time passed. If one were to evaluate the effectiveness of the REP program based solely on retention rates for this cohort, one could say that minority students at USU did better without REP than with REP. However, we need to keep in mind how data for non-REP students were obtained, and how this may have artificially inflated retention results in the long run. Also, as the differences in ACT scores reflect on academic performance for these two groups, we may be looking at a REP group that probably had more difficulties adjusting to college than their non-REP counterparts. In addition, when all student groups are analyzed one can observe that, with the exception of the 1993 cohort, retention rates for both REP and non-REP cohorts remained close to or above 40%, which was the average reported for previous years (Jones, 1992). However, it was the 1994 and 1995 REP groups that had higher retention rates per cohort, with a minimum retention rate of 59% by fall 1996 for the REP '94 group (an increase by 19% over the 1992 averages), and a maximum retention rate of 100% by spring of 1996 for the REP '95 group (an increase by 60% over previously reported averages). Given that the 1993 cohort represents the first year of the REP program, the largest sample group, and this particular group’s ACT scores, we may safely assume that the contrast in retention rates between REP cohorts could be indicative of the REP program’s increased ability to select and retain students as it continued its development. Refer to Table 6 for a description of retention rates for both groups in the three cohorts. With this in mind, we may say that the REP program may have had a difficult start, but continued to improve as time went by and more opportunities
Table 6

Comparison of the Retention Rates Between REP and Non-REP Cohorts by Percentage Per Quarter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Sp 94</th>
<th>% ret</th>
<th>F 94</th>
<th>% ret</th>
<th>Sp 95</th>
<th>% ret</th>
<th>F 95</th>
<th>% ret</th>
<th>Sp 96</th>
<th>% ret</th>
<th>F 96</th>
<th>% ret</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REP 93</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nREP 93</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REP 94</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nREP 94</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REP 95</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nREP 95</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of quarters attended by each student in the group was obtained from their transcripts. The average number of quarters in attendance was calculated for each group in a cohort. Refer to Table 7 for a comparison. It is interesting to notice that despite the difference in successive retention between the REP and non-REP groups and the decrease in USU minority enrollment rates, the only difference between groups that was statistically significant was that between the 1993 cohorts. For this cohort, the REP average number of quarters attended was .54 of a standard deviation below the mean of the non-REP group. Again, this is consistent with lower ACT scores for this group.
Table 7

Number of Quarters Attended--REP Versus Non-REP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>REP</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>T = -2.43, df = 81, g &lt; 0.99, ES = -0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>T = 0.092, df = 56, N.S., ES = 0.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>T = 1.44, df = 14, N.S., ES = 0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The enrollment information indicated that participation in the REP program cannot be accounted for differences in academic achievement, but improvements in retention with successive cohorts have occurred. Therefore, we will focus on other characteristics that describe USU minority students with the purpose of identifying specific factors that may influence persistence at USU.

Level II of Analysis: Questionnaire

Responses to the questionnaire were used for the second part of the study. A total of 90 (57% of all in selected group) students participated in the survey by the deadline, of which 43 (48%) were enrolled at USU and 47 (52%) were not. Of those who responded, 49 (54%) students had participated in the REP program, while 41
(46%) students were from the non-REP group. Thus, slightly more than half of the members in each of the REP (N = 49; 60%) and non-REP groups (N = 41; 55%) participated in this part of the study. Refer to Table 8 for a more detailed breakdown of response rates. The data obtained from these surveys were grouped by REP versus non-REP groups in order to facilitate comparisons.

Survey Results: Admission and Status Information

To verify the accuracy of the information acquired from the IMS system, students were asked to provide information about their status and whether they were admitted as freshmen. Only one student in each group transferred from a community college, both still under freshman status, so the information obtained was supported by student reports. Student respondents varied in their class rank, with most of the non-REP respondents ranking as sophomores (17 = 42%), while the REP students reported mostly sophomores and juniors (16 juniors = 33%, 16 sophomores = 33%). Only seven students in each group reported having senior ranking (non-REP = 17%; REP = 14%). The mean and modal age of the respondents for both groups was 21 years (non-REP N = 20, or 49%; REP N = 21, or 43%). At the time the survey was conducted, a total of 31 non-REP respondents (76%) had declared a major, and 41 REP students (84%) reported the same. Twelve students (29%) in the non-REP group indicated that they are currently serving church missions and intending to return, while six (12%) students from the REP group indicated this. One REP student reported he is currently serving in the armed forces. The majority of non-REP respondents indicated
Table 8

Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment status</th>
<th>REP</th>
<th>Non-REP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24/82 = 29% responded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24/33 = 73% responded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9/82 = 11% no response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not active</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25/82 = 31% responded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25/49 = 51% responded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24/49 = 49% no response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>49/82 = 60% of all REP responded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33/82 = 40% of all REP did not respond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total students selected at Level 1: \( N = 157 \)

Total participants at Level 2: \( N = 90 \)

REP \( N = 82 \)  non-REP \( N = 75 \)  REP \( N = 49 \)  non-REP \( N = 41 \)

that the highest level of college mathematics they took was at the 200-level or above (\( N = 17 \), or 41%), in contrast to only 12 REP students (24%). For the REP group, the mode for the highest math course was 105 (\( N = 13 \), or 27%). For both groups, the majority of students visit their advisor at least once per year (non-REP \( N = 25 \), or 61%; REP \( N = 36 \), or 73%), with REP students reporting quarterly visits. This initial comparison of responses indicated that although there are no differences upon
admission, and, although the REP and non-REP groups show no significant differences in GPA or retention, the REP groups appear to have slightly higher student rankings and more students with declared majors, and appear to work more closely with their advisors than non-REP students. By contrast, non-REP students seem to enroll in more advanced mathematics courses than their REP counterparts.

One aspect that stands out is that although 83 minority students were admitted during the fall 1993 quarter, only 2 are graduating under the traditional 4-year time line. Only one student in each group indicated he or she has graduated, or is about to do so by the end of the 1996-97 academic year. Establishing typical graduation time lines for USU minority students is beyond the scope of this study. Still, given that most of the participants are 21 years old and ranking as sophomores or juniors, it may be logical to presume that the time it takes a minority student to obtain a baccalaureate degree may be much longer than the expected 4 years. Furthermore, with 18 students serving missions, these time lines might be extended to a total of 6 or 7 years, if we account for the impact the semester change may have on their progress. The impact of the actual time line versus expectation variable on persistence could be another area of future investigation.

REP and Non-REP Students’ Satisfaction With USU

A relatively high response rate was obtained to the question whether participants would recommend USU to other students (REP N = 48/49, or 98% of REP respondents; non-REP N = 39/41, or 95% of non-REP respondents). Both the REP
and non-REP groups had subsets of students answering “yes” (non-REP; N = 32/39, or 82%; REP N = 36/48, or 75%), “no” (non-REP N = 4/39, or 10%; REP N = 4/48, or 8%) and “maybe” (non-REP N = 3/39, or 8%; REP N = 8/48, or 17%).

Responses for this question are very similar to the reasons students chose to come to USU, which will be discussed in the next section. Refer to Tables 9, 10, and 11 for a breakdown of the responses for this question.

