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Correlation of Conditional Admittance and Student Achievement in an Undergraduate Higher Education Setting

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Correlation of Conditional Admittance and Student Achievement in an Undergraduate Higher Education Setting.

by

Joe Parisi

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Higher Education Setting

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This dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Doctor of Education at Lindenwood University by the Education Division.

	3/9/2012
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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my scholarly work here at Lindenwood University, and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Joseph A. Parisi Date: 3-9-12

Signature:

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Abstract

This paper explores several research questions that identify differences between conditionally admitted students and regularly admitted students in terms of achievement results at one institution. The research provides specific variables as well as relationships including historical and comparative aggregate data from 2009 and 2010 that indicate evidence related to student achievement. This paper examined several research questions related to any possible differences between conditional admission and student achievement. This was a quantitative study that provided results indicating that the conditional admit population ended with a first-year overall institutional Grade Point Average in the 70th percentile and the regularly admitted population ended with a first-year Grade Point Average in the 80th percentile.

Although much speculation has been devoted to concerns over the success of conditional admit programs, there exists a lack of current empirical data documenting the extent, if it exists, of the success or failure of conditionally admitted students. This study was designed to investigate evidence of the existence, persistence, and degree of success by monitoring a sample of 519 conditionally admitted students over 2 years. Investigation of student grade point averages and college entrance examination results were compared, co-curricular participation, and academic enrichment and support were investigated.

In the last two years significant changes were implemented in the day admissions program. First, admissions standards increased, and second, the implementation of the conditional admissions contract. In addition, the level of academic intervention and support provided from the Office of First Year programs and Office of Student and

Academic Support Services largely contributed to the success of the 2.0 benchmark. There was a 10% increase in the number of conditional admits that academically fell into the GPA range of 2.0 or higher from 2009 and 2010, and a 14% increase between the years of 2008 and 2010. Furthermore, the increase in the overall percentage is a clear indication that the conditional admit intervention programs continues to improve in addressing the individual needs of those admitted on a conditional basis. Results included evidence that the academic success rates are higher for students that are regularly admitted versus those that are conditionally admitted.

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Chapter One

General Background

Given the state of the American economy in 2011, many students are unable to find employment directly upon graduation from high school resulting in a larger number of students applying to colleges to obtain a higher education. Even in the midst of an economic downturn, students who have a college education are far more likely to find employment versus their high school-educated counterparts (Carnevale, 2011). These two converging contemporary realities challenge institutions of higher education to consider a larger number of underprepared applicants than in recent decades, as indicated in *Admissions Decision-Making Models: How U.S. Institutions of Higher Education Select Undergraduate Students* (College Board Best Practices in Admissions Decisions, 2002). Hoxby (2009) indicated in a 2009 study that the top 10% of colleges and universities were becoming more selective and 50% of colleges and universities were less selective in their admissions criteria. In the face of this challenge, the Researched University employs conditional admittance as one of many valuation tools to broaden applicant assessment. The purpose of this study is to research a possible relationship between conditional admittance and student achievement at a private four year Liberal Arts University located in the Midwest. This study used a student cohort model to make comparisons of academic performance between conditionally admitted students and students admitted via standard admittance criteria to provide data by which the Researched University may then use to develop best practices in its admissions decisions. These decisions are derived from all documents submitted in the admissions portfolio including, but not limited to, essay, resume, letters of recommendation, high school transcripts, and standardized test scores. In the researcher's experience no one item is a predictor of student success, but admissions personnel at the researched institution use all of the above to gauge entry - level success.

The researcher explored variables related to student achievement and the direct correlation resulting from insufficient grade point average or standardized test scores. Analysis of at least two years of conditionally admitted students provided a significant change in data statistically significant population to determine if admission decisions meet the success of conditionally admitted students. This study examined in depth the reasons for conditional admission and a statistical analysis of student achievement. The researcher intended to analyze the reliability of the conditional admissions program and specific rationale that correlate with student achievement.

This comparative analysis examined if a relationship existed between regular and conditionally admitted students who participated in co-curricular programs, such as Intercollegiate Athletics and Student Life Sports (SLS) programs, and those who did not participate in co-curricular programs. Moreover, the researcher analyzed the first time freshman population and the transfer student population to identify potential differences in achievement patterns, and to understand if conditionally admitted freshman or transfers succeeded at a higher rate.

This study identified potential threats, or areas of weakness, concerning the admissibility of students and the accessibility of data that can be utilized in the admissions decision-making process at the Researched University. For the purposes of this study, the researched university defined conditional admittance as the admission of any student who falls below the standard admission requirements of a cumulative high school grade point average (GPA) of a 2.5 and a 20 composite score on the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) concordance (Academic Process and Standards minutes, 2010).

Through the researcher's experience as Dean of a Day Admissions program, college admissions representatives regularly perform more duties than just serving as "gatekeepers" for their higher learning institutions. In the opinion of the researcher, the offices of undergraduate admissions at other institutions generally view the college decision-making process as one of the most important decisions that high school students will ever make rather than an outcome of admissibility into the institution. However, the researcher's experience has led to the conclusion that at other universities, the office of admissions determines admissibility and then wishes the student "best of luck" on finding a major or identifying a financial aid strategy that is going to be conducive for the student or family. At the researched institution, the process of admissions includes advising from faculty and meeting to discuss the possibilities of a financial aid package (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010). From the researcher's perspective, a focus on building relationships from the onset, can serve as a catalyst and support during the initial student transition into university life and extend well beyond the students four-year experience. Instead of viewing the process of college admissions as a game to win, the researched university values the importance of hard work throughout the prospective student's elementary and secondary school careers. Based on the researched institution's Presidential Investiture in 2007, admissions procedures were changed to provide students and admissions personnel a road map for admissibility based on information found within the application for admission.

As the researched university's Dean of Admissions, the researcher was fortunate to work with the institution's President on defining admissions portfolio necessities that include all transcripts outlining all academic coursework and credentials including cumulative GPA's, college entrance exams and standardized test scores and rigor of the high school curriculum completed. The college essay is an outline inclusive of a student's desired goals and success principles the student plans on utilizing to achieve his or her undergraduate degree. Finally, applicants submit letters of recommendation from teachers, professors, and administrators as addendums to the application, providing additional references on academic ability, work ethic, and character. The Admissions Office then utilizes these documents to determine the student's admissibility, ability to achieve desired coursework, and inception of the student's initial portfolio for the academic institution (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

In the researcher's experience, students with admissible grades and term GPAs of 2.5 or higher, no matter what the course, provide a foundational indication that a student has completed the necessary requirements for course completion, high school graduation, and ultimately college admittance. In admission discussions with aspiring applicants, students have expressed to the researcher that some courses are easier than others, although there is no way to control or evaluate these specific differences. Students have also expressed that they take the courses that are most rigorous even if it means receiving a grade less than an A, with the possibility that grade inflation could become a contributing factor to the student's overall GPA. From the researchers' perspective, the mission of higher education is to prepare students for life, not to be awarded the top financial aid award or to be a part of a chosen co-curricular activity. These are secondary variables that should not be superseded by the passion to invest in lifelong learning in the students major of choice.

O'Shaughnessy (2009) reported that any specific lowering of the SAT or ACT standards could provide implications for enrollment management. O'Shaughnessy indicated, that "with colleges and universities engaged in intense competition to recruit even more talented and diverse students, test optional policies becoming alluring" (2009, p. 1). The researched university does utilize standardized testing in the admissions decision making process, and the researcher feels that standardized tests provide an indication of college readiness at a minimal level. However, not all universities do so.

An additional quote in the O'Shaughnessy article indicated "Evidence suggests there are also marketing and competitive issues at play," said Jonathan P. Epstein, a senior consultant at Maguire Associates specializing in enrollment and admissions (2009, page 1). Epstein is alluding to the fact that school will advertise and market testing optional policies in order to lure students to apply and ultimately increase the total matriculation of students. Epstein also stated that, "After three beers and in a private moment, schools might acknowledge it" (O'Shaughnessy, 2009, p. 1). This is an affirmation that suggests schools do not want to fully disclose admissibility procedures or references to conditionally admitted students.

Based on the researcher's experience, conditional admission is a common practice utilized in higher education admissions decisions at colleges and universities alike. At the researched institution, the goal is to find ways to admit a qualified student rather than encouraging them to apply, only to deny admission. If a student is not admissible at the time of application, a denial of admission is sent requesting the student to complete at least 24 transferable hours at a community college. Upon successful completion, the student can re-apply to the researched university (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

In order to understand strategic enrollment practices, based on cataloged statements, the researched institution “consciously seeks a diverse student body and welcomes applicants from all socioeconomic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds” (Researched University, Undergraduate Catalog, 2010-2011, p. 8). The researched university also values geographical diversity and welcomes international students to the campus resulting in over 82 different countries being represented (Researched University, Undergraduate Catalog, 2010-2011, p. 8). The office of international admissions adheres to these same principles of good practice to enroll a diverse and qualified student body.

In order to maintain admissions protocol, the office of Day Admissions evaluates student prospects who have applied on a strictly individual basis. The researched institution’s catalog recommends at least 16 units of high school study in core academic areas, where one year in a particular subject equals an academic unit, and no single academic preparation is required; however, a university preparatory curriculum is preferred (Researched University, Undergraduate Catalog, p. 18, 2010-2011). Therefore, the researched institution’s catalog suggests that “a student’s high school record should reflect study of English for four years and two or three years of natural science, mathematics, and social studies” with a recommended two years of foreign language and fine or performing arts (Researched University, Undergraduate Catalog, p. 18, 2010-2011). The researched institution may accept applicants whose academic performance is at or above levels of acceptance by the completion of their sixth or seventh semesters, provided that the applicants complete all high school graduation requirements prior to class attendance at the university. A final transcript showing all grades and final terms completed are required for final submission, after high school graduation, and must include the graduation date (Researched University, Undergraduate Catalog, p. 18, 2010-2011).

The researched university and the Office of Admissions may admit prospective student applicants on a conditional basis even though they fail to meet full admission requirements. The Dean of Day Admissions will admit students above a certain threshold, and the applications that fall below that threshold must be approved by the Academic Standards and Process committee (ASPC). Conditional admission into the researched university always includes individual evaluation portfolios completed by the admissions personnel and reviewed for admissibility by the Dean of Day Admissions. In some cases, the Dean of Day Admissions enlists in the aid of the Institutional Academic Standards and Processes Committee to provide recommendations of admissibility (Minutes from ASPC September 21, 2009). An applicant may be offered admission to the undergraduate program, under a conditional status with a contractual agreement for meeting predetermined requirements; submission of high school or college transcripts, a personal essay on why and how the student feels success will be achieved at the researched institution, and a minimum of three letters of recommendation from teachers or administrators who can speak on the student's academic ability (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010). This is similar to the regular admissions portfolio with the exception that the previous statement is recommended for regular admits and required for conditional admits. Conditional admission to the researched university is determined using a combination of interim and final grades gathered from the high school or community college transcripts, with specific conditions attached and contingent upon the approval of the Dean of Day Admissions (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

Once the Admissions Office awards Conditional Admittance, the conditional admit must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA above a 2.0, with no grade below "C", or remain in good academic standing as established by the provost and achieve results stated in the conditional admission contract (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010). If accepted, these applicants are required to sign and follow all stipulations as set forth in the conditional acceptance contract that includes one or all of the following stipulations: developmental coursework, mentoring contract indicating several options for success, probationary semester/year, course load maximum, and a minimum GPA required for continued attendance (Researched University, Conditional Admissions Contract 2010). In the researcher’s opinion, starting in 2010, the specific stipulations have provided effective communication in the conditional admission process and provided a high level of support and service to the opportunity-based admissions program. This contract also allows for specific weaknesses to be addressed and how academic intervention will be supported throughout the duration of the contract.

Prior to the beginning of the semester, a list is requested from the office of Day Admissions indicating all conditionally admitted students. Academic schedules are reviewed by the Student Services department to make sure course load and chosen courses are reasonable and manageable. Student files are made along with individual tracking sheets to monitor all correspondence and communication. Students are contacted prior to the start of the semester to introduce the Student Services program to the student as a resource for assistance. During the second week of the semester, schedules are reviewed once again to make sure total number of hours and chosen courses still look reasonable and manageable after the deadline to add/drop a course. Student Support Service members will contact the students to “check in” and to see how students are managing their new coursework. After four- week grades are submitted and distributed, the Student Services department reviews four -week grades of the conditional admits and contacts all students. For students showing no deficiencies, they call to encourage the students to “keep up the good work” and to see if there are any questions or concerns. For Conditionally Admitted students who are showing deficiencies, the researched university contacts the student about why there are deficiencies, offer resources for assistance, and includes if needed an adjustment to a student’s schedule. After midterm grades are submitted and distributed, the Student Services department reviews midterm grades of the Conditionally Admitted students and follows a similar approach to that of four- week grades. For students who show deficiencies at four- week and at midterm, the admissions office makes a request for the conditionally admitted students to meet personally with a Student Services staff member for face-to-face mentoring. Face-to-face mentoring gives Student Support Services an opportunity to learn more about the situation and to coach the student through behavioral changes and direct students to any additional resources. At the end of the semester, final grades are reviewed. For students earning above a 2.0, the Student Services department will call and congratulate them on a successful semester and for those students who’s GPA has fallen below a 2.0, the Student services department will contact those students about weekly mentoring and schedule adjustments for the following semester. For Conditionally admitted students who are committee approved, the office of student services contacts those students personally. Once they receive the list of committee approved Conditional admits, they contact the students to introduce the staff and program to discuss and make any schedule changes when needed.

During the first week of the semester, the office of student services will make contact with the student to set up weekly mentoring visits to talk through concerns or obstacles. After the students have received their course syllabi, a meeting occurs to discuss the level of course difficulty and the need for a schedule adjustment for student success. During the first two weeks of the semester, conditionally admitted students are asked to meet with Peer Mentors about time management and study strategy. Every week after the peer mentor, success advisor, and the student discuss course progress and students who need additional resources are referred to tutors and possible counseling. Grades are reviewed the same as the conditionally admitted students who are admitted through admissions. Students who have chosen not to participate in the program and who are performing poorly are recommended for dismissal.

The researcher believes that the main duty of admissions in regards to first time students is to assist these students as they enter into the university. Therefore, the duty is to introduce these students to opportunities for academic assistance available on campus. Through experience, the researcher has found that admission programs should be diligent in informing conditional admits of what is available to them on campus; many of these students are not familiar with the researched institution and its programs. The researcher believes that admissions services must make the gateway to transition as smooth as possible. This can be accomplished by talking one-on-one with students about the researched institutions programs, mailers, emailing, and posting information on the university website, and on Facebook.

To be successful, the researcher's experience has shown that conditionally admitted students require a support system to be successful. One of the initial findings of this study indicated that there were several disconnects throughout the institution to support the progression of the conditionally admitted student. Initially, the researcher discovered a possible disconnect on the front side of the admissions process and worked with the academic standards and policy committee to develop a conditional admissions contract. This contract is presented in Appendix D and helped establish parameters of the conditional admissions process and how it would be constructed for each individual student. This contract was an agreement between the student, the academic advisor, the success mentor, and the Dean of Admissions, and helped to establish needed parameters or requirements for the success of each student (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

In addition, the researched institution houses the Office of First-Year Programs which houses the First-Year Experience (FYE) program for the First-Time Freshman (FTF) that provides education on time management, study skills, tutorial availability, math and writing center accessibility, and focuses on academic success. The researched institution also houses a student success center to provide direct impact not only to the conditional admission students, but to the general population as well. This is an integrated philosophy that includes; mandatory progress reports, update attendance rosters, designated tutorials, and student workshops to enhance learning and achievement. The FYE program recognizes that there are many variables that contribute to the success or failure of both regularly admitted and conditionally admitted students and strives to support the needs of all admitted students. Moreover, if a student is struggling in the classroom, in co-curricular participation, or life in general the FYE program serves to foster success principles and resources that will serve the student body (Researched University Student Handbook, 2010).

Problem Statement

Each college has its own admission criteria to determine the best fit as indicated in the respective institutional catalogs. In the researcher’s experience, just as each company or organization may have its own unique method of selecting employees, each college may have its own way of determining admissibility and the best fit of institutional candidacy, having a unique formula depending on the character of the university. Even when colleges implement admissions quotas and strategic recruitment goals, the researcher has found in his role as Dean of Admissions that those students admitted under established standards still must prove themselves by being able to complete their chosen curriculum according to the college’s standards each term and matriculate into graduation.

In this researcher’s opinion, it is a common misconception that only enrollment-driven institutions have conditional admit programs. In the researcher’s experience, merit and need-based financial aid is frequently used to meet university recruitment goals. In the researcher’s experience, applying as a conditional admit to smaller private colleges and universities is just as extensive, if not more extensive, than applying to larger universities. In the researcher’s experience, it seems that the number of conditional offers increase reciprocally as enrollment goals rise to meet or exceed rising enrollment standards. The researched institution is a medium sized private institution that services 6000 traditional undergraduate students and 17,000 students overall (The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, [IPEDS], 2010).