This information indicates that students who participate in the REP program tend to be more satisfied with USU than their non-REP counterparts. Also, students in both groups place a high value on academic programs, followed by concerns for social activities, and the size of the student population and how it translates into student services and attention from professors. Both groups place a high value on having friendly people on campus. Non-REP students who reported reasons for not recommending the school had concerns related to social activities and religious diversity. Although REP students seemed more reluctant to share reasons for not recommending, they, too, qualified their recommendations according to the person’s expectations more frequently than non-REP students. These qualifiers have a lot to do with social integration concerns such as low levels of cultural or religious diversity and little access to social activities. These concerns are something to watch for in students’ reasons for leaving the university, for both REP and non-REP students, as students who perceive their college environment as hostile tend to react by withdrawing (Bagayoko & Kelly, 1994).

In terms of overall satisfaction, the higher rates in the REP group may be due in
Table 9

**Yes: Reasons for Recommending USU (N = 68)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>REP</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Non-REP</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good school, like classes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social activities, environment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall good experience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly people</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus size, Student population</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like campus (clean, beautiful)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approachable faculty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient distance from home</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere/few distractions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like Logan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of tuition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location, access to outdoor activities</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10

**No: Reasons for Not Recommending USU (N = 8)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>REP</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Non-REP</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited religious diversity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall negative experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited social activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan\USU conservative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11

Mixed Answers (N = 11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>REP N = 8</th>
<th>REP Rank</th>
<th>Non-REP N = 3</th>
<th>Non-REP Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USU is a good school but… *</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on persons expectations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes to Caucasians and LDS, no to others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes to declared majors, no to undeclared</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranked in decreasing order of Republican students' satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*But…</td>
<td>N = 6</td>
<td>rank</td>
<td>N = 3</td>
<td>rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited religious diversity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited social life</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty integrating into local community</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather too cold</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance from home not convenient</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns about tuition cost, use of funds,</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semester conversion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

part to REP students’ higher participation level in campus activities (see section on extracurricular involvement) and individual attention from their advisors, as REP students are required to have at least one advising appointment per quarter during their freshman year. These reports of high satisfaction levels are consistent with the retention levels observed for the 1994 and 1995 REP groups. However, when asked whether they planned to continue studies at USU, the responses provided an interesting contrast to the satisfaction and present retention levels. The number of REP students who indicated they would continue studies at USU was 29 (59% of REP respondents),
which was quite similar to their non-REP counterparts (N = 28, or 68% of non-REP respondents). So even though most students would recommend the institution, they do not necessarily plan to continue studying here. These findings suggest that despite high levels of expressed satisfaction with the institution and between-group similarities in academic achievement, there are some other major factors affecting persistence. The responses to this section in the survey also raise questions about students answering in a socially appropriate manner, the students’ degree of commitment to completing their programs (Turnbull, 1986), as well as other variables that may influence persistence at USU other than the ones discussed so far. An overview of the students’ reasons for enrolling, staying, and leaving USU was conducted with the purpose of finding clues to this dilemma. Perhaps a contrast between the reasons why students come to USU and their reasons for leaving will assist us in understanding this issue.

Why Minority Students Come to Utah State University

Minority students, like any other students, have diverse reasons for choosing USU. Both REP and non-REP students who answered the survey ranked the quality of academic programs, the campus/student body size, desired distance from home, and good financial support as the top four reasons for enrolling at USU. Nonetheless, that is where the similarities end. Refer to Table 12 for a more detailed comparison in students’ responses.

According to the number of responses to this survey, more REP students come to USU attracted by a financial aid package (N = 27, or 55%) than non-REP students
Table 12

Top Reasons for Coming to USU: REP Versus Non-REP Students (N = 84)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REP</th>
<th>N=45</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>N=39</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Offered an attractive financial aid package</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wanted to live away from home</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Quality of academic program</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Campus/student pop. size</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Recruited for specific academic program</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cost of tuition</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Like Cache Valley</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Close to home</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No choice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recruited for athletics program</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(N = 14, or 34%). Many of the financial aid packages currently awarded to minority students include 3- to 4-year scholarships that are awarded on a financial-need basis, but are actually revoked for the spring quarter of the freshman year if the student does not have a minimum GPA of at least 3.0 by his/her first quarter on campus (M. Tenhoeve, personal communication, February 27, 1997). Also, more than twice as many REP students were recruited to specific academic programs when compared to the non-REP group. Some of these programs offer stipends upon which students depend to fulfill their financial obligations at the university. As students reevaluate their career options, or if the programs run out of funds, some students may find
themselves wanting to continue their studies, but unable to cover their expenses if they do so, or simply having no reason to stay here. If students require financial support to attend college, they are less likely to continue in attendance if this source of support is reduced or removed (Broaddus, cited in Wilder, 1992; Noel, 1992). This may be another factor affecting retention rates for both the REP and non-REP groups.

In addition, more non-REP students live relatively closer to home (N = 14, or 34%) than their REP counterparts (N = 7, or 14%). This is an important factor. When students attend an institution of higher education far from home, they are more dependent on campus resources and peers for social and emotional support than students who are closer to home. Thus, being successful at building supportive networks in the university community is probably more important for REP students than for non-REP students. Hence, as tuition costs continue to rise and minority enrollment continues to decline, we may see more minority students from the REP group choosing not to stay at USU, as this is the group that seems to exhibit the most reliance on campus resources to fulfill both their social and financial needs.

Why Students Leave USU

According to this survey, REP and non-REP students have very similar reasons for leaving the university. The main reasons for the REP group were financial problems (10 = 40%) and other reasons (10 = 40%). Most non-REP students said they left the university for other reasons (13 = 62%), or financial problems (8 = 38%). This information is in agreement with Broaddus’ (1987, 1994) claims that
inaccessibility of financial aid may be partly responsible for high attrition rates. Refer to Table 13 for more detailed information about reasons for leaving USU.

The survey requested students who stated they disliked USU or Cache Valley to indicate their reasons for their dissatisfaction. For the non-REP group there was only one response in each of the categories relating to lack of cultural diversity, religious diversity, opportunities for socializing, unmet expectations about their major or problems with the quarters calendar. The REP group, by contrast, had seven students (28%) expressing concerns about lack of diversity, six students (24%) concerned about lack of opportunities for socializing, and four (16%) students concerned about a lack of religious diversity. This information may be associated with inferences about the REP group having more students coming from outside Cache Valley. Given the traditionally high homogeneity among the student population at USU and the population in Cache Valley, these concerns may be a reflection of institutional procedures that attempt to serve the minority population using the same assumptions as for majority populations (Bear, cited in Wilder, 1992; Ezeze, 1994; Levitz, 1994; Lucas, 1993; Manzo, 1994; Wilder, 1992). If no changes are expected from the dominant campus culture, the message sent to minority students is that they need to adjust their differences to the mainstream view. This, in turn, has the effect of disengaging students, which in turn leads to student attrition (Levitz, 1992).