The Chronicle of Higher Education, in an article from Supiano in 2011, published a report by the College Board, indicating that the tuition discount rate, defined as "average institutional gift aid per student divided by the sticker price of tuition and fees" (Supiano, 2011, p. 1), has dropped slightly at public colleges, but has risen among private colleges. This can, in part, be due to the uncertainty of the American economy and enrollment goals of institutions of higher learning. In the researcher's experience, the vast majority of evidence points to the latter; merit and need-based financial aid have become increasingly used as an advantage to meet recruitment goals. Many universities make the claim of economic diversity, but few see it as a real enrollment priority so, in tuition discounting and awarding financial aid, the goal is higher standardized test scores, GPAs and other items that will help schools increase their peer-reviewed rankings (Jaschik & Kiley, 2011).

In some cases, if the university is fortunate to have applications from highly qualified students who meet merit-based scholarships criteria, they may have to adjust budgetary resources to accommodate. In the researcher's experience, peer-reviewed rankings, such as *U.S. News and World Report* do not account for grade inflation or financial aid leveraging; however, over the last 50 years, grade inflation at private colleges has risen by 0.1 per decade, and the average GPA for private colleges is 3.3 compared to the public entities at 3.0 (Rampell, 2010). Rampell suggested that it is important to understand that students, conditionally or regularly admitted, choose colleges and universities based on these rankings without any regard to success or retention. These rankings can be derived from admissions criteria that are established to determine the admissibility of a student. In some cases, schools may use Grade Point Average (GPA) and Standardized Testing ratings solely to determine the admissibility of a student. Kretchmar (2006) stated

> to facilitate the process of evaluating each and every applicant in a relatively short amount of time, schools often devise quantitative ratings scales to summarize student characteristics. The ratings give readers a shorthand way to communicate the qualities of each student, and sometimes play a critical role in determining whether or not a student is offered admission. (p. 2)

The researcher believes that this criterion can only touch on college readiness at a minimal level. In the researcher's experience, supporting documents that are sent to the institution help assist the admissions personnel in making recommendations for admissibility. For example, if a student has solid letters of recommendation from teachers that can attest to the candidate's ability to perform and attain established benchmarks, this is a positive indicator of past performance that the GPA does not necessarily indicate. In addition, an experiential resume that is submitted to support the application for admission will outline work experiences and positions in academic clubs or organizations. This will also provide a timeline for work completed and a story of success for the positions held, accolades achieved, and experiences that represent a hard working student that goes above and beyond the call of duty. In some cases, in the researcher's experience, these students have proven to be well rounded in nature and show an ability to multitask, problem solve, and to recover from setbacks and disappointments. These experiences allow the student to build the necessary skills for future success. Furthermore, the researcher believes the college essay, which describes a significant situation that has impacted the student's life, or why the student feels they will be successful in a college curriculum, establishes an entrance point on the student's ability to communicate in writing. The college essay simultaneously provides admissions personnel a better framework to learn more about the student than GPA or standardized test scores. Kretchmar (2006) ends his study on the reliability concerning the process of admissions rating systems with this thought:

> Regardless of how rating scales are used in particular admission offices—whether simply as a shorthand way for admission personnel to communicate with one another about applicants or more centrally in the decision-making process—they should not be used without some investment of time. (p. 6)

The college admissions process has been the object of scrutiny, both from academia and in the popular press (Rigol, 2002). This interest owes in part to the strategic nature of college admissions offices and schools that competitively set admissions standards to attract the best students, and the students, in turn, respond most judiciously in making their application decisions (Chade, Lewis, & Smith, 2009). Based on the researcher's experience, the competitive market of higher education today combined with a time of economic uncertainty breeds a higher application yield for many colleges and universities. Institutions of higher learning could benefit from enlisting the aid of faculty by combining educational school goals and objectives to recruit the best and brightest. Faculty engagement in the recruitment process can provide additional insight and strategy possibly not considered from admissions and marketing personnel. Unlike any investment in the American economy, education seems to have positive results when compared to other forms of investments. In a down economy, the option to improve individual situations through education yields higher results than monetary investments. However, the researcher believes, institutions need to produce strategic recruitment campaigns that manufacture record enrollments and a higher revenue producing program simultaneously providing a stratification plan concerning institutional funding geared towards merit and need based aid. In essence, when enrollment increases revenue increases as well. The researcher has found that the higher application yield due to the economy and recruitment strategy embraces the idea of selectivity when choosing applicants who have an opportunity to be successful at the institution. The College Board (2002) initiated the admissions models project to compare and contrast admissions programs across the country, and the management of assets indicated the reality of economics and admissions decisions which take into account a student’s ability to pay. Supiano (2010) stated "it's unclear whether the shift is the result of institutional policies, or other factors, like rising tuition prices and declining ability to pay." All evidence in the researcher’s experience points to the latter. The researcher has found that financial aid has become increasingly used as a leverage tool to meet recruitment goals, and that philosophy has been used to provide economic sustainability for the researched institution. Many colleges and universities may reference the usage of economic diversity, but few see it as a real enrollment priority. In the researcher’s experience concerning tuition discounting, the emphasis is placed on higher composite standard test scores and other variables, such as GPA, that will help institutions increase ratings in the peer reviewed US news and World Report rankings. If the high academic achiever that merit scholarships are targeted for have need, the researcher's experience has shown it could draw additional state and federal funding, but if they don't, they're still going to get their scholarship award, and as a result, the institution might have recruited a student that could potentially be an alumni donor in the future.

Conditional admission at the researched university is a continual agenda item and topic of discussion at several faculty committees and councils (Minutes from Retention Meeting, January 14, 2010, p. 2). Questions formulated from the researched institution comprised from faculty committees and included the Student Retention Task Force, Faculty Task Force on Student Recruitment, the Academic Standards and Processes Committee (APSC), and the Educational Policies Committee. Based on a fall, 2009 meeting with the Academic Standards and Processes Committee, members voiced concerns regarding academic success of the conditional admit program (Minutes from APSC, 2009). In addition, the Student Retention Task Force members requested specific population data on the conditional admit population showing success and retention or failure on at least two years of conditionally admitted students from the researched institution (Minutes from Retention Meeting, January 14, 2010). As of fall 2010, there continued to be concerns from the aforementioned committees that conditional admissions programs did not meet the academic mission of the researched institution (Minutes from APSC, 2009). Based on the researcher's experience, the concept of conditional admittance is often misconstrued as a system that forecasts academic deficiency and future academic failure, which relegates faculty and committee concerns back to the admissions office. This study will assist the researched institution in determining the degree to which conditional admission contributes to student achievement and identifying factors pertinent to the academic success or failure of the traditional undergraduate student. Prior to this study, the researcher discovered that there was a need to research and provide data that supports faculty concerns on admitting a student who falls just below institutional standard admissibility criteria. The researcher is recommending that other institutions conduct similar studies to see if their processes and procedures are successful.

Overview of Methodology

The quantitative research study investigated if there is a relationship between conditional admittance standards and student achievement. The researcher analyzed the possibility of differences between student achievement measured by standardized test scores and the student's GPA, type of student (transfer students versus freshman), and athletes versus non-athletes. In the fall of 2008, the researched institution had a leadership transformation including a change in the standards for admissibility, into the institution (Minutes from Presidents Council, 2008). Based on an institutional Presidential decision, the development of new standards changed the admissions criteria to include a minimum of a 2-point composite increase on the ACT and a .5 increase in the GPA hoping to attract a higher caliber student to the institution and theoretically recruit students who were more prepared. Since the inception of the new admission standards, the researcher believes that the success of both the conditional admit and regular admit populations are increasing. The continual speculation from institutional committees and administration regarding this topic supports the need for this study (Minutes from APSC, 2009). The results of this research will add to the body of knowledge in the area of higher education conditional undergraduate admittance and student achievement while providing the researched university the opportunity to use data-driven decision making to address admittance criteria for the future. Collected data included the following: the success of conditionally admitted students and regularly admitted students, co-curricular students and general students, transfer students and first time freshman, resident and commuter students. Specific statistical analysis will determine data related to GPAs and standardized test scores and correlations between the status of these students and achievement.

Research Questions

1. What are the differences between the academic performances of students who are conditionally admitted as compared to those who meet the regular admissions requirements?
2. What academic admission standards of conditionally admitted students most accurately project success during the first full year of school?
3. What are the differences between academic performances of conditionally admitted students based on class status (First time freshman versus Transfer or Re-admit)?
4. Does supportive intervention, provided after admittance, lead to increased student achievement?

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis # 1: There is no difference in the overall Grade Point Average between conditionally admitted and regularly admitted students

Alternate Hypothesis # 1: There is a difference in the overall Grade Point Average between conditionally admitted and regularly admitted students

Null Hypothesis # 2: There is no relationship between the standardized assessments used in admission determination (ACT and SAT conversion score) and the student achievement of conditionally admitted students after the completion of two semesters of continuous enrollment (GPA).

Alternate Hypothesis # 2: There is a relationship between standardized assessments used in admission determination (ACT and SAT conversion score) and student achievement of conditionally admitted students after the completion of two semesters of continuous enrollment (GPA).

Null Hypothesis # 3: There is no difference in Grade Point Average between residential conditionally admitted students and commuter conditionally admitted students.

Alternate Hypothesis # 3: There is a difference in Grade Point Average between residential conditionally admitted students and commuter conditionally admitted students.

Null Hypothesis # 4: There is no difference in Grade Point Average between those conditionally admitted students involved in co-curricular activities and those who are not.

Alternate Hypothesis # 4: There is a difference in Grade Point Average between those conditionally admitted students involved in co-curricular activities and those who are not.

Null Hypothesis # 5: There is no difference in Grade Point Average between conditionally admitted transfer students and conditionally admitted first time freshmen.

Alternate Hypothesis # 5: There is a difference in Grade Point Average between conditionally admitted transfer students and conditionally admitted first time freshmen.

Null hypothesis # 6: There is no difference in mean proportion between conditionally admitted and regularly admitted students represented in four researcher defined Grade Point Average categories.

Alternate hypothesis # 6: There is a difference in mean proportion between conditionally admitted and regularly admitted students represented in four researcher defined Grade Point Average categories.

Null Hypothesis # 7: There is no difference in Grade Point Average between conditionally admitted students entering during academic year 2008-2009 and those admitted during academic year 2009-2010.

Alternate Hypothesis # 7: There is a difference in Grade Point Average between conditionally admitted students entering during academic year 2008-2009 and those admitted during academic year 2009-2010.

Terms and Definitions

Academic Standards and Processes Committee (ASPC) - The principal responsibility of the Academic Standards Committee is to provide advice and counsel to the University's faculty and administration on matters related to adherence to the stated academic standards of the University. Further, the committee reviews and audits the procedures being used to ensure quality as well as the results of those procedures and renders recommendations and solutions to the Provost (hereinafter referred to as the VP-AA) for particular cases

> in which interpretation of academic policy is needed. The ASPC complements the Educational Policies Committee (EPC) by monitoring and ensuring implementation of the academic quality guidelines formulated by the EPC and suggesting changes in academic policy and practices to the EPC. (Faculty Committee Handbook pg. 52, 2010)

American College Test (ACT) – According to ACT.org, the ACT is a national college admissions examination that consists of subject area tests in: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. (ACT, November 8, 2010)

College Readiness Standards - Successful indicators of a student's individual ability to perform in college level curriculum**.** Preliminary testing leads up to scores earned in early testing procedures such as EXPLORE®, PLAN®, and lead up to the national ACT® assessment. (ACT, November 8, 2010)

Comprehensive Academic Management System (CAMS) - Completely integrated and 100% web-based academic enterprise resource planning solution. The software helps colleges and universities of all sizes and types communicate with their prospective students, current students, faculty, and alumni through portals, and manage the entire student lifecycle -- admissions, registration, student records, financial aid, fiscal management, HR/payroll, fundraising management, and alumni relations. Built with pure Microsoft technologies, CAMS Enterprise™ ensures compatibility, efficient use of resources, scalability, and complete automation (Three Rivers, 2009).

Conditional Admit (CA) - Student who falls below the regular admit standards in either category (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

DocuWare - Institutional computerized storage baskets for certified documents (Docuware, 2009).

English as Second Language (ESL) –

ESL is an acronym that is used primarily in educational settings and stands for English as a Second Language. It refers to teaching English to a person who's native or primary language is one other than English. Education laws in the United States require schools to provide ESL instruction in the classroom to any and all enrolled students whose primary language is not English. (Researched University, Undergraduate Catalog; Department of English Preparedness, 2011-2012, p. 58)

Faculty Student Recruitment Task Force (FSRT) - When needed, at the researched institution, task forces are created to discuss and recommend policy. A task force is usually in place for at least one semester and typically remains active for up to two years. The FSRT was created in the summer of 2009 and has been in existence since its inception without any plans to discontinue efforts (Faculty Committee Handbook, 2010).

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) – A federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's academic records, social records, and identities. This applies to all schools that receive funds issued by the Department of Education (US Department of Education, 2010).

First-Year Programs - First-Year Experience (FYE) - The Office of First–Year Programs provides first-year students with the support and resources needed to be academically and socially successful at the researched University. This office facilitates a retention and preparation program for first-year students, includes necessary skills to be successful such as time management, and study skills. This program helps engage, mentor, and acclimatize students into the first year of their college experience. This is a mandatory program for all traditional undergraduate students who are attending college for the first time and transfer students with fewer than 24 credits.

Grade Point Average (GPA) - GPA is calculated by dividing the total amount of grade points earned by the total amount of credit hours attempted. A grade point average may range from 0.0 to an 11.0 depending on the school district's scale (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

Graduate Record Examination (GRE) – A standardized test that consists of two separate graduate admissions tests: the General Test and the Subject Test in psychology. The General Test is composed of three parts--verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing (GRE, November 8, 2010).

Higher Education – The United States code defines higher education as (a) a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate, or persons who meet the requirements of section 1091 (d) (3) of this title; (b) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education; (c) provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree, or awards a degree that is acceptable for admission to a graduate or professional degree program, subject to review and approval by the Secretary; (d) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and (e) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of pre accreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time (Title 20, 1001 of the United States Code, 2011).

Institutional Bring - The amount of funding a student pays to attend (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

Institutional Give - The amount of funding the institution awards in financial aid (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

Matriculation - The total number of students who start at the next term of institutional enrollment (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Eligibility Center – NAIA.org, defines the NAIA Eligibility Center as; responsible for determining the NAIA eligibility of first-time student-athletes. Any student playing NAIA sports for the first time must meet the eligibility requirements. Students must have their eligibility determined by the NAIA Eligibility Center, and all NAIA schools are bound by the center's decisions (NAIA.org, 2010).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Clearinghouse/Eligibility Center - The NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse has changed the official name from the NCAA Clearinghouse to the NCAA Eligibility Center. This is the certifying process for athletic eligibility for all high school and college students who want to register and play at an NCAA institution and includes three divisions—Division I, II, and III. The Eligibility Center reviews each student athlete’s academic records and standardized test scores in conjunction with each division's academic standards to participate according to NCAA rules (NCAA, 2010).

Persistence - The property of a continuous and connected period of time in college making progression to the end result of graduation regardless of the number of institutions attended.

Regular Admit (RA) - Students that have a cumulative 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale and a 20 composite score on the ACT or SAT concordance (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

SAT Reasoning Test (formerly Scholastic Aptitude Test and Scholastic Assessment Test) - College Board.org defines the SAT as a globally recognized college admission test that lets you show colleges what you know and how well you can apply that knowledge. It tests your knowledge of reading, writing and math — subjects that are taught every day in high school classrooms. Most students take the SAT during their junior or senior year of high school, and almost all colleges and universities use the SAT to make admission decisions (College Board.org, 2010).

Student Life Sports - Sports that are sponsored by the researched institution, but not by the NAIA or NCAA (Researched University Student handbook, 2010 and 2011).

Student Retention Task Force (SRTF) - When needed, task forces are created to discuss and recommend policy. A task force is usually in place for at least one semester and typically remains active for up to two years and can continue meeting indefinitely (Faculty Committee Handbook, 2010).

Success - Success, for this study, will be defined by the researcher as a student that is in good academic standing, enrolled in a full time capacity and having earned a term or cumulative grade point average of a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale (Researched University, Undergraduate Catalog, 2011-2012, p. 10).

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) The National Center for Education Statistics defines IPEDS as; the system that collects annual data from every institution and consists of the following components: Institutional Characteristics, 12-month Enrollment, Completions, Human Resources composed of Employees by Assigned Position, Fall Staff and Salaries, Fall Enrollment, Graduation Rates, Finance, and Student Financial Aid. The serves as the primary resource for all data and includes all post-secondary institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010).

Title IX - A federal law that states “[n]o person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (United States Code Section 20, 2010).

Yield - The amount of institutional applications received for a period of time (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

Limitations

A limitation of this study was data reporting and utilization. The Comprehensive Academic Management System (CAMS) that the researched institution utilized indicated discrepancies when tabulated, with a three percent margin of error. Based on the program module that generated the report, three percent of the data was missing when the report was produced. The researcher had to enlist in the aid of institutional representatives to manually fill in the missing information and check it for accuracy. For example, when the initial phase of data analysis began, there were data fields that did not report information and were blank based on Comprehensive Academic Management System reports, communication and generation. The researcher cleaned these blank fields and inputted CAMS data for each individual student identification number, one by one. This procedure allowed for human data entry error and involved a large amount of time to research, verify, and manually record.