**Why Students Stay at USU**

According to survey responses, REP and non-REP minority students have very
Table 13

Reasons for Leaving USU (N = 46, or 98% of Inactive Participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>REP</th>
<th>Non-REP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 25</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial problems</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike Cache Valley*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better fit with academic program elsewhere</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic problems*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike USU*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Asterisk items</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited diversity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited opportunities for socializing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited access to preferred religion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major not what expected</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty adjusting to quarters</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

similar reasons for continuing studies at USU. It is in the frequency of these responses that we find most of the differences between groups (see Table 14). For REP participants, the programs, encouragement from their support system, and the desire to graduate seem to be the primary reasons, followed closely by financial aid. Albeit the priority is different for enrolled versus inactive REP students, the reasons for staying seem to fit well with what the inactive REP students stated as their reasons for leaving
Table 14

Reasons for Continuing Studies at USU (N = 42, or 85% of Active Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>REP</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good program, classes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends, support system, church</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self motivation: education, better job, more of life, graduation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship, financial aid</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors, staff</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student organization</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance to change schools, convenience</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family pressure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowhere else to go, want to stay away from home</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REP, REP staff member</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition affordable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like USU, campus, atmosphere</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in terms of financial problems, academic problems, and finding better programs elsewhere. Comments related to the quality of the programs and the desire to graduate fit well with inferences about the students' level of commitment to their education and to achieving career goals (Pascarella et al., 1986; Turnbull, 1986). Apparently there are differences in the level of commitment between REP active and inactive students that are also impacting retention rates.
The top reasons for staying for the non-REP group are liking USU, encouragement from their friends or support system, and the quality of academic programs. Financial aid, cost of tuition, and the desire to graduate do not seem to be as important to this group, in comparison to their inactive counterparts, and to both enrolled and inactive REP students. Once again, there appears to be a certain level of commitment in this group. The commitment appears to be more towards the institution than to their own goals, but it still acts as a retaining factor.

Although they did not appear as primary motivators, it seems that for both groups the support and encouragement received from faculty and staff, as well as members of student organizations can be very influential in their decisions to continue studies at USU or not, more so than support from family members. Faculty involvement has been previously stressed as a means of enhancing student retention (Clewell & Fickler, 1987; McKenna & Lewis, 1986; Turnbull, 1986). Given that the students’ level of commitment to their career and the institution seems to be functioning as one of the factors in retention for minority students at USU, the involvement of faculty members in the retention effort may prove useful to increase students’ commitment to their career or the institution. Once again, there are a number of students who base their decision to stay on their appreciation of the campus and their feelings about Logan. This reason is not as popular for any of the enrolled students as it was for the inactive REP students. Perhaps the REP students who came to USU because of the attractiveness of the campus later found out it was not reason enough to keep them here, while those who are still enrolled at USU have found ways to make Cache Valley
more likeable. Perhaps wanting to leave is part of their motivation to graduate. It is difficult to determine why there is such a difference in these sectors of the REP group, but one may hypothesize that it is related to the number of students in the group that are not from the vicinity and find Logan a very different environment to what they are used to. Given that analysis of the influence of variables such as religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, out of state versus state residence, and urban versus rural background on persistence at USU is beyond the scope of this study, it is difficult to determine to what extent these variables may be related to REP students’ reports about disliking Cache Valley and concerns about diversity. This may be an area of future exploration that may assist in finding predictors for minority student success at this university.

How Extracurricular Involvement Compares Between REP and Non-REP Students

Students were asked whether they joined any campus organizations at USU. Students in both REP and non-REP groups reported joining a campus organization. However, 46% more REP students joined campus organizations than their non-REP peers (non-REP N = 21/39, or 54%; REP N = 47/47, or 100%). Refer to Table 15 for a more detailed report on the types of student organizations each group in the sample joined. This information is probably reflective of two things: (a) REP students are encouraged to become involved in campus activities by peer mentors and advisors and were provided information about student organizations during the fall
preorientation, and (b) a larger portion of the REP student groups are not from the Cache Valley vicinity, so they probably depend more on campus activities to fulfill their social needs than the non-REP group. Participation in campus activities has been previously demonstrated to facilitate the fit between the students and the institution, a variable often said to impact retention (Bagayoko & Kelly, 1994; Bennett & Okinaka, 1990; Lucas, 1993; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1982). Therefore, the REP program has been successful at assisting students become active members of the academic community.

At this point of our analysis we have observed that REP and non-REP students are similar in admission variables, and their college GPAs. We have also observed that there is a slightly higher level of retention for REP students, with the exception of one cohort, and that overall, REP students seem to be more satisfied with USU, seem to be more involved in campus activities, and have slightly higher rates of declaring majors and students' rank. However, REP students also seem to be more concerned with financial aid issues and the quality of their social life during their stay in Logan. There appears to be a difference in the level of commitment to career goals between active and inactive students in both groups; these are some variables not considered for this evaluation, but that merit further study. With participation in the REP program the primary comparison criterion, let us now evaluate how well the REP program has served its students' needs thus far.
Table 15

Student Organizations (N = 86, or 96% of All Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student organization</th>
<th>REP N = 47</th>
<th>Non-REP N = 39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural clubs</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student services</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubs related to field of study</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor societies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student government</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/band</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How Student Participants Rate the REP Program

The majority of REP students who responded to the questionnaire reported that the REP program was helpful to them (Yes: 47/49 = 96%; No: 0; Abstained: 2/49 = 4%). When asked why they thought REP was helpful or not, most students who shared their reasons for finding REP helpful stated that they made friends with their peers (n = 13), that the program eased the transition into college (n = 10), and that they received general assistance and support from the staff (n = 10). Students who
explained why REP was not helpful commented mostly about required courses that caused scheduling conflicts (n = 2), or finding academic advising not helpful. These comments indicate that the REP program is addressing some important social needs for its participants, and fit well with what respondents later specified as their preferred and disliked aspects of the program.

With regard to instructors who taught the required courses, REP students reported overall positive impressions (n = 25). There were 17 positive comments about specific instructors, seven students commented on areas that specific instructors could improve upon, and six students could not remember them. As with instructors, the majority of REP students reported overall good experiences in their dealings with MSA staff members (n = 36). There were 18 positive comments about specific staff members, and two students wrote that the MSA staff helped them stay in college. There were three comments about MSA staff members being too intense, and one that a staff member “promised too much.” It is interesting to point out this last comment, as previous research has indicated that the information provided during recruitment is especially important to African Americans (Ansley, cited by Hudson, 1993).

When asked what they liked best about the REP program, the most frequently reported reasons were making friends, having a sense of belonging and meeting people of diverse backgrounds (n = 27), followed closely by the people and the support (n = 26), activities (n = 11), and priority registration (n = 10). The aspects most disliked about the program were having course requirements (n = 14), the development of
cliques ($n = 5$), and the time consumed by meetings ($n = 4$). Please refer to Table 16 for a breakdown of these preferences.

It appears that, for the REP students who participated in this survey, the most valuable asset of the program is people: the staff members who help them, the friends they make, the faculty who teach them how to adapt to college life. This information can be easily associated to the higher number of REP students who are not from the local community and who have a higher dependency on campus resources for ways to facilitate adaptation and socializing.