Summary

The success of the conditionally admitted students at the researched institution has never been determined. The purpose of this study was to research a possible relationship between conditional admittance and student achievement at a private four year Liberal Arts University located in the Midwest. The continual debate within the researched university among the administration and faculty governing body, regarding conditional admission requirements, percentages of allotment, and success ratios supports the need for this study (Academic Process and Standards minutes, 2010). Due to the lack of aggregate data analysis for the conditional admit program, the institutional administration and faculty committees requested that the primary investigator complete this study. The results of this research will add to the body of knowledge in the area of higher education conditional undergraduate admittance and student achievement while providing the researched university data that can be used in future decision making regarding conditional admittance. To date, there seems to be little information regarding the success and retention of the researched institution's students and more specifically, how it relates to admissibility and student achievement. The researched institution will benefit from the results of this study to broaden the knowledge base of the regular and conditionally admitted student's college readiness indicators. The researcher feels that it will be important to identify if any variables exist that give the researched institution supportive information concerning the success or failure of admitted students. In addition, were the successes or failures a direct result of the researched institutions current methodologies and support systems in current practice or are there specific changes or modifications that need to be made based on identification of these specific variables or the aggregate data.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

Never before in their history have Admission Offices been the object of such intense scrutiny (College Board Best Practices in Admissions Decisions, 2002, p. 5). This study investigated the progression of the conditionally admitted students at the researched institution. These findings are relevant as they relate to the future of the researched university's conditional admissions program and the admissibility correlation between student achievement and conditionally admitted students. The researcher has identified variables that may or may not have an impact on the success of the conditionally admitted students. Categories ranged from those involved in co-curricular participation to GPA and college entrance examinations. The researched institution's data was analyzed to determine if differences exist between the academic achievement of fully admitted students, and that of conditionally admitted students. Academic achievement is defined by the term and cumulative GPAs of selected students. The researcher has analyzed data from conditionally and regularly admitted students who participate in co-curricular programs, students who have been admitted conditionally based on college entrance examinations or GPA, and students who have been provided academic enrichment and support opportunities.

Platt (2010) indicated that the percentage of students admitted in higher education has decreased and the numbers of waitlisted students have increased. In talking with other individuals who have similar responsibilities as the researcher, this shift has developed more questions than answers. The economic downturn has created several levels of uncertainty concerning enrollment at four-year institutions (Carnevale, 2011). The yield of applications at many institutions has hit record lows (Platt, 2010). There are two institutional task forces that make recommendations and provide service relationships to the Day Admissions Office at the researched university.

The Faculty Student Recruitment Task Force assists the researched institution's efforts in recruitment, retention, and training. It also provides a continuing opportunity for bringing together institutional educators and researchers with Day Admissions and personnel from academic or business related departments. In this context, a major objective of the task force is to provide assistance to academic programs that address recruitment issues. The task force can recommend approaches, model recruitment initiatives and strategic plan modules, and use other resources to help develop such programs. The task force can be responsible for developing special presentations, symposia, and conference workshops on recruitment-related topics for the institutional Faculty Recruitment Task Force meetings and at other faculty related functions. Members of the task force should make themselves available to support undergraduate admissions. Student recruitment strategies implemented within the aforementioned task forces and committees helps to further Day Admissions initiatives. If a student requests admission and falls below the academic standard of conditional admission, then Academic Standards and Processes committee approval would be needed. The Academic Standards and Process committee will identify successful academic intervention processes and provide mentoring recommendations for a conditionally admitted student. The Day Admissions program supports the committee and the Dean of Day Admissions has been added into the Academic Process and Standards Committee.

The researcher is specifically studying the achievement of the undergraduate day population, but note that conditional admission takes place in the international admissions program as well. The international admissions program has recruited over 150 students each year from many different countries and just as the traditional day program, the international program will adhere to the institutional policy that less than 20% percent of the total matriculation should be conditional admits (Minutes from ASPC September 21, 2009 at 2:00pm). The Office of International Admissions functions independently but with the same restrictions as the day program concerning conditional admits which are also reviewed by members of the ASPC (Minutes from ASPC September 21, 2009). The following quotes are from admissions related personnel who are responsible for the recruitment, admittance, and matriculation of students from all over the country addressing this topic and the economic need to continue their conditional admission programs simultaneously increasing the conditional admission percentages of their upcoming matriculation.

In an article written from Fischer (2010), Fischer indicated, “Robert Barry, Director of International Services at Saint Louis University, which enrolled as many as 200 conditionally admitted students in its intensive-English program in 2010 stated "It's the wave of the future.” Studying in America "is a huge investment in these economic times," stated Tara Kelley, Director of the ELS Language Center, at the Clemson University campus. Mitch Leventhal, Vice Chancellor for Global Affairs at the State University of New York stated, due to the amount of money it takes to process international admissions documents "Students want a guarantee for acceptance." For U.S. colleges, conditional admission is gaining acceptance as yet another recruiting tool in an increasingly competitive global marketplace for top foreign students. American institutions "used to be prepared to let students enter only on our own terms," stated Mitch Leventhal, Vice Chancellor for Global Affairs at the State University of New York. Now a growing number of colleges see conditional admission as "part of a comprehensive recruiting strategy” (Fischer, 2010, p. 2). "If you don't do it, you could cut off a substantial part of your market" (Fischer, 2010, p. 2). At the researched institution, international students are admitted through the office of international admissions and utilize the same academic criterion that is mandated for the traditional population. That criterion indicates that if a student falls below an established benchmark they are categorized as a conditional admit, and if the student falls below the established standard the case is brought forward to the ASPC. At the researched institution, the majority of international students pay full tuition, room, and board adding no only to the residential population total, but the revenue bottom line as well.

The researcher’s experience has shown that the influx of traditional undergraduate parents indicating on the front side of the admission process they are uninterested in financial aid and seeking to pay in full. The researcher’s experience has found these parents believe that if they identify themselves as full pay customers, their chances of admissibility and the credentials concerning their son or daughter will be evaluated on a different level. However, financial aid awards are not determined until after an admissibility decision is rendered. Zernike (2009) indicated the trend of low application yields are not lowering financial aid budgets due to the increased need based on the economic downturn. This would seem at face value to be additional reasoning to consider full pay candidates, but some institutions are keeping scholarship and financial aid program standards the same (Zernike, 2009).

Institutions of higher learning in the global market are planning utilization of the U.S. GPA model. Baker (2011) noted seven British colleges were changing to the U.S. Model and addressed these changes by identifying the need to provide a better assessment rather than just utilizing an assessment. In the United Kingdom, a degree is awarded with or without honors, with the class of an honors degree based on the average mark of the assessed work the student has completed (Baker, 2011). The researcher feels that this shift could provide admissions personnel better predictors of success for conditionally admitted or regularly admitted domestic and international students. Admissions directors and personnel review files that contain all of the required documentation and utilize transcript evaluation concentrating on the proficiency level in English and Mathematics, and focusing on ACT or SAT scores. Theoretically, the student should be prepared academically, having met the established benchmarks and the GPA requirement required for admissions consideration. The researcher feels that the conditional letter for American or international students should be clear as to what must happen, and by when, before any form of admission is granted. The new contract recently established at the researched institution provides a clear distinction of what is needed to complete the academic year (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010). The researcher believes that institutions of higher learning need to be confident in enforcing the letter due to the support of all parties involved; there is no need to lower standards, or let students “slide in” if they are close. Students come knowing what they need to do, and if they do not fulfill their obligation, the researcher believes they simply need to find another option. In the researcher's experience, there typically is not a problem with communication, as the student is fully aware of the requirements and conditions to admission in writing. The signature represents that the student needs to meet all criteria of the conditional contract by the date indicated or find another school to attend. (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010).

Co-Curricular Participation

The purpose of this study was to identify if any direct relationship existed between student achievement of conditionally admitted students who participated in co-curricular activities such as athletics or students life sports and those who did not. The researcher feels that the topic of co-curricular participation is relevant to the discussion of conditionally admitted students as it relates to the amount of practice time required by individual coaches each week leaving the student with a decrease in time available for academics. For the purposes of this study co-curricular participation was defined as "any school sponsored activity that necessitates required practice and performance endeavors" (Researched University Student handbook, 2010 and 2011, pp. 24-25). These activities range from athletics to the fine and performing arts. The researched institution has a strong focus concerning the mission statement its philosophy is based on the development of the whole person. Fried (2007) indicated that there were two separate studies exploring the realities and consistencies concerning admissibility of student athletes and their participation in intercollegiate athletic programs over the past four decades at schools with a higher admissions selectivity. Fried indicated that "The authors' main findings with respect to athletic recruits concern three issues: admissions preferences, absolute numbers enrolled, and academic performance" (2007 p. 2). Fried discussed the importance of college admission programs and questioned if athletics needed to play a role in determining the admissibility of a student or giving preferential treat to student-athletes (2007). Furthermore, Fried discussed the debate of athletics and the role it plays in the academic framework and mission of each institution (Fried, 2007). In the researcher's experience as a former collegiate coach, co-curricular participation at any level has several valuable attributes that provides students with positive experiences and unique teaching moments. First, it provides an educational experience outside of the traditional classroom theoretical perspective. Practical knowledge can be communicated through co-curricular activities and provides an experience relative to textbook theories. Second, they provide a psychological value in expressing personal behavior and serving as a vehicle for creative thinking in a strategic and pressured environment. Third, there is a physical component that leads to healthy and active lifestyles by the physical and mental training involved in preparation. Fourth, co-curricular participation helps to develop the all-around character of the student, and helps reinforce problem solving skills that are necessary to survive in a turbulent world of the future. The researcher has witnessed first-hand that competition and practice involvement, as well as the accolades gained through many of these activities, help students during internships, resume development, and job placement. In today's competitive world, the spirit of competition and job performance can be attributed to the aforementioned philosophy described from the researcher concerning the skills learned through participation in these co-curricular initiatives. The researcher feels that, the value added from these learned skills developed from participation within the co-curricular activity include leadership opportunities, responsibility, deadline preparation, multitasking, problem solving, and general life skills.

Again, in the researcher's experience, success in today's organizations requires more than just high intellect. Thus, as an administrator that serves on several institutional hiring committees, these committees commonly examine job candidates' co-curricular activities in search of well-rounded, emotionally intelligent, and interpersonally skilled employees. Intuitively, co-curricular activities are valuable experiences that place students in problem solving and critical thinking environments to make decisions that have a positive impact for the organization. Table 1 and 2 provide a listing of all co-curricular activities.

Table 1

NAIA-NCAA Athletics

Fall
Football
Field Hockey
Men's & Women's Cross Country
Men's &Women's Soccer
Men's and Women's Tennis
Women's Volleyball
Men's and Women's Golf
Winter
Men's & Women's Basketball
Men's Indoor Track and Field
Women's Indoor Track and Field
Women's Ice Hockey
Men's & Women's Swimming and Diving
Men's Wrestling
Spring
Baseball
Men's & Women's Golf
Men's & Women's Tennis
Men's Outdoor Track and Field
Women's Outdoor Track and Field
Men's Volleyball

Softball
Men’s &Women’s Lacrosse

Note. Institution changed from NAIA to NCAA status during study timeline.

Table 2

Fine and Performing Arts

Marching Band
Marching Band Drumline
Color Guard
Majorette
Lionettes
Lion
Line
Musicals
Plays
Collegiate Music Educators National Conference
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
Sigma Alpha Iota
Theatre Tech
Box Office
Ushers
Voices Only
Concert Choir
University Chorus
Orchestra
Jazz
Band
Jazz Combo
Symphonic Band
Pep
Band
Pit Orchestra
String Ensemble
String Quartet
Woodwind Ensemble
Brass Ensemble
Percussion Ensemble

Davis and Murrel (2002) indicated that co-curricular participation is widespread at many colleges and universities today. Davis and Murrel (2002) have found that students like to feel connected not only to the academic school of choice, but in many cases by affiliation of their desired co-curricular activity. Davis and Murrel also indicated that "Recent scholarship has emphasized the importance of student effort and involvement in their academic and co-curricular activities as the decisive elements in promoting positive college outcomes" (2002, p. 1). In the researcher's experience, those students who have a connection outside of academics alone have two sets of goals: to fulfill personal goals associated with the co-curricular activity and to graduate with a college degree. The researcher also feels that although the goals may be separate, if one is unsuccessful in the eyes of the students, they have failed at both.

Shulman and Bowen (2001) indicated that they believe

> respects in which current practices and trends should be reconsidered and in some instances modified, but we also believe that changes should be made within a framework that recognizes that many people derive great pleasure from working hard as part of a team, glorying in a hard-fought win, and, yes, reflecting on the inevitable disappointments that are also part of competing. (p. B8)

In many cases, the researcher believes that the same principles and practices that produce success in the classroom are the same on the athletic field and performance arena. In some cases, there are common misconceptions in higher education related to the admissions programs and the admissibility of student athletes. It is important to point out that all student athletes at the researched institution undergo a pre-eligibility screening process (Athletic Department Handbook, 2010). Per the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), a student athlete must register with the NAIA Eligibility Center to determine initial eligibility of a student athlete based on an analysis of the high school or college transcripts sent to the eligibility center in conjunction with the statement of eligibility (NAIA.org). This analysis is disseminated, administered, and signed by the eligibility coordinator, athletic director, and faculty athletics representative, and this information is then given to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions for utilization (Researched University, Athletic Compliance Manual). This is a mandated process used by the researched university to verify and identify information within the high school transcript, including all schools attended to help solidify documentation concerning verification of academic information for utilization in the conditional and regular admissions process. If the student athlete is a transfer student then additional analysis of all college transcripts will be utilized in conjunction with the high school transcript to determine the position of the eligibility, including the verification of all full time terms attended and a breakdown of the eligibility utilized (Researched University, Athletic Compliance Manual). In the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), student athletes are required to register and utilize the NCAA clearinghouse which determines the initial eligibility of the student athlete (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2010). The researched institution utilized these guidelines when entering freshman or transfer student athletes who wanted to participate in NCAA sponsored athletic programs. It is the researcher’s belief that these guidelines have been put into place for all student athletes. Once a student athlete registers with either affiliated organization, they have opportunities to explore and access all resources instituted from each organization.

If the NAIA or NCAA does not recognize and approve the process of determining athletic eligibility, a violation would be administered on the certifying organization and the researched university. However, all athletic programs at the researched institution are not recognized by the NAIA or NCAA designation and are categorized as Student Life Sports (SLS) (Researched University Student handbook, 2010 & 2011). At the researched institution, Student Life Sports (SLS) organizations must meet the eligibility standards of their respective national affiliations, and also the researched universities' policies and procedural standards. At the researched institution, all SLS programs are bound to adhere to current eligibility standards as designated from the athletic department handbook (2009-2010) and derived from institutional control and the NAIA bylaws.

Co-curricular participation is defined by athletic designation and encompasses all institutionally sponsored activities that require practice, travel, equipment, and extensive participation. The researched institution's policy is that students must remain in good academic and social standing to participate in all co-curricular programs. If students fall below the institutionally established academic criteria, they may be removed from the co-curricular program and possibly the institution (Researched University, Undergraduate Catalog, 2010-2011, p. 19). The researched institution fully funds all SLS programs and institutionally sponsored programs that are run and operated with the same protocol as the NAIA or NCAA athletic programs (Researched University, Athletic Compliance Manual). The researcher believes that the SLS program serves as an example of a university that maintains an aggressive student recruitment campaign focused on attracting athletically and performing arts gifted students in the country. In a time where uncertainty and Title IX indicates "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance". United States Code Section 20, has stripped away co-curricular opportunities from our college bound students. Title IX issues affect nearly every athletic department that is contemplating cutting an athletic program due to budgetary constraints (Watson, 2009). Although most men's teams tend to bring in more revenue, they are often the first on the chopping block so schools can remain compliant with Title IX laws (Watson, 2009).

In the researchers’ experience, a university’s listing of sports and co-curricular activities should not include revenue generating sports. If a program is designated as “self-sustainable,” and therefore does not need to be supplemented with institutional resources then it should not be governed by equity regulations. The researcher chose not to include in the male to female comparison of this study, but does understand that in past experiences, the revenue generated through ticket sales, concessions, and merchandising from football and basketball is what is providing additional funding or supplementing the athletic budget in men's and women's athletics programs. In addition, the researcher believes, based on experience that no decrease or cut in men’s programs should occur to adjust the proportionality. The researcher believes in the researched institution’s model which would add additional women’s sports to align with equity distributions with the caveat of proportionality. At the researched institution, a similar model is utilized concerning proportionality of conditional admits in each co-curricular program to help provide consistency and equity amongst each program simultaneously providing parameters for all constituents to operate (Researched University, Athletic Compliance Manual).

As the Dean of Admissions, the researcher has instituted a model of participation that embraces the ideals of more participation which relegates a higher application yield and a higher matriculation to the institution therefore providing additional candidates for admission, simultaneously producing additional revenue.