**Student Evaluation of Courses**

REP students were asked to rate the courses they were required to take during their freshman year in REP. The two courses REP students found most helpful were PSY 173, Personal Study Efficiency (39 students agreed), and MHR 116, Life Management Skills (33 students agreed). The LAS 125 course, Pathways to Knowledge, was found helpful by 21 students. The two areas that had received the most complaints from REP students, math workshops and English 195, also fared well. A total of 21 students reported benefitting from the math support compared to 6 who did not. English 195, Individual Writing Seminar, seemed to be the most unpopular course in the REP curriculum. Nonetheless, 18 students agreed that it was helpful to them, while 12 disagreed. Responses indicate that whereas students did not appreciate having to take the courses, they did benefit from them.
### Table 16

**REP Student Preferences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred aspects</th>
<th>Student response</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting people of diverse cultural backgrounds, making friends, sense of belonging</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People, support network, staff members who care</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities, encouraged involvement with university</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority registration</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic offerings, advising, orientation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped stay in school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disliked aspects</th>
<th>Student response</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required courses (general)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social difficulties with peers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict attendance requirements</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English 195</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative perceptions of REP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of ethnic diversity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-quarter evaluations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math seminars</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers left</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misled by recruiters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of off-campus activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed meetings, felt lost</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggie pizza served too often</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Limitations of This Study

This study has some serious limitations that need to be considered before drawing any conclusions. First, we need to keep in mind that the REP program was not developed as planned due to financial limitations and repeated administrative changes. These factors were not considered in this study, so the extent of their influence over the program and its participants is unknown. Secondly, the accuracy of identifying minority students for the non-REP group is equal to the accuracy or the information published in the student information system. The information reported in the IMS system depends on the students' willingness to supply accurate information as well as accuracy in data entry. It is not unusual to find students who have been misclassified under this system, minority students who define themselves as Caucasian, or students who choose not to answer. Notwithstanding, it is the best available form of identifying this sector of the student population at USU. Third, it is important to keep in mind that the students in the non-REP cohorts were selected from the 1994 and 1996 student databases provided by the USU Office of Multicultural Affairs. Thus, if a student was selected from the 1994 database to be a member of the 1993 cohort, and, likewise, if a student was selected for the 1995 cohort using the 1996 listing, the student was obviously retained from one year to the next. With no access to a complete list of all minority students enrolled for 12 credit hours during the fall
quarters of the 1993, 1994, and 1995 academic years, it is difficult to determine to what extent there was a sampling bias in favor of non-REP student retention. Finally, this study was conducted by the REP advisor. The author has been personally involved with the implementation and development of the REP program since its inception and has worked with all of its participants. Although personal identification data were kept separate from survey results and transcript information, one has to consider not only the author's involvement as a possible source of bias in favor of the REP program, but also the participants' relationship to the author and REP staff members, or lack thereof as another variable influencing participation, as well as the tendency to provide socially desirable responses about USU and/or the REP program.

This investigation did not intend to identify predictors for minority student success at USU. This study is aimed at determining, first of all, how the REP program has fared to this point, in retaining its students and serving their perceived needs. A secondary purpose was to examine whether there are some common characteristics in REP participants that make them different from nonparticipants, as well as to identify any variables that could influence persistence and merit further study. All these analyses have been conducted in order to provide REP and USU administrators with a few directions for program improvement, but mostly with better questions to ask in addressing minority student retention. Therefore, the preliminary quality of this study is underlined so that subsequent evaluations have some well-defined criteria upon which to base their conclusions.

Finally, the generalizability of this study is very limited. This study was
conducted at USU, under the current conditions of tuition costs, available financial aid, and a quarter-based academic calendar. Although there may be other universities across the nation with a similar situation, it is important to keep in mind that a university does not exist in a vacuum. The characteristics that define the Cache Valley community (demographics, religious climate, marital, and socioeconomic status of the traditional college-age population, and general openness to diversity) further limit the generalizability of the study to institutions with similar conditions in their surrounding communities. Given that this was an initial effort in evaluating recent institutional efforts at improving minority retention, and that there were several extraneous variables that may have affected results, it is recommended that the study be used only to guide further evaluations conducted at USU.

Conclusions

Perhaps the best way to answer the question of whether the REP program has achieved its goals is to look at each objective individually. The original reasons for developing the program were to address the issue of high undergraduate minority attrition rates by (a) providing students with a support network that would allow them to integrate into the campus community and (b) providing skill development resources to help them succeed academically.

According to grade reports and student impressions, it is appropriate to say that the REP program has successfully accomplished the goal of helping students succeed academically. Most students who have participated in the REP program have
performed academically as well or better than other students with similar admission characteristics. In fact, the REP group had more students with declared majors and higher student ranking than the non-REP group. REP students also expressed satisfaction with USU, with program course offerings, and with advisement. The mean GPAs for the REP students placed the groups within good academic standing levels at the end of their freshman year. In order to improve upon these GPA levels and perhaps even allow more students to benefit from achievement-based financial support, REP program administrators may conduct initial assessment of study skills and require students to attend skill-building seminars as needed (Castle, 1993; Glennen, Baxley, & Farren, 1985; McKenna & Lewis, 1986; Turnbull, 1986). This may prove especially helpful with 200-level mathematics courses.

Reports on student involvement on campus organizations strongly suggest that the REP students actively seek integration into the academic community at USU, more so than non-REP students. Given that for both the enrolled and inactive REP groups it is important to have opportunities for socializing, and that for all students in this study support from a reference group made a difference between persistence and attrition, this factor cannot be overlooked. Students' expressed reasons for liking the REP program show a consistent tendency to maintain participation in order to satisfy social needs. In other words, minority students in the REP program find it is a vehicle for satisfying their needs for socializing, cultural validation, and belonging. In this aspect, the REP program has successfully accomplished its goal to date. One improvement for the social aspect of the program that may add another dimension to the program would
be to foster a sense of ownership of the program in its students. This may be accomplished by having students participate in the decisions related to activities and new student orientation. Since student involvement and commitment have been shown to increase the likelihood of retention (Turnbull, 1986), this approach may result in increased member participation and more participant recruitment.

Based on the enrollment information obtained for this study, REP '93 students did not exhibit higher rates of persistence than other minority students. In fact, the sequential retention rates have been lower than that of other minority students, and even the average number of quarters enrolled has been lower in the REP '93 group than the non-REP '93 group. Although this may be an artifact of the sampling sources used, and differences in admission variables, it is noteworthy and deserves further analysis. However, based on retention reports previously discussed, we can say that after its first year, the REP program has demonstrated higher levels of student retention and has contributed to an overall increased minority student retention level at USU. In view of the current decline in minority enrollment, it may be said that the program has achieved its goal by maintaining the attrition rates during its first year and increasing it with each cohort up to 56% over previously reported levels, despite decreased minority enrollment. However, if the program is to truly reduce attrition, its administrators will need to address variables not currently being served by the program. Given the differences in financial need, background residence, their subsequent increased need for social support from campus sources, and their expressed reasons for coming to USU and decisions to continue, higher attrition rates may still be expected from the
REP students. If the REP program is to increase its success in reducing attrition, the above-mentioned variables should be addressed.

Some strategies may include helping students integrate into the Cache Valley community, and educate nonminority peers in cultural awareness. Diversity does not occur simply because we bring in more minority students. A campus should be able to make its minority students feel welcome in order to foster a pluralistic learning environment (Levitz, 1992; Stikes, cited in Taylor, 1990). One important factor beyond program administrator control is the cultural attitudes of the faculty and community at large. An environment cannot be built at USU if all members of the academic and local community do not contribute to this effort (McKinney, cited in Hudson, 1993; Stikes, cited in Taylor, 1990). At this point of the program, it is important to have faculty members become involved with the program, so that mentoring relationships can develop with students. An advisory committee of faculty members can also prove helpful in developing a more effective curriculum conducive to skill development and better use of diverse learning styles for REP students. With regard to the local community, it may be advisable to conduct a diversity audit in order to assess the level of openness to diversity in the community, and generate ideas to make Cache Valley a more attractive place for minority students (Arenas & Holtzman, 1995).