The SLS and co-curricular programs at the researched university range from dance, cheerleading, flag corps, bowling, and trap and skeet shooting, and provide an institutional program into which students can be recruited. For the purposes of this study, the researcher utilized the NCAA athletic programs and the student life activities programs. At the researched institution, the researcher uses these programs to serve as recruitment strategies and strives to bring the best and brightest to the institution, simultaneously providing a healthy base of applicants for admittance. Letawsky, Schneider, Pedersen, and Palmer (2003) indicated that, "recruitment is a vital component for any college or university, and recruiting top student athletes is strategic due to the potential increase of undergraduate admissions and booster donations that a championship season may bring" (Letawsky et al., 2003, p. 1). Lederman (1991) indicated that these recruitment strategies not only help facilitate growth and revenue but serve as marketing campaigns every time they compete. These recruitment initiatives can lead to special treatment given to athletes not meeting standard admission criteria. A national survey indicated nearly 18 percent of all athletes admitted to big-time college and university sports programs in 1989 were given special admissions treatment (Lederman, 1991).

According to Laden, Matranga and Peltier (1999), colleges and universities nationwide have developed special talent committees and admission committees to embrace the ideology that a certain percentage of its matriculation will fall below the designated admission criteria. These committees are often comprised of institutional administrators and faculty, who provide additional recommendations to the office of admissions concerning the feasibility of success for students who fall below the standard admissions criteria (Laden, Matranga, & Peltier, 1999). In the researcher’s experience, students admitted under the conditional admit policies are those who do not meet the regular criteria for admission. These students may petition, in writing, to the Director of Admissions or a special admissions committee regarding the denial of their admissions acceptance; the Director of Admissions or a special admission committee can review the petition and make a determination of admissibility (Laden, Matranga, Peltier, 1999). The average GPA for athletes and non-athletes for the researched university is summarized on Table 3. The lowest GPA for the 2009 population at the researched institution was the male athletes, and the highest GPA attained was from the female athletes. The average GPA for the entire 2009 cohort of regular admits was a 2.82. The average GPA is encouraging and falls into an above average category for cumulative GPAs relative to the 2.5 GPA necessary for regular admissions standards. Interestingly, there is no difference in GPA when athletes are compared to the non-athletes. The researcher would expect a statistically better GPA for the athletes due to the academic intervention that is performed by the coaching staffs and the Director of Athletic Student Success and Coaching with Character program. Although there is academic intervention and support for all students at the researched institution, student athletes have additional support staff in each co-curricular program to evaluate progress and determine if any additional support is needed. In addition, the researched institution allows for priority enrollment for all co-curricular students to obtain a course schedule each term that is conducive to the co-curricular travel schedule, each student athlete is allowed to set their daily schedule to include preparation and study time for each course desired.

Table 3

Comparison of GPA of athletes and non-athlete students

	Average GPA; Fall 2009.
Athlete GPA	2.77
Non-athlete GPA	2.87
Male athlete GPA	2.625
Male non-athlete GPA	2.658
Female athlete GPA	3.026
Female non-athlete GPA	3.024

Note. Researched University Fact Book (2010).

Lederman (2007) reported in his study that there were several concerns related to recruitment of those students who passed the NCAA clearinghouse but were denied admission to the university's conditional admittance committee. The "special" admissions process that the university used for about 75 students a year who did not qualify under its regular admissions procedures turned down appeals from two or three football recruits who were referred to it . Students, who have had a family member graduate from the institution and have applied, are referred to as legacy admits (Lederman, 2007). In the researcher's experience, this is a commonly used practice that allows legacy or co–curricular students below standard to be admitted into the institution. This particular issue has raised eyebrows at several other state institutions and comments such as "the admissions process is out of sync with the recruiting process" (Lederman, 2007, p. 1), and has led university officials to review all policies relevant to these issues (Lederman, 2007).

In summary, in the researcher's experience, students want to feel a sense of connectivity to the institution. The researcher feels that this connectivity is derived not only from academic schools and majors, but from co-curricular participation. Watson (2009) discussed relevant issues that affect decisions made to support or drop institutional or co-curricular participation programs. In the researcher's experience, co-curricular participation has provided connectivity for students and has helped the institution strategically reach enrollment goals. The researcher also feels that schools should add additional female programs rather than drop or discontinue male opportunities. Laden, Matranga and Peltier (1999) indicated the usage of special talent committees to foster admissibility decisions, which engages faculty participation and shared governance. During the course of this study, the researched institution added this philosophy into the admission procedures for conditional admits. Lederman (2007) discussed scenarios that involved admitting students who meet co-curricular eligibility requirements but do not meet institutional requirements. This is also an issue for the researched institution and will continue to be assessed moving forward.

College Entrance Examinations and Grade Point Averages

Colleges rely on standardized testing in admission decisions to identify the student's ability to succeed in higher education (Bettinger & Evans, 2011). According to Clark, college assessment representatives indicated that standardized tests in all forms are administered to predict freshman success rates rather than graduation rates (Clark, 2009). A 2011 study indicated that English and mathematics were highly predictive for college success, although science and reading have very little ability to predict success (Jaschik, 2011). The researcher believes that standardized tests provide a basic foundation to determine the admissibility of a candidate and the progression of student achievement for that student. For the purposes of this study, conditionally admitted students would be defined as those students who fall below the standard requirement of 20 on the American College Test (ACT) or its Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) concordance, or below the standard cumulative GPA of a 2.5 calculated on a 4.0 scale (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010). Schmidt (2008) indicated that institutions of higher learning continuously strive to find ways to advance in peer reviewed rankings. Schmidt specified that an increase in the "attempts to climb the pecking order of various college ranking systems" (p. 2) is a contributor to admissions decisions that are made. Schmidt states that the National Association for College Admission Counseling reports that the schools utilized in the study give standardized test scores "considerable importance" in their admissions decisions, and that the percentage of institutions using ACT or SAT testing as measures for admissibility has significantly grown from about 50 percent to about 60 percent over the past decade (2008). Schmidt referenced a study that was conducted with 30 colleges and universities that participated in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings and were among the highest ranked for the year of 2007. The researcher believes that particular study and these peer reviewed ranking methods are flawed, and are not exactly what they appear to be. Schmidt referenced the fact that the study has limitations “because it relied on the information that the institutions chose to report to leading college guides” (Schmidt, 2008, p. 2).

The researcher believes that standardized testing may not be as good of a predictor when it comes to student achievement as GPA. The researcher feels that GPA's vary at the high school level due to the academic integrity, possible grade inflation, and level of standard within the academic curriculum. In the researcher's experience, standardized tests give a basic foundation of parity amongst applicants to determine at a basic level the possibility of student achievement at the researched institution. The researcher has found that a standardized test score held in conjunction with high school GPA's are the best predictors of student achievement and far supersede the individuality or utilization of standardized test or cumulative GPA solely. Atkinson (2001) stated, "We must assess students in their full complexity" (p. 6). He goes on to state "If we do not use aptitude tests like the SAT I, how can we get an accurate picture of students' abilities that is independent of high school grades" (Atkinson, 2001, p. 5). The researcher's experience has found that a combination of materials can be utilized in making decisions that affect the institution and the academic future of the admissions candidate. College admissions officials typically use both high school GPA and scores on college entrance tests to predict, formally or informally, an applicant's probability of academic success in the first year of college (Noble & Sawyer, 2002).

A recent dissertation completed at the researched institution, analyzed data high school GPA, rank in graduating class, and ACT scores as predictors of college freshman success and found a statistical significance in the correlation of high school GPA and freshman success (Townsend & Nack, 2007). The ACT scores did not result in as significant a correlation and high school class rank added nothing to the predictability of freshman success (Townsend & Nack, 2007). Based on the researcher's experience, colleges must consider several factors in student admissibility, and standardized tests are only a small fraction or indicator of student success because these tests are not equally valid for all groups of people. The National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) commission discussed the reliability of standardized testing and stated that they are not equally valid for all constituents (Jaschik, 2008, p. 1). The National Association of College Admissions Counseling indicated that this debate “may never be conclusively resolved the issue can be acknowledged and appropriately factored into admissions decisions” (Jaschik, 2008, p. 1).

The researcher feels that there have been deliberations from various groups of the years on both sides of the issue relating to standardized tests and GPA’s. Many say that standardized tests are biased and not an accurate reflection of standardization and on the other side of the issue, many indicate that GPA’s are not an actual depiction of student’s abilities based upon the level of the institutional curriculum and the possibility of grade inflation issues (Jaschik, 2008, p. 2). Ziomec and Svec (1995) conducted a study to find the significance of grade inflation devoted to grade inflation concerns over the existence of this issue and the degree in which it exists at the high school level. The results of the study provided evidence to support their grade inflation hypothesis with significant importance and frequency at the higher end of the grade point scale (Ziomec & Svec, 1995).

The researcher feels that testing critics always stress that standardized tests do not give a complete picture of the condition of education, and are biased against low income and minority students and claim that multiple choice questions are culturally biased towards white, middle class Americans, leaving students outside that group at a disadvantage (Marlaire & Maynard 1990). The researcher feels that school performance and improvement is often measured solely on the basis of test scores, and high school administrators and teachers believe they need to develop and implement curriculums based on the results of standardized tests. In addition, standardized testing has had a long history of scrutiny and controversy. In well publicized court cases in the 1970's, individuals complained that cultural bias in this form of testing was a form of discrimination which resulted in one being placed into special classes or coursework (Marlaire & Maynard 1990).

Tam, Bassett, and Sukhatme (1994) participated in a study that provided correlations and specific impacts of first semester students and a freshman cohort; statistical analysis was used to impact decisions on student admittance. GPA's and standardized tests scores do give a certain understanding of ability, but several variables come into place when considering admittance of a student (Tam et al., 2002). Students completed various admissions tasks, including a resume, to outline all relevant experiences and an essay indicating a major preference and forecast of the future as it relates to career paths and letters of recommendation from current or former teachers that could provide an indication of a student's academic ability (Tam et al., 2002). This particular study provided a quantitative example of a freshman cohort utilizing GPA as a significant indicator of student achievement (Tam et al., 2002). In a 2009 article written on the topic of achievement tests and college admissions, the author indicated "the SAT is a relatively poor predictor of student performance; admissions criteria that tap mastery of curriculum content, such as high-school grades and achievement tests, are more valid indicators of how students are likely to perform in college" (Geiser, 2009, p. 3). The article goes on to discuss the variances in testing and how the SAT test is a poor predictor of student achievement compared to GPA and AP exams especially in the areas of sciences and history. Specifically, the article states that it is difficult to place the greatest emphasis on admissibility and college readiness on a three or four hour test compared to four years of curriculum in foundational core subjects along with three or four years of AP exams throughout the duration of the students high school career (Geiser, 2009). In the researcher's experience, conditionally admitted students do not prepare for standardized tests with any type of strategy in mind. Standardized test taking strategies are not discussed or utilized in order to prepare for the rigor of the three to four hour testing segment. In addition, the conditionally admitted students in many cases only take the test on one occasion and wait until their senior year to register and take the ACT or SAT. Conversely, regularly admitted students have taken the ACT or SAT on at least three separate occasions and have taken an ACT or SAT preparation course to gain knowledge and understanding of test taking strategy and curriculum content levels. In many cases, the researcher has found the results of the regularly admitted students have increased each time the student has taken the examination. Furthermore, in the researchers experience, conditionally admitted students have had a minimal amount of contact with ACT or SAT preparation resources, and learn about these resources on their first college visit in February and March of their senior year, allowing a minimal amount of time to prepare and test prior to the start of their freshman year in college.

Academic Enrichment and Support

Arnold (2006) in his study titled "Conditional Admits and the academic enrichment center" indicated a need for an academic enrichment center to provide advising, feedback, mentoring, and student success strategies. Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh and Witt (2005) indicated that many institutions of higher learning have devoted resources to the success of first year students. The researcher feels that a continuum of procedures must fall in sync with the recruiting and admitting process as it relates to student achievement. Subjective discretion is commonly used by higher education administrators: however a specific matrix is recommended to provide structure and validity to the program (Arnold, 2006).

Hunter (2006) discussed a study directed by the Group on Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, discussing the idea that starting in the 1980s schools were becoming more aware of their first year programs and the success of the first year student. The study indicated “college administrators should reallocate faculty and institutional resources to increased service to first and second year students” (Hunter, 2006, pg. 4). The journal indicates several choices for academic intervention and provides contact information to further research in each supportive intervention initiative (Hunter, 2006, p. 4). First, Hunter (2006) highlighted recommendations that included a new student orientation to acclimate the first year students prior to the start of the semester. The researched institution houses a first year orientation program that takes place a week prior to the start of the semester and continues throughout the duration of the semester. Second, the article recommends a strong academic advising component as a key element to student success. The researched institution carries an academic advising component that is conducive to student success. Those who seek out the academic advising opportunities will have the capacity to be more successful. The academic advisors coordinate with the student to determine what type of needs each student may have. For example, one student may need a semester by semester plan that keeps them on track with a vision as they matriculate into graduation, and another student may need career counseling and major declaration recommendations. Third, the article recommends peer assisted study. The researched institution provides peer assisted tutorial programs in most content areas offered at the institution. Specifically, tutorials are offered in the four core areas of English, Math, History, and Science. In addition, the researched institution offers a writing center that supports the grammar and writing skills necessary for students to succeed in the classroom and develop necessary skills for professional writing. Hunter (2006) indicates that the days of first year success programs relying solely on faculty and student services are over. The concept of first year student success needs to be a campus wide initiative (Hunter, 2006).

Zhang, Chan, Hale, and Kirshstein (2005) analyzed programs and services from 2001-02 cohorts that support not only first year programs, but the campus population as a whole. Conceptually, the programs and services that are provided by student services include counseling and mentoring programs. There are several program services listed that support the success of both regularly and conditionally admitted students. First, Zhang et al. (2005) reference personal counseling to provide crisis prevention and intervention for the student population as a whole. The researched institution houses a counseling department that provides support services for all students in the areas of sports psychology, test taking and text anxiety, alcohol abuse, eating disorders, and depression. Second, the authors reference participation in professional mentoring. The researched institution provides mentoring for all students. Students who are conditionally admitted are required to participate in the mentoring program along with students that have been suspended academically and are approved to continue their studies. However, all students have the opportunity to participate in the program, and a mentor assigned to students upon inquiry. In summary, Zhang et al. (2005) concluded that the 2001-02 cohort's GPA increased as the students participated in these programs and persisted through the institutions. Note that students GPAs increased at a higher rate for the students at four-year institutions versus two year institutions (Zhang et al., 2005).

The institutional Director of Day Admissions Services at a mid-sized public university stated, "we offer several supports for conditional admits. These include a mentoring program, twelve class hour maximum per semester, tutorial opportunities, writing lab, and outstanding faculty dedicated to the success of all students". Conditional admits are also tracked by the Dean of Student Services (2010). This new process was developed for conditional admits for the researched institution. The researcher believes it is irresponsible to assume that ACT and GPA indicate everything institutions need to know about a student when admitting and determining college readiness. The researched institution examines each student individually when determining admissibility that allows the admissions department to identify students who truly need extra help as a conditional admit (Researched University Day Admissions Handbook, 2010). The researcher believes this is the best strategy and allows for the most accurate identification of students in need.

Summary

Persistence of students who enroll at any institution is of utmost importance. Research from Clark (2009) specified that outlining specific characteristics that give positive signs of progression through undergraduate course work and graduation rates indicated that high school grades are the single most important gauge of how well a student will adjust and succeed in the curriculum. Marchand (2010) announced in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, that private nonprofit institutions had a 65 percent graduation rate versus the public colleges at 55 percent. Supiano (2011) indicated that while the growing number of people attending college grows, the graduation rates remain flat. These grades and rates indicate a pattern of time management, study skills, and commitment to education as well as motivation and perseverance. Clark (2009) specified several important factors; one is that the competitive market in higher education is vastly growing. Colleges at similar quality levels have close equality in terms of student matriculation therefore the amount of market share for each institution is limited (Epple, Romano & Sieg, 2006). They present findings that “Admissions policies are largely driven by the effective marginal costs of educating students of differing abilities and incomes” (Epple et al., 2006, p. 887). The researched institution indicated that enrollment was up this past year even though the economy indicated otherwise. Seventy-One percent of public institutions and fifty four percent of private institutions reported gains in student matriculation, and surveys indicated that institutions were able to survive by admitting more students and providing merit and need based aid programs to accommodate the economic downturn (Jaschik, 2009). In the researchers experience, private institutions have utilized these strategies for years, and feels that there will be a large amount of deliberation for institutions as they approach each new academic year regarding the restructuring of institutional merit and need based aid programs. Research indicated that in the United States, the number of high school graduates from 1955 to today, increased by 131 percent, whereas, the number of freshman entering college has risen 297 percent (Jaschik & Hoxby, 2009).

Chapter Three

Overview

This chapter includes the methodology, procedures and data resources used, hypotheses stated, descriptive statistics, population utilized, and any other considerations that are pertinent to the research of the study. This quantitative study will be conducted utilizing several quantitative research methods. The researcher used statistical analysis to determine similarities and differences that existed between conditionally admitted students and regularly admitted students with respect to student achievement. The study tested for a correlation between conditional admittance and student achievement in an undergraduate higher education setting. A variety of sources were used to collect data in this study including Comprehensive Academic Management System (CAMS), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), DocuWare, and Common Data Set information. Data from the researched institutions operating system, CAMS, was analyzed involving Standard Admittance as well as Conditional Admittance to determine if there were similarities or differences between the populations of students who were admitted into the institution. Further, descriptive statistics were created and analyzed according to admittance status, specific populations, and current academic standing within the institution to determine if gains in student achievement had taken place.

The researched institution utilizes two faculty task force delegations to provide service and recommendations to the Office of Day Admissions. The Faculty Student Recruitment Task Force fosters the campus-wide implementation of the Student Recruitment initiatives which are grounded in the university’s changing demographics and the current increase in traditional undergraduate students (Faculty Committee

Handbook, 2010). These recruitment initiatives set forth objectives and actions for encouraging faculty to attain some minimal level of recruitment expertise in their day-to-day activities, as well as increase the number of highly academic students in conjunction with the institutional Admissions Strategic Plan (Faculty Committee Handbook, 2010). The second faculty task force, at the researched university, is the Academic Standards and Processes Committee. It assists in admissions recommendations for conditional admission on any student who scores below the internal established criteria of a 17 ACT composite score and a 2.25 cumulative GPA (Faculty Committee Guidebook, 2010). The principle responsibility of the Academic Standards Committee is to provide advice and counsel to the University's faculty and key administration on matters related to adherence to the stated academic standards of the University (Faculty Committee Guidebook, 2010). In addition, to the above-mentioned responsibilities, the committee reviews and audits the procedures used to ensure quality, as well as the results of those procedures, and renders recommendations and solutions to the Provost for particular cases in which interpretation of academic policy is needed (Faculty Committee Guidebook, 2010). The Academic Standards and Processes Committee monitors and ensures implementation of the academic quality guidelines formulated by the Educational Policies Committee and suggests changes in academic policy and practices (Faculty Committee Handbook, 2010).

Table 4 is an overview of ASPC conditional admits taken from the ASPC committee meeting minutes on March 21, 2010. This overview was a preliminary research scope while the study was in progress to garnish a better understanding between the students who were admitted from the Dean of Day Admissions and the Students who were admitted through the ASPC. In the fall semester, 2010, 160 students were conditionally admitted. Out of the 160 conditionally admitted students, 146 students were admitted by the Office of Day Admissions and 14 students were approved through the ASPC. In assessing the performance of the conditionally admitted group as a whole, 72% completed the term successfully.

Table 4

Total Number of Conditional Admits ASPC CA vs CA

Total Number of Conditional Admits	Academic Status	Percentage
21	Suspended	13%
11	Probation	7%
13	Warning	8%
115	Good Academic Standing	72%
Total = 160		100%

ASPC approved 14 students as conditional admits where 36% of this group completed the term in good standing.

Table 5

Academic Standing of ASPC Conditional Admits

Total Number of Conditional Admits	Academic Status	Percentage
4**	Suspended	29%**
3	Probation	21%
2	Warning	14%
5	Good Academic Standing	36%
Total = 14		100%

Note. **This number reflects 2 students who were academically suspended and 2 students who were socially suspended.

In comparison, data presented in the 2009-2010 Retention Report reflect a suspension and probation combination rate for all freshmen for fall 2009 as 15.5%. This data is used in comparison considering most conditional admits are freshmen students.

The suspension and probation combination rate for all conditional admits is slightly higher at 20% and the ASPC approved group shows 50% (Academic Standards and Process Committee minutes, 2010).

The researcher feels that when looking at freshman admits alone there are many areas to consider. Freshmen are new to the collegiate environment and all the variables that surround it. These freshman students do not live in a vacuum; they live in the real world, which is full of many constantly changing variables including family issues, peer pressure, extracurricular activities, teacher quality, and socioeconomic status. It can be difficult to compare the freshman to the transfer conditional admit. The transfer student who is a conditional admit has had success at the collegiate level with a poor term of attendance or has experienced previous deficient grades and ready to rectify and remedy any former mistakes that may have occurred.

Research Questions

1. What are the differences between the academic performances of students who are conditionally admitted as compared to those who meet the regular admissions requirements?
2. What academic admission standards of conditionally admitted students most accurately project success during the first full year of school?
3. What are the differences between academic performances of conditionally admitted students based on class status (First time freshman vs. Transfer or Re-admit)?
4. Does supportive intervention, provided after admittance, lead to increased student achievement?

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis # 1: There is no difference in the overall Grade Point Average between conditionally admitted and regularly admitted students.

Null Hypothesis # 2: There is no relationship between the standardized assessments used in admission determination (ACT and SAT conversion score) and the student achievement of conditionally- admitted students after the completion of two semesters of continuous enrollment (GPA).

.Null Hypothesis # 3: There is no difference in Grade Point Average between residential conditionally admitted students and commuter conditionally admitted students.

Null Hypothesis # 4: There is no difference in Grade Point Average between those conditionally admitted students involved in co-curricular activities and those who are not.

Null Hypothesis # 5: There is no difference in Grade Point Average between conditionally admitted transfer students and conditionally admitted first time freshmen.

Null hypothesis # 6: There is no difference in mean proportion between conditionally admitted and regularly admitted students represented in four researcher defined Grade Point Average categories.

Null Hypothesis # 7: There is no difference in Grade Point Average between conditionally admitted students entering during academic year 2008-2009 and those admitted during academic year 2009-2010.

Descriptive Data

Academic admissions data included high school and college GPA, standardized test scores, class status, as well as co-curricular activities and mentoring program participation after enrollment from 460 conditionally admitted students during the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 academic years, as well as 2,199 regularly admitted students. This data was collected using the databases utilized by the researched institution, namely DocuWare, CAMS, and IPEDS. Table 6 illustrates the demographic and academic information for both conditionally and regularly admitted students. Table 6 also indicates a breakdown of mean, median, and range for students that were residentially housed at the researched institution versus commuter students, male population versus the female population, and the freshman versus the transfer student population. The median for regular admits in 2008 was a 2.98 compared to a 2.22 for conditional admits, and the median for 2009 was a 3.0 for regular admits compared to a 2.36 for conditional admits. The mean GPA for regular admits in 2008 was a 2.74 compared to a 2.06 for conditional admits, and the mean for 2009 was a 2.82 for regular admits compared to a 2.18 for conditional admits. The female mean was significantly higher than the male average with the mean GPA for female regular admits in 2008 indicating a 2.97 compared to a 2.56 for male regular admits, and the mean for female conditional admits 2009 was a 2.4 for regular admits compared to a 1.9 for male conditional admits. 2008 and 2009 results are identified in Table 6.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Sample Populations

	Conditional Admits						***Regular Admits***					
	GPA Data						*GPA Data*					
	Max	Min	Range	Mean	Median	n (%)	Max	Min	Range	Mean	Median	n (%)
Year												
2008	3.902	0.000	3.902	2.066	2.221	218 (47.4%)	4.000	0.000	4.000	2.724	2.982	1064 (48.4%)
2009	3.836	0.000	3.836	2.186	2.367	242 (52.6%)	4.000	0.000	4.000	2.827	3.000	1135 (51.6%)
Gender												
Male	3.690	0.000	3.690	1.950		278 (60.4%)	4.000	0.000	4.000	2.56		1052 (47.8%)
Female	3.900	0.000	3.900	2.400		182 (39.6%)	4.000	0.000	4.000	2.97		1147 (52.2%)
Class												
Freshman	3.900	0.000	3.900	2.130		353 (76.7%)	4.000	0.000	4.000	2.81		1325 (60.3%)
Transfer	3.840	0.000	3.840	2.130		107 (23.2%)	4.000	0.000	4.000	2.72		872 (39.7%)
Housing												
Resident	3.900	0.000	3.900	2.140		402 (87.4%)						
Commuter	3.710	0.000	3.710	2.060		58 (12.6%)						

Figure 1 categorizes sample populations that were combined into categories of “conditional” and “regular” admits, combining the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 academic years. In figure 1, 101 of the regularly admitted students for both academic years obtained a cumulative GPA of a 3.0 or higher compared to 35 of the conditionally admitted students that obtained the same GPA range. In comparison, 13 of the regularly admitted students fell into the 0.0-.99 GPA range and 27 of the conditionally admitted students fell into the 0.0-.99 GPA range. In 2008, 62% of the conditionally admitted students finished the conditional admission program with a 2.0 GPA or higher compared to the 2009 cohort that finished with 67% with a 2.0 GPA or higher. In 2008, 82% of the regularly admitted students scored above a 2.0 GPA compared to the 2009 cohort representing 84%. In 2008, 38% of the conditionally admitted students scored below a 2.0 GPA compared to the 2009 cohort which represented 33% that fell below the 2.0 GPA. In 2008, 18% of the regularly admitted students fell below the 2.0 benchmark compared to the 2009 cohort that represented 16%. Both trends indicate a successful trend of data that represents a positive increase in the amount of students that reach the academic benchmark of a 2.0 GPA to ensure good academic standing with the researched institution.

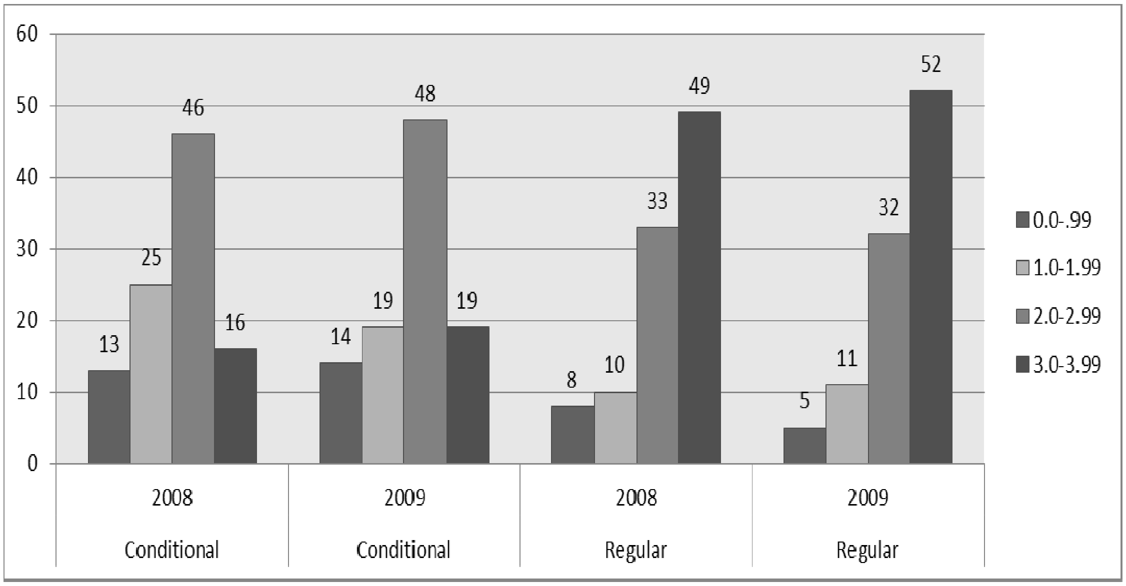

Figure 1. Percentages by range for admit status & year

Table 7 is a representation of conditional and regular admits separated into GPA categories and summarized in percentages. In 2008 and 2009, 16-19% of all conditional admits ended the first year of attendance with a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA compared to 49-52% percent of regular admits finished the first year of attendance with a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA.

Table 7

Percent per GPA category for Conditional and Regular Admits

GPA	Conditional 2008	Conditional 2009	Regular 2008	Regular 2009
0.0-.99	13	14	8	5
1.0-1.99	25	19	10	11
2.0-2.99	46	48	33	32
3.0-3.99	16	19	49	52

In 2008 and 2009, 13-14% of all conditional admits ended the first year of attendance with a .99 or below cumulative GPA compared to 5-8% percent of regular admits finished the first year of attendance with a .99 or below cumulative GPA.

Overview of Data Resources

CAMS functions as the researched institution's comprehensive academic management system. Every office used CAMS to input student information including demographics, grades, standardized test scores, co-curricular participation, class ranking, residential status, and financial information. For the purposes of this study, a report was built to include specific data on selected cohorts of students. This data was exported to a spreadsheet where it was manipulated for statistical analysis. Pearson Correlation Coefficient, Confidence Intervals, and Regression Analysis were all applied utilizing the data from CAMS. In addition, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) contains the results of a survey conducted annually by the U.S. Department's National Center for Educational Statistics including demographic and socioeconomic information. The researched institution participates in this survey on an annual basis. Data from IPEDS was obtained from the Researched University employee who oversees IPEDS reporting and then analyzed for this study.

The researcher utilized DocuWare and the Common Data Set (CDS) to store all necessary paper documents included in student files. The DocuWare included the following documents: student applications, transcripts, admit letters, entrance essays, letters of recommendation and academic suspension notifications. Data was extracted from paper documents and analyzed along with other data for the purposes of this study. The Common Data Set is a standard format of data collection and reporting. It was created by higher education data providers and publishers as a way to report data in a standard format across all institutions of higher education, therefore improving comparability. The Common Data Set includes information such as admissions requirements, academic statistics and class size on an incoming class, and specific demographics of the matriculation. The researched institution updates the Common Data Set on an annual basis. Data from the Common Data Set was gathered from the Researched University employee who oversees the annual update.

In addition, committee minutes were used to collect information from varying viewpoints across campus at the researched institution. Committee members included members of the Academic Services Office, the Day Admissions Office, the Institutional Research Office, the Academic Standards and Process Committee, the Faculty Task Force on Student Recruitment, the Student Development Office, the Retention Committee, the Provost Office, and the Athletics Office. Information collected from the minutes of committee meetings, in conjunction with data collected was used in the development of the conclusions and recommendations.

Variables were identified to understand the possible relationship between student achievement and conditional admittance. Such variables included the student's high school GPA; the students standardized test scores, and the student’s type of co-curricular participation, as well as their admission documentation and status. The statistical analysis allowed the researcher to determine specific variables, their level of significance, and information concerning the increase of student achievement.

Population

The researched population was defined as first time, full-time freshmen including transfer students, who attended as day students during the 2008 to 2010 terms. These students were comprised both residential and commuter based populations. Permission was granted from the vice president and provost of the researched institution to secure, analyze, and study the progression of conditional admittance as it relates to student achievement. The investigator compiled academic data including, the student's high school GPA the students standardized test scores, and the student’s type of co-curricular participation from 460 conditionally admitted students during the 2008-2009, and 2009-2010 academic years, as well as 2,199 regularly admitted students. This data was collected using the databases utilized by the University, namely DocuWare, CAMS, and IPEDS.

The investigator compiled academic data including, high school and college GPA, standardized test scores, class status, as well as co-curricular activities from 460 conditionally admitted students during the 2008-2009, and 2009- 2010 academic years, as well as 2,199 regularly admitted students. This data was collected using the databases utilized by the University, namely DocuWare, CAMS, and IPEDS reports and is illustrated in Table 8. Data for race, ethnicity, as well as commuter status, was not taken into account for this study.

Table 8 indicates specific demographics for 2008 and 2009 conditional and regular admits. 278 of the conditional admits in 2008 and 2009 were male compared to 182 for the female population. In 2008 and 2009, over 76% of the conditional admits to the researched institution was first time freshman compared to the overall regular freshman admission percentage of 58-63%.

Table 8

Conditional and Regular Admission Demographics

	Conditional Admission		Regular Admission	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
Total	218	242	1064	1135
Male	128	150	530	522
Female	90	92	534	613
M/F Ratio	1.42	1.63	0.99	0.85
Freshman	169	184	666	658
% Freshman	78%	76%	63%	58%

Figure 2 and Table 9 indicate a graph of conditional and regular admits based on a 4.0 grading scale of A=4.0, B=3.0, C=2.0, D=1.0, F=.0. 50% of regular admits finished with a B average or higher compared to 18% of the conditional admits. In addition, 82% of regular admits finished with a C average or higher compared to 66% of conditional admits finished the first year of attendance with a C average or higher. The researcher feels it is expected that 50% of the regularly admitted students fall into the A-B cumulative GPA category. However, the researcher wants to point out that 47% of the conditionally admitted students fell into the C range of cumulative GPA category compared to the 32% of the regularly admitted cohort. The biggest separation between the conditionally admitted students and the regularly admitted student indicated in Figure 2 were in the percentage of students that feel into the A-B range of cumulative GPA category. The percentage of separation concerning these cohorts was 39% with regularly admitted students yielding the highest degree of B-A students.

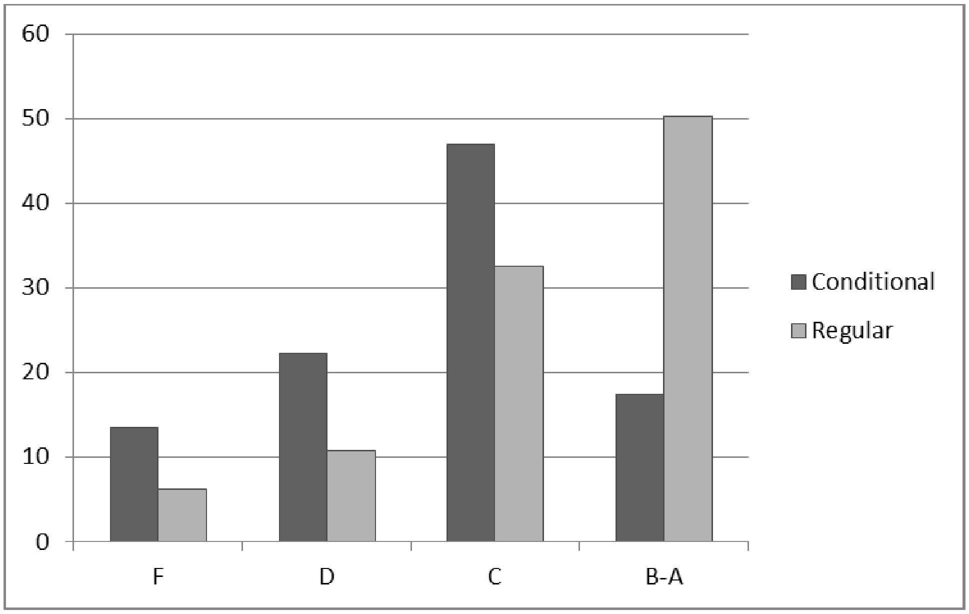

Figure 2. Percentage of GPA category A-F: conditional and regular admissions.