A second area to address is the level of commitment and involvement with their education that students have when admitted to USU. Students with a high level of commitment to completing their degree tend to persist more than those with lower levels. Therefore, all outreach and minority recruitment efforts should not be limited
to making an attractive financial aid offer to prospective students, but should use all student services available as vehicles to foster career goal pursuit in new students (Pascarella et al., 1986; Thile & Matt, 1995; Turnbull, 1986).

Another very important area to address is financial assistance. Minority students come from groups that have been documented as having a disproportionately disadvantaged quality of life nationwide (Castle, 1993), so their dependence on financial assistance is unlikely to decrease. Developing more effective plans to assist students in maintaining the financial aid packages they were awarded during their first year may reduce the number of students who discontinue studies at USU due to the loss of scholarships by the spring quarter of their freshman year. Also, program advisors can assist students in locating additional sources of funding by developing more effective systems of distributing information about such sources.

Finally, REP administrators should gather information to assess the impact that belonging to each specific minority group, religious affiliation, socioeconomic background, campus residence, and specific study skills background have on minority student success at USU, in order to provide better services to participants. The REP program could also be evaluated in terms of how it has impacted success and retention for students in different minority groups so as to establish specific goals to address the different needs members of different groups may have.

In sum, the information analyzed during the course of this evaluation indicates that the REP program serves a sector of the minority student population with unique socioeconomic variables that distinguish itself from other minority students on campus.
The program has fulfilled its objectives by increasing retention rates with each successive year, increasing student participation and satisfaction at USU, and encouraging academic progress. Specific recommendations for program development and improvement follow in the next section.

Recommendations

Assessment of Campus and Community Climate

An assessment of the environmental variables that affect persistence at USU is of utmost importance, given the marked contrast in enrollment and retention rates between this institution and other universities in the state and nation. These differences in enrollment rates may indicate the presence of processes within USU that inhibit growth in the minority student population. Thus, the changes that have taken place as of 1994 need to be carefully examined to determine what has caused the marked change in enrollment rates, from steady increase to continued decrease. Also, factors affecting enrollment at present should be identified and compared to variables previous to 1994, so that effective interventions can be implemented.

In order to effectively develop an environment of diversity, administrators should determine the level of readiness for diversity in both the university and the surrounding community (Arenas & Holtzman, 1995). Given the traditional homogeneity in the population in the Cache Valley area, a diversity audit would prove helpful not only to determine the prevailing attitudes towards nonmembers of
predominant groups, but also to facilitate identification of those individuals and organizations in the community that can provide assistance to students and other community members in developing more positive attitudes towards diversity in this area. Alliances with different institutions in the community could serve as an extended support system for minority students at USU (McKinney, cited in Hudson, 1993; Stikes, cited in Taylor, 1990).

At the university level, the audit would allow administrators to identify the attitudes and behaviors among the faculty and student body that both promote and discourage diversity. Identifying these factors would allow all parties involved in minority recruitment and retention to understand which aspects of current programming are effective and which are not, in light of how these attitudes enhance or inhibit their effect. The information can be used to guide the development of policies at all levels, as well as programs and activities designed to increase the level of cultural sensitivity in all members of the campus community. These types of changes would allow USU to shift paradigms, from the expectation that minority students have the same needs and should adapt to the nonminority student model of behavior, to that of an institution that effectively provides for the needs of all its students.

Analysis of the Impact of Other Variables on Retention

Information provided by the participants indicates some notable differences between REP and non-REP students in persistence, financial need, and social integration. This study did not break down REP and non-REP groups by gender or
minority group, although these variables can also influence persistence. Also, it is unclear to what extent there is a difference in level of commitment to finishing a degree among these groups. Therefore, careful investigation of the impact of minority group membership, socioeconomic background, residence of origin, and religious affiliation on persistence at USU can prove helpful in better identifying the needs of minority students at this university.

Financial Support

The most frequent reason for coming to USU for REP students was an attractive financial aid package. The most frequent reason for leaving USU in both REP and non-REP groups was financial problems. In addition, nationwide reports point at the prevalence of lower socioeconomic levels among minority populations. If minority students are offered financial assistance to come to USU, then have that assistance removed, they will most likely drop out or transfer to another institution that reinstates the assistance. These factors point out the need for increasing access to financial aid among minority students as well as improvement in policies that regulate how students are to continue receiving aid. Therefore, it is also recommended that some form of financial assistance be provided with participation in the program. For disadvantaged students, a stipend may mean the difference between persistence and attrition (Noel, 1992). In addition, more effective methods of distributing information about external sources of funding should be developed so that minority students do not have to depend entirely on federal and institutional aid to pay for their education.
Other interventions to assist students in keeping their grants should include mechanisms to assess a student's level of proficiency in basic study skills and the provision of instructional opportunities to refine these skills. This aspect will be further discussed in the next recommendation.

**Study Skill Assessment and Development**

Given that current policies for retaining some financial aid packages only allow minority students one quarter to establish a GPA that will determine continuation of funding, students who are awarded funding need to have the academic and life skills to adapt to the college environment and succeed as soon as possible. This need can be addressed in one or two ways. The first method would involve having students with lower ACT scores participate in a summer preparation program. The program would provide assistance with basic study skills, such as note-taking, time management, and test-taking, as well as writing and mathematics. Students could also be assisted in understanding expectations of their instructors and basic university policies and procedures. Research in retention suggests the usefulness of summer bridge programs in preparing minority students for college (Clewell & Fickler, 1987; Jackson, in Hudson, 1993; Levitz, 1992; Noel, 1992; University of Wisconsin, 1993).

Another method of strengthening students’ ability to retain their scholarships would be by conducting an objective study skills assessment upon admission, then place students on enrichment or remedial courses as needed (Castle, 1993; Glennen et al., 1985; McKenna & Lewis, 1986; Turnbull, 1986). Students should be clearly informed
that initially they may not necessarily follow the requirement sheets for their majors but
will eventually be placed on their tracks upon completion of any necessary remedial
work. It should be clarified to them that the purpose of this initial deviation from their
track will be to their own benefit; so they cannot only succeed in following their track
by acquiring the necessary skills to do so, but also retain their financial aid. An active
involvement approach for academic and career advisement should be utilized so that
students feel they are participating in the decisions that will affect their future, thereby
nurturing their level of commitment to their goals and the institution (Banks & Byock,
1991; Brigham et al., 1994). Although REP freshman students are required to meet
with their advisor once per quarter, research suggests that biweekly follow-up during
their first term may be more helpful for needs assessment and early intervention (Banks
& Byock, 1991; Glennen et al., 1985; McKenna & Lewis, 1986).

Students’ Commitment to Goals

Students’ level of commitment to their career goals and the university should be
assessed upon admission. This assessment could be conducted through personal
interviews and/or questionnaires in which students are asked to solve common
problems related to higher education, as well as through the use of career development
assessment tools. Students who need to clarify their career goals should be required to
participate in courses designed for this purpose, just as students needing remedial
education should be required to attend such courses, in order to increase their level of
commitment to their goals. In addition, the students’ willingness to contract with
program advisors to define and accomplish specific goals each quarter can help in this endeavor.