Table 9

Frequency of GPA category: Conditional Admissions and Regular Admissions Combined

		Conditional		Regular	
GPA	Letter Grade	n	%	n	%
0.0-.99	F	62	13.5	139	6.3
1.0-1.99	D	102	22.2	237	10.8
2.0-2.99	C	216	47	717	32.6
3.0-3.99	B-A	80	17.4	1106	50.3

To test the null hypothesis, There is no difference in mean proportion between conditionally admitted and regularly admitted students represented in the four researcher defined Grade Point Average categories (see Table 9), a z-test for difference in proportions was conducted. The p-value of .998 compared to the alpha value of .05 indicates rejection of the null hypothesis. There is no statistical difference in distribution of proportions of students in the four grade point average categories displayed in Table 9.

Table 10 depicts the first time freshman population that applied to the researched institution, were admitted, and ultimately enrolled as a fist time, full time freshman. 4,020 students applied to the institution in in 2008 compared to 3,261 students that applied in 2009. However, 1,852 students were admitted in 2009, as compared to 1,598 that were admitted in 2008. In 2009, admissions criteria changed and the institution heightened its awareness and criteria for conditional admits. Students that fell below certain criteria were sent to the ASPC for recommendations on admittance. The researcher believes that as the academic standards were increasing the reputation of the institution was also increasing, therefore attracting a more qualified candidate for admission, thus producing a lower yield of overall applications, but higher yield of admitted students.

Table 10

Admissions Rates for First-time Full-time Freshman

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	frequency	percent	frequency	percent	frequency	percent	frequency	percent
Applied	3856		2584		4020		3261	
Admitted*	2472	64.1	1511	58.5	1598	39.8	1852	56.8
Enrolled**	865	35	882	58.4	1090	68.2	1105	59.7

Note. *Percentage of those who applied were admitted.
**Percentage of those who were admitted and subsequently enrolled.
Adapted from Researched University Fact Book (2010).

Table 11 depicts the community college and four-year transfer population that applied to the researched institution, were admitted, and ultimately enrolled as a first-time transfer student. 1,116 transfer students applied to the researched institution in in 2008, as compared to 1,442 transfer students that applied in 2009. The researcher attended a community event in May 2011 at a local high school where Missouri Governor Jay Nixon announced that the Missouri community college system hosted an all-time high of over

100,000 students. This could play a role in the increase in the total number of transfer applicants that applied in 2009.

Table 11

Admissions Rates for Transfer Students

	2007		2008		2009	
	frequency	percent	frequency	percent	frequency	percent
Applied	2331		1116		1442	
Admitted*	1635	70.1	670	60	874	60.6
Enrolled**	1324	81	513	76.6	775	88.6

Note. *Percentage of those who applied were admitted.

**Percentage of those who were admitted and subsequently enrolled.

Adapted from Researched University Fact Book (2010).

Table 12 depicts the average composite score for all regularly and conditionally admitted students admitted through the Office of Day Admissions with a standardized test score. Table 12 represents an average composite score on the National ACT entrance examination for the academic years of 2007-2009. The Day Admissions strategic plan lists as a goal, to improve the average ACT of incoming students at the researched institution to a composite score of 24 by the year 2017. In the fall of 2011, the average ACT of the incoming students at the researched institution was raised to a composite score of 23.

Table 12

Average ACT and SAT

	2007	2008	2009
ACT	22	22.28	22.26
SAT			1034

Note. Adapted from Researched University Fact Book (2010).

Table 13 indicates a percentage of students and range of ACT scores between the 25^{th} and 75^{th} percentile. The lower number is for the 25th percentile of students who matriculated to the researched institution. For the researched institution, 25% of enrolled students received a math score of 20 or lower. The upper number is for the 75th percentile of students who enrolled at the researched institution. For the researched institution, 75% of enrolled students received a score of 24 or lower.

Table 13

Range of ACT Scores Between the 25th and 75th Percentiles

2007		2008		2009	
25th	75th	25th	75th	25th	75th
20	24	20	24	20	24

Note. Adapted from Researched University Fact Book (2010).

Table 14 depicts the percentage of incoming first time freshman students to the researched institution that had a composite score of 24 or above on the ACT. The percentage of students in 2007 and 2008 that matriculated to the researched institution with a composite score of 24 or above was 28%. The researched institution experienced a growth of 1% between the years of 2008 and 2009.

Table 14

Percentage of Students 24 or Above on ACT

	2007	2008	2009
24 or above	28	28	29

Note. Adapted from Researched University Fact Book (2010).

Descriptive Statistics

Tables 15 and 16 list the descriptive statistics for the two academic years used for the study, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 conditional admits and Tables 17 and 18 list the descriptive statistics for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 regular admits. The minimum GPA for all four populations was 0.00. These GPAs of 0.00 were included as they represent students who did not complete coursework, or withdrew, as opposed to “no data” values. The researcher viewed withdrawal was viewed as a student being unsuccessful during their first year.

Table 15

Conditional Admissions 2008: Descriptive Statistics

HSGPA		*ACT*	
Mean	2.547	Mean	19.005
Median	2.539	Median	19.000
Mode	0.000	Mode	19.000
Standard Deviation	0.771	Standard Deviation	2.240
Sample Variance	0.594	Sample Variance	5.016
Minimum	0.000	Minimum	12.000
Maximum	4.000	Maximum	26.000
Count	218.000	Count	187.000

Note. HSGPA = High School GPA. ACT = American College Test.

Table 16

Conditional Admissions 2009: Descriptive Statistics

HSGPA		ACT	
Mean	2.622	Mean	19.258
Median	2.602	Median	19
Mode	0	Mode	18
Standard Deviation	0.705	Standard Deviation	2.409
Sample Variance	0.496	Sample Variance	5.806
Minimum	0	Minimum	14
Maximum	4.03	Maximum	30
Count	242	Count	213

Note. HSGPA = High School GPA. ACT = American College Test.

Table 17

Regular Admissions 2008: Descriptive Statistics

HSGPA		ACT	
Mean	2.505	Mean	22.961
Median	3.050	Median	22.000
Mode	0.000	Mode	20.000
Standard Deviation	1.458	Standard Deviation	3.528
Sample Variance	2.125	Sample Variance	12.444
Minimum	0.000	Minimum	15.000
Maximum	4.500	Maximum	34.000
Count	1064.000	Count	802.000

Note. HSGPA = High School GPA. ACT = American College Test.

Table 18

Regular Admissions 2009: Descriptive Statistics

HSGPA		ACT	
Mean	2.794	Mean	22.795
Median	3.154	Median	22.000
Mode	0.000	Mode	20.000
Standard Deviation	1.248	Standard Deviation	3.373
Sample Variance	1.558	Sample Variance	11.376
Minimum	0.000	Minimum	12.000
Maximum	4.810	Maximum	34.000
Count	1135.000	Count	839.000

Note. HSGPA = High School GPA. ACT = American College Test.

Data Information

The data and information utilized in this researched study was formulated from accredited high schools, community colleges, and four year colleges and extracted from the official transcripts issued by the office of Day Admissions at the researched institution. In addition, other certified documents for admissibility were utilized to determine if commonalities existed between the student that was conditionally admitted and the regularly admitted student. These documents included standardized testing documents from the American College Test (ACT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and other admission related documents such as the application, academic transcripts, resume, letters of recommendation, and personal interview.

Success, for this study, is defined by a student that is in good academic standing, enrolled in a full time capacity and having earned a term or cumulative GPA of a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. The researched institution operates under the 4.0 grading system. Only grades earned are used in computing the GPA unless the student is seeking teacher certification (Researched University Undergraduate Catalog, 2010-2011, p. 18).

Research Setting

The researched institution is located in the Midwest United States, and was founded in the early 19th century as a liberal arts college for young women. In the mid-20th century the University Board of Directors made a decision to allow men to matriculate to the college (Researched University, Undergraduate Catalog, 2010-2011, p. 7). The researched institution is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and the State Department of Education and is a member of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (Researched University, Undergraduate Catalog, 2010-2011, p. 7). The researched institution is authorized to grant undergraduate and graduate degrees inclusive of Doctor of Educational Leadership degrees (Researched University, Undergraduate Catalog, 2010-2011, p. 7). The researched institution serves a diverse, talented student body of over 15,000 students; more than 4,000 of whom are resident students and 25% of the overall population is members of minority groups (Researched University, Undergraduate

Catalog, 2010-2011, p. 7). Originally, the university in which the study was conducted started as an all-girls institution and although a transition has been made to a coed model and at the time of the study the diverse student body consisted of 64.8% women. At the time of this study, cultural, social, and intellectual enrichment were valued, evidenced by a population of 1028 international students who hailed from 88 countries and domestic students that represented 47 states. The students' ages ranged from the teens to the 70s, with the average student being 30.86 years old. Table 19 represents a snapshot and unduplicated headcount of how many traditional daytime undergraduate students that matriculated to the researched institution were commuter students versus residential students. In 2009, 3604 residential students were housed and 1186 students choose to be commuter students.

Table 19

Current breakdown of the undergraduate students at researched institution

Head Count	Housed	Not Housed		
Status	Yes	Yes - No App	No	Total
Full Time	3581	125	1019	4725
Part Time	23	3	167	193
Grand Total	3604	128	1186	4918

Summary

The methodology, population, descriptive statistics, overview of data resources and research setting were discussed in this chapter. This study will be conducted utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methods and will use The Pearson Correlation Coefficient and other statistical analysis to determine if a relationship existed between conditionally admitted students, regularly admitted students and student achievement. The purpose of utilization with the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient is to indicate a linear relationship between two measureable variables. In essence, the researcher wants to know if one score potentially predicts another. The researcher’s claim is that there is not a direct correlation between conditional admissions standards and student achievement at the researched institution. The researcher’s claim is that there is a relationship between student achievements of conditionally admitted students who participate in co-curricular activities compared to students that are regular admits and do not participate in co-curricular activities. Also, that there is a relationship between standardized assessments used in admission determination and the student achievement of conditionally admitted students after the completion of two semesters of continuous enrollment. This study’s purpose is to provide the researched institution with data concerning the level of admittance including success rates of conditionally and regularly admitted students And to identify any possible relationships between the admissions program and student achievement.

Chapter Four

Overview

The admissions department of the researched institution focuses on admitting students who meet the admissions criteria set forth and identifying those students who have the best opportunity to succeed at the University. While the admissions criteria provide a framework for admitting most students, at times, exceptions are made for students who fall outside of this range. Students not meeting a cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 and an ACT composite score of 20 are evaluated for conditional admittance. Conditional admittance is granted to certain students not fully meeting the set forth criteria; however, certain stipulations are attached. Conditionally admitted students may be required to achieve a minimum GPA in their first semester in order to continue their enrollment. Completing specified courses, hour requirements, and a minimum GPA of 2.0 (with no course grade below a “C” level), are common conditions placed upon conditionally admitted students. Conditional admission into the researched institution is based on the evaluation of each individual student (Undergraduate Catalogue, 2009-2010) and is also contingent upon the approval of the Dean of Day Admissions, and in some cases the Academic Process and Standards Committee. Starting with the Fall 2009 conditionally admitted students, an academic mentoring program was established which provided for regular meetings between the conditionally admitted student and a faculty member to review course progress and identify any areas for improvement in order to provide the student the best opportunity for success. The criteria set forth for the conditionally admitted student are clearly stated in the students Conditional Admission Contract (see Appendix E), along with the deadline for completion.

In keeping with the academic mission of the University, these guidelines for conditional admittance are frequently evaluated. Previous basic data collection, discussion, and preconceived notions indicated a possibility that the conditional admittance program does not meet the academic mission of the institution, which is to ensure that academically capable students are given every opportunity to thrive in the college setting. Historically, researched university data indicated a correlation between conditionally admitted students and overall lower academic performance, the research stops there, not going further to indicate causation. Most recently, the Academic Process and Standards committee has indicated concerns regarding the academic success of conditionally admitted students (September 21, 2010 Meeting). The retention committee has also requested aggregate data detailing the success and retention of conditionally admitted students.

The purpose of this study is to research the relationship between conditional admittance and student achievement. The investigator desired to identify any relationship between conditional admittance and academic performance, as well as identify other factors or criteria that factor into the student’s performance. Identifying such factors would lead to more accurate evaluations of students who do not meet the University’s admissions requirements, as well as, steps that could be taken to provide these students additional opportunities to succeed at the researched institution. The information gained by this research will not only add to the body of knowledge surrounding the conditional admittance process, but will also provide the University data in order to assist in the admissions decision-making processes.

Analysis of Data

The collected data was analyzed using Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis, *F*-test for difference in variance, *t*-test comparison for difference in means, and *z*-test for difference in proportions in order to address four predetermined questions:

1. What are the differences between the academic performances of students who are conditionally admitted as compared to those that meet the regular admissions requirements?
2. What academic admission standards of conditionally admitted students most accurately project success during the first full year of school?
3. What are the differences between academic performances of conditionally admitted students based on class status (First time freshman vs. Transfer or Re-admit)?
4. Does supportive intervention, provided after admittance, lead to increased student achievement?

Research Question 1

The question “What are there a difference between the academic performances of students who are conditionally admitted as compared to those that meet the regular admissions requirements?” was addressed by examining the average first-year GPAs of these two groups. Table 20 lists the GPAs for each group for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years. For the purpose of the study, the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 populations were combined in order to have a larger sample size. Interestingly, both groups showed similar increases in GPAs from the 2008-2009 academic year to the 2009-2010 academic year (conditional admits: 0.12 increase; regular admits: 0.10 increase).

The combined GPA's were 2.13 for the conditionally admitted students compared to 2.78 for the regularly admitted students. A *t*-test for difference in means was used to test the null hypothesis and results are summarized in Figure 3. The researcher conducted further analysis by breaking the populations in to ranges of one grade point and examining the percentage of students falling into each range. Figure 3 illustrates how the populations fit into these ranges. The most striking difference is that the majority of conditionally admitted students (47%) fell into the "C" range (2.00- 2.99), as opposed to the regularly admitted population which most commonly (50.3%) fell into the "B" range of 3.00- 4.00.

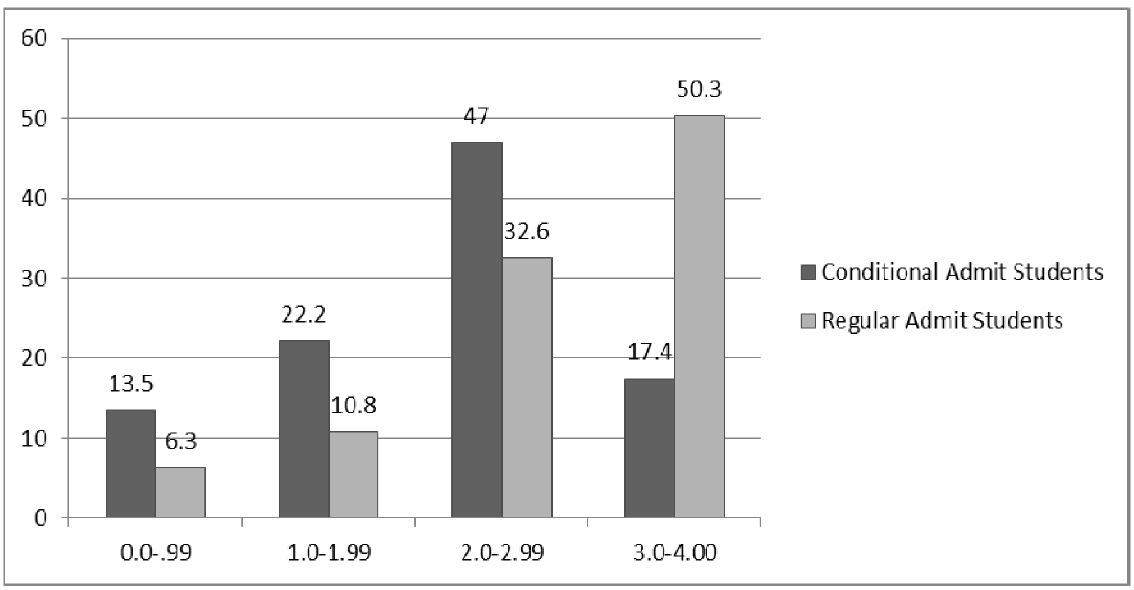

Table 20

Percentages by GPA range for Conditional and Regular Admits

	Conditional Admit Students	Regular Admit Students
0.0-.99	13.5	6.3
1.0-1.99	22.2	10.8
2.0-2.99	47	32.6
3.0-4.00	17.4	50.3

For hypothesis one, an f-test for variance was conducted to identify if there was a difference in variance among the two sample populations. The test revealed that there was no difference in variance (F=1.30; F-critical =1.88). A *t*-test for difference in means was performed to test the null hypothesis "There is no difference in the overall GPA between conditionally admitted and regularly admitted students." The p-value of $9.57e^{-39}$, compared to the alpha value of 0.05, led to rejection of the hypothesis. All t-tests for the study were calculated at the 95% confidence level. Table 21 shows the results for this t-test.

Table 21

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	2.129	2.777
Variance	0.87	0.921
Observations	460	2199
df	2657	
t Stat	-13.23	
P(T<=t) two-tail	9.57E-39	
t Critical two-tail	1.96	

Note. alpha = 0.5

Research Question 2

Having confirmed the difference in performance levels between the regularly and conditionally admitted students, research question two attempts to identify, What academic admissions standards of conditionally admitted students most accurately project success during the first year of school? A limited number of quantitative measures are available to the admissions staff when reviewing a student's application for admission, namely high school GPA and ACT score.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients were calculated comparing both high school GPA and ACT score to conditionally admitted students first year GPA. The null hypothesis was: There is no relationship between the standardized assessments used in admission determination (ACT and SAT conversion score) and the student achievement of conditionally- admitted students after the completion of two semesters of continuous enrollment (GPA). Table 22 and 23 illustrate the non-significant relationship between high school GPA and first year college GPA for the conditionally admitted population. A Pearson Correlation value of 0.136 was calculated, indicating a weak positive correlation, though not statistically significant for both 2008 and 2009 populations. ACT score compared to first year college GPA, however, resulted in a Pearson correlation value of -0.212, indicating a statistically significant, weak negative relationship between ACT performance and first year college GPA, also not significant. Table 23 also illustrates this non-significant relationship.

Table 22

Relationship between College and High School GPA

	College GPA	*HS GPA*
College GPA	1	
HS GPA	0.135	1

Table 23

Relationship between College GPA ACT Score

	College GPA	*ACT score*
College GPA	1	
HS GPA	-0.219	1

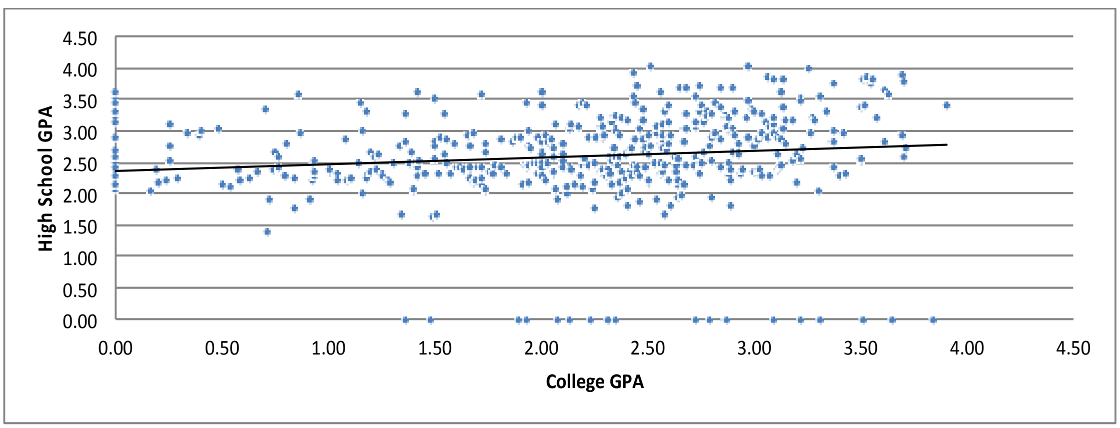

Figure 3. High school GPA vs. first year college GPA of conditional admissions.

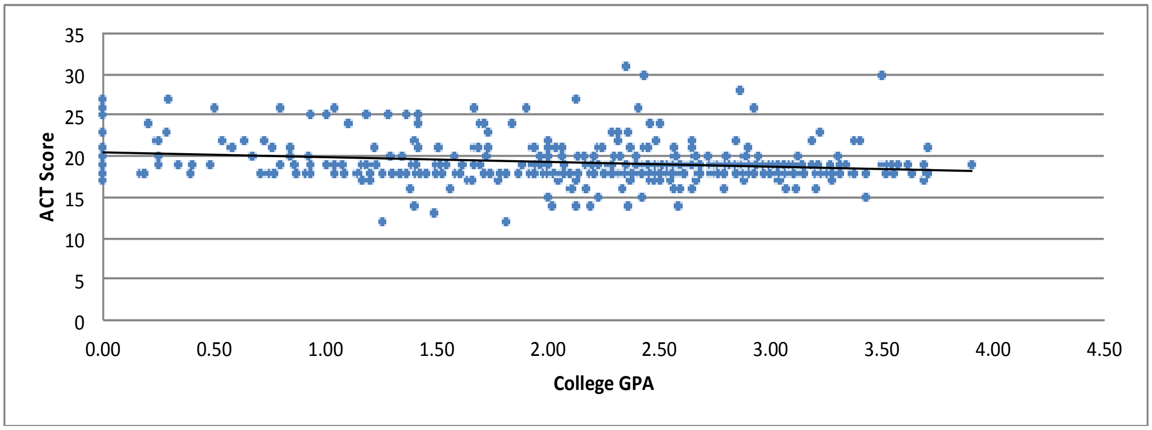

Figure 4. ACT score compared to first year college GPA of conditional admissions.

For the quantitative measures, High School GPA and ACT score, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients were used to identify relationships. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate these results. It is important to note that not all students had taken the ACT score at the time they applied. For these students, the SAT score was converted to the equivalent ACT score using the scale used by the admissions staff. This scale was also tested on students having both ACT and SAT scores, and in fact, the converted SAT utilized from the ACT concordance chart (ACT.org) was equal to their actual ACT score, lending further confidence to this methodology.

These weak relationships only make identifying well-suited conditional admits more difficult. Therefore, other factors such as co-curricular involvement and class status were examined. While this may not aid the admissions staff in determining whether or not to grant admission to a student, it may be useful in identifying relationships and lead to additional requirements being set for conditionally admitted students, such as co-curricular requirements, or pre-arranged housing requirements.

Examining the sample population by housing status showed that 58 of the conditionally admitted students over the two-year period were commuter students, with the remaining 402 making arrangements to live in campus housing. The null hypothesis tested was “There is no difference in GPA between residential conditionally admitted students and commuter conditionally admitted students.” The mean GPAs of these groups were 2.046 for the commuter students and 2.141 for the resident population. These means were compared using a *t*-test for difference in means, and a p-value of 0.469 was obtained. Comparison of this value to the alpha value of 0.05 supports the result that the null hypothesis was not rejected, and there is no significant difference based on housing status.

The researcher also examined participation in co-curricular activities. Again, combining the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 years, 116 of the 460 conditional admits participated in at least one co-curricular activity, with 3 participating in more than one. The remaining 344 did not participate in any co-curricular activity. The mean GPA calculated for these populations was 2.54 for those who participated in a co-curricular, compared to 1.99 for the 344 who did not participate in any kind of co-curricular. Splitting the population along these lines yielded the first group that fell below the “C” average. The null hypothesis was “There is no difference in GPA between those conditionally admitted students involved in co-curricular activities and those who are not.” A p-value of $9.18e^{-8}$ was calculated using a t-test for difference in means. Comparison of this value to the alpha value of 0.05 confirmed that null hypothesis would be rejected and the difference was significant. It should be noted that the cut off to participate in school sponsored co-curricular activities is a GPA of 2.00, lending support to the theory that desire to remain eligible on their respective sports teams may lend additional motivation for the students to focus more on their academic requirements, coupled with building a close relationship with a faculty member that also focuses on keeping them eligible. This "mentoring" theory is further explored by research question four. Table 24 summarizes the GPAs and population size based on the different co-curricular activities. The data is used here for observational purposes only.

Table 24

GPA and Frequency by Co-Curricular

Co-Curricular	GPA	n	Co-Curricular	GPA	n
Softball	3.33	1	Cheerleading	2.66	9
Tennis	3.24	2	Hockey (Ice)	2.56	2
Vet33	3.09	2	Swimming	2.55	10
Table Tennis	3.07	1	Football	2.51	18
Synchronized Swimming	3.00	2	Wrestling	2.44	9
Track & Field	2.99	3	Synchronized Skating	2.43	1
Basketball	2.93	4	Baseball	2.30	3
Soccer	2.89	4	Shooting	2.26	6
Lion Line	2.81	6	Volleyball	2.25	4
Water Polo	2.74	3	Hockey (Roller)	2.21	4
Bowling	2.68	5			

Research Question 3

Research question three, What are the differences between academic performances of conditionally admitted students based on class status (First time freshman vs. Transfer or Re-admit), examined first year success of conditionally admitted students based on their class status entering their first year. Of the 460 conditionally admitted students for the two years, 353 were first-time freshman, with the remaining 107 either transferring from other colleges, or returning to the University after taking time off. The GPAs of these two groups was exactly equal, 2.13. No statistical comparison of these GPAs was necessary to test the null hypothesis, There is no difference in GPA between conditionally admitted transfer students and conditionally admitted first time freshmen. Further analysis supports the previous trends in the data with the majority of these groups falling into the “C” range (44.2% of first-time freshmen; 56.1% of transfers/ re-admits). Figure 6 illustrates the proportions.

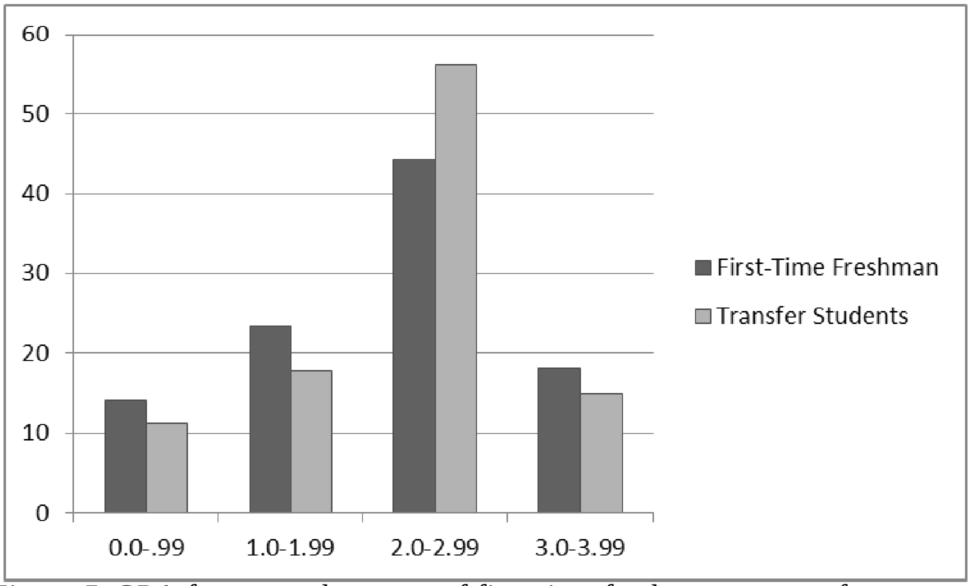

Figure 5. GPA frequency by range of first-time freshman vs. transfers.

Table 25

Frequency by GPA Range for First-time Freshman vs. Transfer

	First-Time Freshman	Transfer Students
0.0-.99	14.2	11.2
1.0-1.99	23.5	17.8
2.0-2.99	44.2	56.1
3.0-3.99	18.1	15

To test the null hypothesis, There is no difference in mean proportion between conditionally admitted and regularly admitted students represented in the four researcher defined GPA categories (see Table 25), a *z*-test for difference in proportions was conducted. The *p*-value of .998 compared to the alpha value of .05 indicates rejection of the null hypothesis. There is no statistical difference in distribution of proportions of students in the four GPA categories displayed in Table 25.

Table 26

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	Variable 1	*Variable 2*
Mean	25.025	25
Variance	227.2825	416.3933333
Observations	4	4
Pooled Variance	321.8379167	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	6	
t Stat	0.001970772	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.998491443	
t Critical two-tail	2.446911851	

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 states: Does supportive intervention, provided after admittance, lead to increased student achievement? The 2008-2009 conditionally admitted class compared to the 2009-2010 class showed an increase of .12 grade points in one year. This increase can be attributed to the organization and implementation of the institutional mentoring program. These mentoring advisors serve in an over and above capacity as compared to the institutions academic advising component. Mentoring advisors utilize attendance monitoring with weekly attendance sheets, bi-monthly progress reports, study hall requirements, and tutorial designation based on prior academic performance.

Mentoring of conditionally admitted students was added during the second year of data collection for this study. Observation of student performance for conditionally admitted students for that second year indicated that the mentoring process may have contributed to higher student success. Starting with the 2009-

2010 class, conditionally admitted students participated in a mentoring program that involved regular meetings with designated faculty members in an attempt to ensure they are staying on top of course work and making a successful transition into college life. Of the 460 conditionally admitted students during these two years, the population was divided fairly evenly with 218 enrolling during the 2008-2009 academic year (47.4%) and 242 enrolling during the 2009-2010 academic year (52.6%). The GPAs for these two groups differed by 0.12 grade points with the 2008-2009 class averaging 2.221 compared to the 2009-2010 class, who averaged 2.367 (Table 20).

Hypothesis # 7 analyzed data that provided observational support for the answer to Research Question # 4. The null hypothesis tested was, There is no difference in GPA between conditionally admitted students entering during academic year 2008-2009 and those admitted during academic year 2009-2010. As with hypothesis one, a *t*-test for difference in means was used to determine the significance of this difference, and resulted in a *p*-value of 0.166. This indicated that the null hypothesis should not be rejected, and there is not a significant difference between the populations. Interestingly, as mentioned earlier, a similar GPA increase was seen in the regularly admitted students over these two years (0.10), despite no academic intervention being provided.

Summary

Based on the evidence presented, there is no quantitative academic standard currently used that shows any merit in accurately predicting the academic success of conditionally admitted students. While this result is not entirely unexpected, it does present a challenge for the admissions staff when reviewing files for students who do not meet the admissions requirements. Logic and other research in the field would suggest that those students who performed better in high school and/ or standardized tests would be more likely to succeed at the collegiate level; however, the data does not support this. Further research comparing high school GPA and standardized test scores to the first year academic performance of non-conditionally admitted students would be interesting to see if these students showed any correlation. Universities across the country base their admissions decisions heavily on these factors and the fact that no significant correlation was observed raises the question of, Are these the best factors to examine when choosing which applicants qualify for admission?

While these quantitative measures are interesting to examine, they only tell part of the story. There are many other factors that come into play when examining whether or not a student will be successful in college. Further research, including surveys of conditionally admitted students would likely provide additional insight into what they found to be the largest obstacles to success. In addition, comparing the results of committee minutes including faculty and first year academic results may provide additional insight as a trained educator may be able to more accurately identify someone who is likely to succeed at the collegiate level better than test scores or high school performance.

While the quantitative data that was examined did not provide much insight into future academic performance, it is interesting to note that the lone factor examined after the admissions performance that did indeed show a positive correlation was participation in a co-curricular activity. Contrary to popular stereotypes of athletes performing at a lower academic level, this did not prove to be the case. As hypothesized earlier, this could just as likely be attributed to the students desire to maintain eligibility for their particular co-curricular as a true desire to succeed in the classroom. The relationship built between a coach or moderator may also lead to increased academic performance, as the student is more likely to identify with them as opposed to an arbitrarily assigned moderator. Again, surveys and questionnaires of these students would likely shed additional light on this.

The researcher's alternate hypothesis 1 indicated that there is a direct relationship between student achievement of conditionally admitted students that participate in co-curricular activities and students who do not participate in co-curricular activities. In fact, there was not a significant difference attributed to students who participated in co-curricular programs. Institutional committees and task force groups continue to voice concerns regarding the co-curricular population and their interpretations of success. These groups feel as though co-curricular students place more emphasis on their personal success in co-curricular participation and competition rather than on academic performance and preparation. The researcher wanted to identify if the afore mentioned concerns sustained validity or if there was a need to further explore a possible change in the day admissions protocol concerning admissibility.

Alternate hypothesis 2 indicates that there is a direct relationship between standardized assessments used in admission determination and student achievement of conditionally admitted students after the completion of two semesters of continuous enrollment. Although several studies prove standardized assessments maintain legitimacy of college readiness, correlations could not be attributed to the research institution's cohorts. The ACT score alone as a determining agent did not prove to be a useful identifier in dictating success.

The researcher found a significant difference between the freshman and transfer population indicating a strong statistical difference in the freshman population. Given the fact that the transfer student met initial admittance criteria as a high school senior, but upon transfer fell into conditional admit status based on below average first year academic performance one would think that would provide an advantage over a true freshman.

The researcher's hypothesis supported the idea that the conditionally admitted transfer student would have performed statistically stronger than the conditionally admitted first time freshman. However, both cohorts performed exactly the same.

In addition to the obvious convenience of being on campus, the residential student has access to resources that the intuition provides to support and reinforce academic success. The commuter student has those same opportunities, but utilization is based on outside factors such as work obligations, transportation, and in some cases family. There was no significant difference identified based on residential status.