Faculty participation can be extremely useful in this endeavor. Having faculty members support the retention efforts on campus can facilitate the flow of information on students' academic progress as an early warning/referral system, can encourage the development of mentoring relationships that help students clarify their career goals, and can influence the campus climate by making students feel more welcome (Banks & Byock, 1991; Clewell & Fickler, 1987; Boger, Duwve, Bankey, & Poggiali, 1994; Glennen et al., 1985; Levitz, 1992; McKenna & Lewis, 1986; Noel, 1992; Stikes, cited in Taylor, 1990; Thile & Matt, 1995; Turnbull, 1986; University of Wisconsin, 1993). In addition, REP staff should consider assigning advisors to students from similar minority backgrounds, so as to provide additional role models for students who are aware of the specific cultural needs of their students. These are two missing elements in the REP program that should be addressed. A faculty advisory committee for the REP program can assist administrators in developing a curriculum that is flexible enough to adapt to each student's needs, and provide some initial mentoring relationships as well as in encouraging other faculty members to become actively involved in the retention efforts on campus.

As REP students have indicated their preference for social activities, another way to foster career development, increased commitment to career goals, and allegiance to the university may be to offer informal social activities in which students can mingle in a relaxed environment with professors, and/or have different career-
related topics presented by their peer mentors.

Finally, the REP curriculum should be revised so that classes required of students are more relevant to their needs and interests. Courses evaluated as helpful should be required of all students, but other currently offered courses should be prescribed only to those students who need them. Furthermore, such courses and the preorientation should include elements that have been proven to be especially helpful for minority groups, such as cooperative learning, incentives and recognition within the classroom, tactile-visual experiences in learning, clarification of requirements, and high expectations (Levitz, 1992).

Students' Suggestions

REP students had many suggestions for improving the program. The bulk of them can be condensed into the following:

1. Offer more activities and meetings to keep students up to date with school events and each other.

2. Eliminate required courses or be more flexible with them. Students would be assigned to the courses by skill level. Students who need the courses should be able to decide in which quarter they will take them.

3. Assist students in developing skills to educate non-minority peers to be culturally sensitive.

4. Have student input in the design stages of the orientation and calendar of activities.
5. Make the program more visible across campus. Participants are proud to belong in REP and want other members of the campus community to become familiar with the program.

6. Develop more avenues for distributing information to membership.

7. Require follow-up advisement with non-freshman members.

In sum, it is recommended that the USU administration conduct a diversity audit to identify factors in the community that are in favor and against the increase of minority enrollment, as well as develop better mechanisms to award and retain financial aid for minority students. Efforts to increase minority retention should not focus exclusively on minority students' ability to integrate into the USU community, but also should encourage changes in attitudes and policies throughout the community so that diversity can be embraced. The administration should also encourage faculty members to endorse and participate in retention efforts. REP program administrators should assign advisors according to minority background, and involve faculty members in revising the program curriculum and participation in activities, so that mentoring relationships can develop between students, advisors, and instructors. Assessment of each student's study skills and level of goal commitment should be conducted upon admission so that coursework can be accurately prescribed to help students do well academically and retain their scholarships. The program should be made more visible across campus to foster a sense of pride in the students and encourage support from the USU community. Information about the program should be more accessible to both participants and the USU community. Program activities should be programmed more
frequently. Students should be involved in the design and development of orientation and social activities to increase their level of commitment to the program and each other. These recommendations are made with the purpose of increasing the REP program’s effectiveness and developing an environment of pluralism at USU.
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Appendix A

Cover Letter and Questionnaires

INFORMED CONSENT

March 5, 1997

Dear Student:

At the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs we are conducting a survey to determine the most common reasons why our students decide to stay or discontinue studies at Utah State University. The objectives of this study are to evaluate the services we currently offer and determine areas that need improvement. We would also like to develop new ways of helping our students have a positive educational experience at Utah State. Your comments and suggestions will be greatly appreciated. Enclosed you will find a questionnaire designed for this purpose. Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire, then return it in the enclosed envelope. For your convenience, we are including a pencil so you can complete the survey right away.

Your answers will be kept confidential. As you will notice, your name does not appear in the questionnaire. Only a numerical code will be used to match mailed questionnaires to recipients. Independent scorers will read and keep track of the returned questionnaires. Only the research coordinator will have access to the list of names and codes. The information obtained will only be used for the purpose of this study. All records will be kept in a locked file cabinet inside our office, which is locked at the end of the day. Your participation or decision to be excluded will not affect your eligibility for services at Utah State, now or in the future. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (801) 797-1733. Our office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

I hope you will decide to assist us in this enterprise. Your opinion is very important. On behalf of the Multicultural Student Affairs staff, I would like to express our gratitude, and wish you the best of luck in your plans for the future. Please make sure you send us your response by March 17. Upon receipt of your completed questionnaire we will send you a token of our appreciation.

Sincerely,

April I. Spaulding
REP Program Director

Date
Active Student Questionnaire

Our records show that you are currently continuing your education at Utah State University. We would appreciate your comments regarding your decision to stay at Utah State University. Please fill out the following survey. Questions 13-23 should be answered by REP participants only. Use additional paper if needed. Your answers will be kept confidential.

1. Were you admitted as a freshman student? yes | no
2a. Did you transfer from a community college? yes | no
2b. Did you transfer from another four-year college or university? yes | no
3. Have you declared a major? yes | no
4a. Did you serve a church mission after coming to USU? yes | no
4b. Did you join the active military after coming to USU? yes | no
5. Have you completed your academic program? yes | no (go to 6a)
6. Are you planning to continue studies at USU? yes | no (go to 7)
6a. When do you expect to graduate? Quarter / Year

7. Please indicate your reasons (you may check more than one) for coming to USU:
   a. Quality of academic program
   b. Cost of tuition
   c. Recruited for specific academic program (e.g. Special Education, Engineering, etc.)
   d. Recruited for athletics team
   e. Offered an attractive financial aid package
   f. Campus size
   g. Like to, or want to live in Cache Valley
   h. Easy to access or close to home
   i. Wanted to live away from home
   j. The choice was made for me
   k. Other (Please specify)

8. What has motivated you to stay?

9. Which math classes have you taken at USU?

10. Do you go in for academic advising? If so, how many times per quarter?

Who is your academic advisor (department, college, or name)?

11. Are you a member of any campus organization? If so, which one(s)?

12. Would you recommend USU to other students? Why, or why not?

If you were not a participant of the R.E.P. program, please go to question 24.

QUESTIONS 13-23 SHOULD BE ANSWERED BY R.E.P. PARTICIPANTS ONLY.

13. Was the REP program helpful to you? ________ Why or why not?

14. How do you feel about the REP faculty (Carol Rosenthal, David Sul, Sonia Manuel-Dupont, Barbara Hall, Donna Bernhierl) that you interacted with?

15. How do you feel about the Multicultural Student Affairs staff you worked with?

16. What did you like best about REP?

17. What did you like the least?

18. What would you suggest to improve the program? Use additional space below, or additional paper if needed.

Please fill in the scale: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NA=Not Applicable, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

19. The MHR 116 (Life Skills - C. Rosenthal) course was helpful.

20. The PSY 173 (Survival) course was helpful.

21. Math support (workshops, tutoring) was adequate.

22. English 195 (Composition - D. Bernhierl) was helpful.

23. LAS 125 (Pathways to Knowledge - S. Manuel-Dupont) was helpful.

ALL STUDENTS

24. My ethnic background is: ___ Hispanic American ___ African American _ Native American ___ Asian American ___ Other: ___ Pacific Islander ___ sophomore ___ Other: ___ Native American ___ Asian American ___ Other: ___ Other: ___ Other:

25. I am currently a: ___ freshman ___ sophomore ___ junior ___ senior

26. My gender is: ___ Male ___ Female

27. Please indicate your age: ______

28. Additional Comments: (use additional paper if needed)

Thank you for your help!

In appreciation for participating in our study, we would like to send you a little present.
Please indicate your preference by checking one:

___ Big Blue T-shirt (white, size large only)

___ $5.00

___ Aggie Ice Cream certificate
Inactive Student Questionnaire

Our records show that you have not continued your education at Utah State University. We would appreciate your comments regarding your decision to leave Utah State University. Please fill out the following survey. Questions 13-23 should be answered by REP participants only. Use additional paper if needed. Your answers will be kept confidential.

1. Were you admitted as a freshman student? yes | no
2a. Did you transfer to a community college? yes | no
2b. Did you transfer to another four-year college or university? yes | no
3. Have you declared a major? yes | no
4a. Are you serving a church mission? yes | no
4b. Did you join the active military? yes | no
5. Did you complete your academic program? yes | (go to 6 a.)
6. Are you planning to continue studies at USU? yes | no (go to 6 a.)
6 a. Please indicate when you intend to return: ___ / ___
7. Please indicate your reasons (you may check more than one) for coming to USU:
   - a. Quality of academic program
   - b. Cost of tuition
   - c. Recruited for specific academic program (e.g. Special Education, Engineering, etc.)
   - d. Recruited for athletics team
   - e. Offered an attractive financial aid package
   - f. Campus size
   - g. Like to, or want to live in Cache Valley
   - h. Easy to access or close to home
   - i. Wanted to live away from home
   - j. The choice was made for me
   - k. Other (Please specify)
8. Please indicate your reason (you may check more than one) for leaving USU:
   - a. Financial
   - b. Found another academic program outside USU that better met my needs
   - c. Health (Physical/Mental)
   - d. Academic Problems
   - e. Disliked Cache Valley
   - f. Disliked Utah State
   - g. Other (Please specify)

*If you marked items c, e, or f, please let us know which of these, if any were related to your answer:
   - h. Limited cultural diversity in Logan
   - i. Limited or no access to preferred religion
   - j. Limited opportunities, and /or facilities for socializing
   - k. Could not adjust to the time constraints of a quarterly academic calendar
   - l. Academic major not what expected
   - m. Other
9. Which math classes did you take?
10. Did you go in for academic advising? If so, how many times per quarter?
Who was your academic advisor (department, college, or name)?
11. Did you join any campus organizations? If so, which ones?
12. Would you recommend USU to other students? Why, or why not?
If you were not a participant of the R.E.P. program, please go to question 24.
QUESTIONS 13-23 SHOULD BE ANSWERED BY R.E.P. PARTICIPANTS ONLY.

13. Was the REP program helpful to you? __________ Why or why not?

14. How do you feel about the REP faculty (Carol Rosenthal, David Sul, Sonia Manuel-Dupont, Barbara Hall, Donna Bemhisel) that you interacted with ?

15. How do you feel about the Multicultural Student Affairs staff you worked with?

16. What did you like best about R.E.P?

17. What did you like the least?

18. What would you suggest to improve the program? Use additional space below, or additional paper if needed.

Please fill in the scale: SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, NA=Not Applicable, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

19. The MHR 116 (Life Skills - C. Rosenthal) course was helpful.
20. The PSY 173 (Survival) course was helpful.
21. Math support (workshops, tutoring) was adequate.
22. English 195 (Ind. Writing Seminar - D. Bemhisel) was helpful.
23. LAS 125 (pathways to knowledge - S. Manuel-Dupont) was helpful.

ALL STUDENTS

24. My ethnic background is: __ Hispanic American __ African American
   __ Native American __ Asian American
   __ Pacific Islander __ Other __________

25. When I left USU I was a: __ freshman __ sophomore
   __ junior __ senior

26. My gender is: __ Male __ Female

27. Please indicate your age: __________

28. Additional Comments: (use additional paper if needed)

Thank you for your help!

In appreciation for participating in our study, we would like to send you a little present.
Please indicate your preference by checking one:
   __ Big Blue T-shirt (white, size large only)
   __ $5.00
   __ Aggie Ice Cream certificate
Active Student Questionnaire - Telephone version

Number: ________________________________

1. Were you admitted as a freshman student? 
   Yes  No

2a. Did you transfer from a community college? 
   Yes  No

2b. Did you transfer from another four-year college or university? 
   Yes  No

3. Have you declared a major? 
   Yes  No

4a. Did you serve a church mission after coming to USU? 
   Yes  No

4b. Did you join the active military after coming to USU? 
   Yes  No

5. Have you completed your academic program? 
   Yes  No (go to 6a)

6a. When do you expect to graduate? 
   Quarter Year _____________________________

6b. Are you planning to continue studies at USU? 
   Yes  No (go to 7)

7. What were your reasons for coming to USU? 
   (Let participant tell you, if other than specified, write in comments)
   - a. Quality of academic program
   - b. Cost of tuition
   - c. Recruited for specific academic program (e.g., Special Education, Civil Engineering, etc.)
   - d. Recruited for athletics team
   - e. Offered an attractive financial aid package
   - f. Campus size
   - g. Like to, or want to live in Cache Valley
   - h. Easy to access or close to home
   - i. Wanted to live away from home
   - j. The choice was made for me (parents, etc.)
   - k. Other (please specify)

8. What has motivated you to stay? (Write in comments, verbatim.) _____________________________

9. Which math classes have you taken at USU? (Doesn’t matter if passed or not)

10. Do you go in academic advising? 
    If no, skip to # 10b. If yes, go to 10a

10a. About how many times per quarter? ________________________________

10b. Who is your advisor? (college, department, major, or name are acceptable) _____________________________

11. Are you a member of any campus organization? 
    If no, skip to # 12. If yes, go to 11a

11a. Which one(s)? ______________________________________

12. Would you recommend USU to other students? 

12a. Why/why not? (Write in comments, verbatim.) _____________________________
Did you participate in the Realizing Educational Potential Program? If yes, go to question 13.

13. Was the REP program helpful to you? ________ Why or why not? (Write in comments, verbatim.)

14. How do you feel about the instructors who taught Life Skills (Carol Rosenthal), Math workshops (David Sul), English 195 (Donna Bernshisel), and LAS 125 (Sonia Manuel-Dupont & Barbara Hall) that you interacted with?

15. How do you feel about the Multicultural Student Affairs staff that you worked with?

16. What did you like best about REP?

17. What did you not like or like the least?

18. What would you suggest to improve the program?

Say: "Now I am going to read some statements to you. For these statements please tell me whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, the question is not applicable, you disagree, or you strongly disagree."

Read statement, mark an X in the grid.

19. The MHR 116 (Life management skills-Carol Rosenthal) course was helpful.

20. The PSY 173 (Survival) course was helpful.

21. The math support (tutoring/workshops) was adequate.

22. The English 195 (Independent Writing Seminar-D. Bernshisel) class was helpful.

23. The LAS 125 (pathways to knowledge-Sonia Manuel-Dupont) class was helpful.

Say: "We are almost done. All I need now is some descriptive information about yourself." Go to question 24.