Chapter Five: Implications and Recommendations

Implications

The National Association of College Admissions Counseling announced that many colleges and universities will have space available for Fall 2012. Jaschik and Kiley stated that "for admissions officials at many private colleges, they are going to have to work much later into the spring and summer months to fill housing and classes" (Jaschik & Kiley, 2011, para. 5). This will cause admissions offices to look beyond the traditionally allotted number or rely on conditionally admitted students to meet their enrollment projections. It is therefore of the utmost importance to begin examining the collegiate success of students who were conditionally admitted to ensure retention and service students to the highest degree. This study did just that, and there are implications for a study of this nature. Research, in most cases, was not readily available on this topic due to the fact that not many schools want to discuss or publish specific information related to conditional admittance programs, their existence, or the success of its constituents. With this being the case, it can be challenging to make comparisons or contrasts on historical or current aggregate data to identify specific trends or issues.

Recommendations

Conditional admission at the researched institution is a component of the Day Admissions program and relegates concerns among faculty and executive boards. Questions have been formulated requesting responses from the Student Retention task force, Faculty Student Recruitment task force, and the Academic Standards and Processes Committee. These questions will help provide additional research questions and alternative studies that are worthy and relevant. Continued relationships with students, staff, and faculty will be pivotal in terms of participation and feedback. The task forces mentioned above will help provide suggestive feedback as it relates to current and ongoing data related to students who were conditionally admitted.

The researcher has formulated an active and engaged subcommittee that can provide feedback and directional advice. This committee will have members from each of the respective task forces, committees, operational offices, and academic schools to ensure communication and campus wide participation related to the success of the conditional admittance program. This committee will be essential in providing continual advice or criticism as well as research related to the success or failure of the students at the researched institution that will further the development of the conditional admittance program and the implementation of future programs and strategies. These relationships will have similar an exchange of ideas that has been derived from previous situations the researcher has been involved with or has researched in the past.

Utilizing data driven decision making, it is beneficial for the researched institution's leadership to research and study the topic of conditional admission to determine if they are making sound decisions, not only from an economic standpoint, but rather an academic enhancement perspective. Many smaller universities offer high quality programs, and these smaller universities, especially the private institutions, will have strategically implemented financial aid programs that bring their costs into a competitive range when compared to state institutions. It is vitally important for the future of this institution to gauge the success of our students and utilize data to drive any current or future decisions as it relates to admissions, financial aid, and student achievement. Relationships that have been formed will help facilitate this study due to the enthusiasm and acceptance from each relationship not from a hypothesis standpoint, but rather an understanding and confirmation of sound decision-making ability. Alternative relationships to be formed or created include the collaboration of all institutional offices as it relates to student achievement. These relationships will continue to grow and serve as an ongoing sound board for data, questions, and feedback. The researcher believes that continual updates to each of these committees and task forces will provide data and information to eliminate negative thoughts or connotations as it relates to the progression of conditional admits and questions of the processes that supersedes it.

In the researcher's experience, students who are diligent during high school and do their best will always rise to the top and receive university admission letters first; these are the students who are sought after by most colleges. The researcher believes that it is discreditable that so many people seem to use certain institutions as status symbols with their peers rather than truly seeking out a degree program and institution that will be a better fit and provide the highest quality learning experience. In the researcher's opinion, decisions are made by students to attend certain institutions without the development of a sound academic plan for success. It is highly recommended that each student not only visit and meet with all academic constituents, but learn about how their academic background has prepared them for post-secondary education.

The researcher sought to identify if the university was making sound decisions regarding admissibility, and equally as important was identifying if academic intervention has made any significant impact. In the researcher's opinion, it will be important for the future to not only monitor the conditional admittance program, but to monitor all academic intervention programs to ensure that the researched institution is providing a supportive environment that is conducive for academic success.

While assigning the students to a mentor has not lead to a significant increase in academic performance, it is interesting to view this in light of the academic improvement seen by those students participating in co-curricular activities, examined in research question two. While these students are not officially assigned a mentor, they are receiving mentoring from the coach or leader of their particular co-curricular. Perhaps this mentor could not only have more in common and forge a better relationship with the student; they could also take a deeper interest in their academic success. The collection of additional data would be required to further explore this. The researcher would like to recommend future research not only for conditionally admitted students, but regularly admitted students as well. The academic mentoring program for the general student population will need to be studied as well as the academic intervention program assigned from the Academic Process and Standards Committee from the inception of the conditional admittance program.

Further research, including surveys of conditionally admitted students would likely provide additional insight into what they found to be the largest obstacles to success. Furthermore, comparing the results of task force and committee minutes may provide additional insight as a trained educator may be able to more accurately identify someone who is likely to succeed at the collegiate level better than test scores or high school performance.

The researcher recommends the continuation of this study, and constant assessment concerning the success of the admissions program, specifically the conditional admit program. This constant assessment approach will help all constituents better understand the decisions that are made in the Office of Day Admissions. Below, in Table 27, is a comparison of GPA ranges for the years of 2008, 2009, and 2010. The researcher's intent was to compare the 2010 GPA ranges to the 2008 and 2009 data that was used for this study. In Table 27, conditionally admitted students were compared to fully admitted students by academic performance. Table 27 depicts the percentage of conditionally admitted students and the percentage of regularly admitted students whose GPAs fall in the four given ranges (0.0-0.99, 1.0-1.99, 2.0-2.99, and 3.0-4.0).

Table 27

2008-2010: Comparison of GPA Ranges

GPA	Conditional Admit 2008	Full Admit 2008
0.0-.99	13%	7%
1.0-1.99	24%	9%
2.0-2.99	48%	32%
3.0-4.0	14%	52%
GPA	Conditional Admit 2009	Full Admit 2009
0.0-.99	15%	4%
1.0-1.99	18%	10%
2.0-2.99	48%	30%
3.0-4.0	19%	55%
GPA	Conditional Admit 2010	Full Admit 2010
0.0-.99	4%	2%
1.0-1.99	19%	10%
2.0-2.99	50%	34%
3.0-4.0	27%	54%

The results from the table above show how conditionally admitted students are successful when given the opportunity. In 2008, 62% of conditional admits were successful in achieving a 2.0 grade point average or above. In 2009, this percentage increased with 67% of conditional admits earning a 2.0 grade point average or above. In 2010, 77% of conditional admits were successful in achieving a 2.0 grade point average and above. Conversely, in addressing those students who did not meet the 2.0 GPA benchmark the following years were analyzed. In 2008, 37% of conditional admits were unsuccessful in achieving a 2.0 grade point average. In 2009, this percentage decreased, with 33% of conditional admits earning below a 2.0 grade point average. In 2010, 23% of conditional admits were unsuccessful in achieving a 2.0 grade point average. It is important to point out that during this study significant changes were implemented in the Day Admissions Program. As indicated in previous chapters, admissions standards increased to help set students up for success rather than failure.

The implementation of the conditional admissions contract helped organize the communication between the student who was conditionally admitted, the parents of the student, and all institutional constituents that would be involved in the implementation of the contract. In addition, the researcher believes that the level of academic intervention and support provided from the Office of First-Year programs and the Student Success Center largely contributed to the success of the 2.0 benchmark. The 10% increase in the number of conditional admits that achieved a GPA of 2.0 or higher from 2009 and 2010, and the 14% increase between the years of 2008 and 2010 is a positive indicator of the changes that were implemented into the conditional admissions program. Furthermore, the increase in the overall percentage is a clear indication that the conditional admit intervention program continues to improve in addressing the individual needs of those admitted on a contingency basis.

In addition, it should also be noted that the cut off to participate in school sponsored co-curricular activities is a GPA of 2.00, lending support to the theory that desire to remain eligible on their respective sports teams may lend additional motivation for the students to focus more on their academic requirements, coupled with building a close relationship with a faculty member that also focuses on keeping them eligible. This could serve as another research topic to explore mentoring from the academic advising and mentoring program versus the mentoring from the co-curricular programs.

Conclusion

This study is foundational in concept and only provides specific research and data that will lead to future study analysis and comparisons in regards to sound admissibility decisions. The researcher wanted to identify if ACT and GPA are strong predictors of success, and from the researcher's viewpoint worthy for the researched institution to investigate the feasibility of a different admittance model. In some admissions offices, such as the University of Missouri, Columbia, admissions offices have gone away from using standardized tests or GPA's as the bottom line decision indicators for admittance and have chosen to implement a sliding scale. It is noteworthy to investigate the viability of an admissions sliding scale utilizing several admittance factors as they relate to the predictors of success or college readiness benchmarks. The challenge of the sliding scale presented in Table 28 is that in the researchers experience some schools have gone away with class ranking and indicating the class rank on the transcripts sent to the researched institution. This would require additional research and data entry responsibility on the school producing the transcript to investigate and provide the information on the document prior to sending to the requested institutions.

Table 28

University of Missouri's Sliding Scale for Admission

ACT	SAT (CR–M)	Core GPA*	Minimum HS class rank
23	1050–1080	2.80	Top 52%
22	1020–1040	2.90	Top 46%
21	980–1010	3.05	Top 38%
20	940–970	3.20	Top 31%
19	900–930	3.35	Top 22%
18	860–890	3.50	Top 14%
17	820–850	3.65	Top 6%

Note. Adapted from Missouri.edu

As the researcher and Dean of Admissions, I believe the ACT score alone predicts success at a minimal level, meaning there are several additional supporting factors that should be taken into consideration in this process. One could then determine that the procedures and protocols established and supported in the admissions office by the research institution prove to be effective in determining conditional admittance regarding transfer students and their success as compared to first time freshman.

A student who is connected and supported in their environment and associated with the institutions residential success programs would have a better chance to be more successful than the student who maintains commuter status. Moving forward, the researcher will identify if all conditional admitted students be earmarked for residential status.

In regard to research question number one, the researcher believes that it was expected to see that the students regularly admitted performed better than their counterparts that were conditionally admitted. It is also surprising that the researcher could not identify what academic admission standard would serve as the best predictor of college readiness. The fact that there was not a direct correlation between GPA's or standardized test scores for conditionally admitted students raises questions of the possibility of a sliding scale admittance program and the validity of sending the conditionally admitted student to the community college for twenty four hours prior to enrolling their first semester.

The researcher was surprised that a significant difference could not be drawn from the first time freshman student and transfer students that were conditionally admitted. One would think that the transfer student that was academically admissible out of high school and went to another school and performed poorly and needed conditional admittance would perform at a higher rate than the student that was not academically admissible based on the institutionally set admissions standard. In essence, if a student with a 3.0 high school GPA and a 24 ACT score obtained a 1.3 GPA from another university and wanted to transfer into the institution and apply for conditional admission would be better prepared than a student who had a 2.1 GPA and an 18 ACT and applied for conditional admission.

At this time, it is not surprising that academic intervention played a key role in the success of conditionally admitted students. It is important to keep in mind that the fall of 2009 was the first year that supportive intervention was a reality. The researcher believes that any new program is going to take time to implement, and should the researched institution continue with further assessment of this data that in a couple of years the institution will find that supportive intervention does work. The researcher believes that the intervention will have to be something that the office of admissions, faculty, and academic advisors refer students to, because students will not actively seek it out, a fact worth considering since the researched university has always had help available through mentoring, academic writing center that has not been utilized.

Overall, the data shows that none of the objective data the institution currently uses to assess conditional admit success (GPA, ACT/SAT, resident status, transfer credit) actually serves as a significant predictor of college readiness. It may be helpful to rely on additional subjective indicators such as an active resume, letters of recommendation, informative essay, and extracurricular participation. The constant assessment approach will need to be utilized to better understand our current and future data as it relates to college readiness and the institutional admissions program as a whole.

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Appendix A

Researched University Conditional Admission Statement:

Applicants, who fail to meet full admission requirements, but show potential for academic success at the college level, may be admitted on a conditional basis. These applicants are required to sign and follow all stipulations as set forth in the conditional acceptance contract. Once the contract is researched, approved, and signed off on it may have one or all of the following stipulations attached:

1- None

2- Developmental Coursework Required

3- Mentoring Contract (List of several options for success)

4- Probationary semester/year

5- Course load Maximum

6- Minimum GPA required for continued attendance

Conditional Admission Statement

Conditional admission into the university is based on individual evaluations of each student. An applicant may be offered admission to researched institutions undergraduate program, conditional upon completion of certain requirements and submission of high school or college transcripts, all standardized test scores, a personal essay on why and how they feel success will be obtained at the researched institution, and a minimum of three letters of recommendation from teachers or administrators that can speak on the student’s academic ability. Conditional admission is a form of admission to the researched institution, based on a combination of interim and final grades, with specific conditions attached. Students may be asked to achieve certain results in the first semester of attendance. For example, the student may be asked to take some specified courses, hour requirements and to achieve a minimum course grade. While in Conditional Admission status, a student must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA above 2.0, with no grade below "C", or remain in good academic standing. Certain Conditional admits require a probationary semester and/or an academic mentoring contract that outlines student obligations. Offers of conditional admission will always state clearly what requirements are to be met and will define the deadlines for completion of requirements. Conditional admits are contingent upon the approval of the Dean of Day Admissions.

Appendix B

Researched University Conditional Admissions Contract

The following constitutes a conditional admission:

- ❖ Student applying from high school with less than a 2.5 GPA.
- ❖ Student applying from high school with under a 20 ACT or SAT equivalency (940).
- ❖ Student applying as a transfer from community college or university with under a 2.0

In addition:

- ❖ Student needs to have an 18 ACT or SAT equivalency (860) and a 2.3 GPA to be considered for conditional admission.
- ❖ In certain circumstances, additional recommendation is needed from the Academic Standards and Policy Committee (ASPC).

As a condition of my admission to the University, I agree to the following terms:

(Please initial each statement after reading)

- ☐ I will meet with my success mentor to establish a mentoring contract that is conducive for my progression and enrollment.

- ☐ I will meet with my assigned academic advisor as directed. If I must miss an appointment, it is my responsibility to cancel in advance and reschedule the appointment.

☐ I understand that there is a possibility of a course load reduction as deemed appropriate by my academic advisor, success mentor, and/or ASPC.

☐ I will attend all of my classes. If I must miss a class due to illness or extenuating circumstances, I will notify my instructors, academic advisor, and success mentor *before* the class and make arrangements to complete any missed assignments/tests.

☐ I will utilize a daily planner to record test dates and due dates for assignments, manage my study time, and record grade outcomes. I will share my planner with my success mentor and academic advisor during our meetings.

☐ I will complete all of my homework and assignments on time as directed by my instructors.

☐ I understand my academic advisor or success mentor is the only person who can make schedule changes for me.

☐ I will update my academic advisor and success mentor of any changes in my contact information (address/phone) and will check my email daily.

☐ I will sign the Buckley Waiver so that my academic advisor or success mentor may contact my parent(s)/guardian(s) at any time regarding my academic progress and fulfillment of this contract.

☐ I agree that my academic advisor or success mentor may contact operational offices, academic departments, and faculty members concerning my academic progress and fulfillment of this contract.

☐ I understand that if my first semester GPA is less than 2.0, I will be suspended from the University. If my first semester GPA is 2.0 or greater, then I am eligible to continue to attend for the following semester. I will remain in the conditional admissions program until the end of the first academic year. I understand that the conditional admissions program is a first-year program, and I will remain a part of the program throughout the fall and spring semesters.

☐ I will supply the following documents by __________. Failure to do so will void my application for conditional admission.

- Three letters of recommendation submitted by teachers, instructors, administrators who can speak on the student’s academic behalf.

- o If the conditional admission is based on an insufficient ACT/SAT score, the student must take the test a minimum of three times to evaluate sub scores.

- o A personal essay discussing how and why the student will be successful at the institution.

- o A resume detailing extra and co-curricular activities, community service, and youth leadership initiatives.

☐ Additional requirements per Dean of Admissions:

1. ____
   ____
2. ____
   ____
3. ____
   ____
4. ____
   ____
5. ____
   ____

☐ **I understand that a decision will be rendered within three weeks of completion of this contract and submission of all required documents. The requirements of each conditional admissions contract must be completed no later than three weeks before the start of each term.**

☐ **I have read and understand the policies, procedures, and requirements as stated in this contract and accept full responsibility for my academic progress and admissions process. If I fail to meet any of the requirements listed above, I understand that I may be ineligible for the conditional admissions program at the researched University for the current or future semesters. This contract does not guarantee admissions into the University. The completion of this contract in its entirety is an application into the conditional admissions program.**

__________________________________ __________________________________

Student name (please print) Parent/ Guardian name (please print)

__________________________________ __________________________________

Student Signature Date Parent/Guardian signature Date

__________________________________ __________________________________

Student cell phone #	Parent contact phone #
Student email	Parent email

Appendix C

Vitae

Joe Parisi is the current Dean of Day Admissions at the researched University, in St. Charles County, Missouri. Although Joe has been Dean for the past four years, he has been working in higher education since 1994. He was an Associate Dean for three years prior to obtaining his current position. Joe also taught in the School of Business for six years at the researched University and Missouri Valley College specializing in Non Profit Administration. He anticipates earning his Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the researched university in 2012 and he earned his Masters of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Non Profit Administration from the researched University in 1996 and earned Bachelor's degrees in Human Services and Recreation Administration from Missouri Valley College in 1994.