24. What is your ethnic background? (Check all that apply)

- Hispanic American
- Native American
- Pacific Islander
- African American
- Asian American
- Other:

25. What is your student rank?

- freshman
- junior
- sophomore
- senior

26. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

27. How old are you?
28. Is there anything else you'd like to comment on that I haven't asked you about?
(Write in comments, verbatim.)

Say: "I would like to send you a little present for participating in the survey, so tell me, what would you prefer? (Read options, mark choice).

- Big Blue T-shirt (only white, only size large)
- $5.00
- Aggie Ice Cream certificate

Say: "Okay, you will receive your prize within the next three weeks. Please verify your mailing address for me."

Write down address.

Say: "Thank you very, very much for participating in this survey! Goodbye!"
# Inactive Student Questionnaire - Telephone version

Number: ____________

1. Were you admitted as a freshman student? | yes | no
2a. Did you transfer to a community college? | yes | no
2b. Did you transfer to another four-year college or university? | yes | no
3. Have you declared a major? | yes | no
4a. Are you serving a church mission? | yes | no
4b. Did you join the active military? | yes | no
5. Did you complete your academic program? | yes | no
6. Are you planning to continue studies at USU? | yes | (go to 6 a.) | no | (go to 7)
6 a. Please indicate when you intend to return: ___ / ___

Quarter Year

7. What were your reasons for coming to USU? (Let participant tell you, if other than specified, write in comments)
   a. Quality of academic program
   b. Cost of tuition
   c. Recruited for specific academic program (e.g., Special Education, Civil Engineering, etc.)
   d. Recruited for athletics team
   e. Offered an attractive financial aid package
   f. Campus size
   g. Like to or want to live in Cache Valley
   h. Easy to access or close to home
   i. Wanted to live away from home
   j. The choice was made for me (parents, etc.)
   k. Other (please specify)

8. Why did you leave Utah State? (Let participant tell you, if other than specified, write in comments)
   a. Financial
   b. Found another academic program outside USU that better met my needs
   c. Health (Physical/Mental)
   d. Academic Problems
   e. Disliked Cache Valley
   f. Disliked Utah State

Comments: ________________________________

*If they replied anything related to these reasons, please ask them to be more specific. Write in comments, and check if it had anything to do with these reasons:

   b. Limited cultural diversity in Logan
   1. Limited or no access to preferred religion
   j. Limited opportunities, and / or facilities for socializing
   k. Could not adjust to the time constraints of a quarterly academic calendar
   l. Academic major not what expected

Comments: ________________________________

9. Which math classes did you take?

10. Did you go in academic advising? | If no, skip to #11. If yes, go to 10 a
10a. About how many times per quarter?

Comments: ________________________________
10 b. Who was your academic advisor? (Department, college, major, or name are acceptable)

11. Did you join any campus organizations? ___________ If no, skip to #12. If yes, go to 11a
11 a. Which ones?

12. Would you recommend USU to other students? ___________  
12 a. Why, or why not? (Write in comments, verbatim.)

Did you participate in the Realizing Educational Potential Program? If yes, go to question 13. If no, go to question 24.  
(Write in comments, verbatim.)

13. Was the REP program helpful to you? ___________ Why or why not? (Write in comments, verbatim.)

14. How do you feel about the instructors who taught Life Skills (Carol Rosenthal), Math workshops (David Sul), English 195 (Doruc Bernhnet), and LAS 125 (Sonia Manuel-Dupont & Barbara Hall) that you interacted with?

15. How do you feel about the Multicultural Student Affairs staff that you worked with?

16. What did you like best about REP?

17. What did you not like or like the least?

18. What would you suggest to improve the program?

Say: "Now I am going to read some statements to you. For these statements Please tell me whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, the question is not applicable, you disagree, or you strongly disagree."
Read statement, mark an x in the grid.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NA=Not Applicable, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

19. The MHR 116 (Life management skills-Carol Rosenthal) course was helpful.
20. The PSY 173 (Survival) course was helpful.
21. The math support (tutoring/ workshops) was adequate.
22. The English 195 (Independent Writing Seminar - Bernhiset) class was helpful.
23. The LAS 125 (pathways to knowledge/Sonia Martin-Dupont) class was helpful.

Say: “We are almost done. All I need now is some descriptive information about yourself.” Go to question 24.

24. What is your ethnic background? (Check all that apply)
   ____ Hispanic American
   ____ Native American
   ____ Pacific Islander
   ____ African American
   ____ Asian American
   ____ Other

25. What is your student rank?
   ____ freshman
   ____ sophomore
   ____ junior
   ____ senior

26. What is your gender?
   ____ Male
   ____ Female

27. How old are you?

28. Is there anything else you’d like to comment on that I haven’t asked you about?
   (Write in comments, verbatim.)

Say: “I would like to send you a little present for participating in the survey, so tell me, what would you prefer? (Read options, mark choice).

   ____ Big Blue T-shirt (only white, only size large)
   ____ $5.00
   ____ Aggie Ice Cream certificate

Say: “Okay, you will receive your prize within the next three weeks. Please verify you mailing address for me.”

Write down address.

Say: “Thank you very, very much for participating in this survey! Goodbye!”
Appendix B

Interview Guide

1) Dial number. If answered by voice mail, say:

"This is a message for _____________.
(participant name)
My name is ____________ and I am
calling from Utah State University to follow up on a
questionnaire that was sent to you several weeks ago.
If possible, please call me at 797-1733
and let me know what time is more convenient to
do this, or if you do not wish to participate.
Thank you for your help."

2) If answer, introduce yourself:

"Good (afternoon, evening)! My name is ____________,
and I am calling from Utah State University. May I speak
to (participant name)?"

3) State purpose of call. Say:

"The university is conducting a study about the reasons why
minority students remain active or decide to leave USU.
I would like to take a few minutes to ask your opinion
about this. (emphasize) Your answers will be completely
confidential, and will not be used to identify you or harm
you in any way. Your opinion and comments, along with
those of other participants, will be used to improve the
student services currently offered. We are offering a
small reward to those who participate. Is this a good
time to talk about this, or would you prefer to have me
call you back at a more convenient time?"

If okay, go to 6.

4) If not participating, say:

"I understand. Your information will be removed from the
study, as requested. Thank you for your time, and have a good
(afternoon, evening). Good bye!"
Appendix C

Approval from the Institutional Review Board

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kenneth Merrell
    Frances Touss

FROM: Sally Maxwell, Secretary to the IRB

SUBJECT: A Preliminary Evaluation of The Students Realizing Educational Potential Program at Utah State University

The above-referenced proposal has been reviewed by this office and is exempt from further review by the Institutional Review Board. The IRB appreciates researchers who recognize the importance of ethical research conduct. While your research project does not require a signed informed consent, you should consider (a) offering a general introduction to your research goals, and (b) informing, in writing or through oral presentation, each participant as to the rights of the subject to confidentiality, privacy or withdrawal at any time from the research activities.

The research activities listed below are exempt from IRB review based on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human research subjects, 45 CFR Part 46, as amended to include provisions of the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, June 18, 1991.

2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through the identifiers linked to the subjects; and (b) any disclosure of human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research is exempt from further review based on exemption number 2. Please keep the committee advised of any changes, adverse reactions or termination of the study. A yearly review is required of all proposals submitted to the IRB. We request that you advise us when this project is completed, otherwise we will contact you in one year from the date of this letter.