

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

5-16-2023

REPRESENTATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: DOES REPRESENTATION MATTER TO BLACK AND HISPANIC STUDENTS

James Wright
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wright, James, "REPRESENTATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: DOES REPRESENTATION MATTER TO BLACK AND HISPANIC STUDENTS" (2023). *Theses and Dissertations*. 3105.
<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/3105>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact graduateresearch@rowan.edu.

**REPRESENTATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: DOES REPRESENTATION
MATTER TO BLACK AND HISPANIC STUDENTS**

by

James Wright

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Higher Education
at
Rowan University
May 3, 2021

Thesis Chair: Tyrone McCombs, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Educational Services and
Leadership

Committee Members:

Andrew Tinnin, Ed.D., Associate Vice President for Student Life
MaryBeth Walpole, Ph.D., Professor, Educational Services and Leadership

© 2021 James Wright

Acknowledgments

I dedicate my research to my Wife, Desirae. She has been extremely supportive of me throughout this year and this semester especially. Thank you for understanding, caring, and being an all-around great person.

I would like to thank my family and friends who have also pushed me throughout this year. My cohort is also included in this as well.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. McCombs and the Thesis Committee for challenging me and encouraging me to do my best work. The amount of time and effort, that was put into the creation and constant modification of my thesis could greatly be attributed to the encouragement of the Thesis Committee.

Abstract

James Wright

REPRESENTATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: DOES
REPRESENTATION MATTER TO BLACK AND HISPANIC
STUDENTS

2020-2021

Tyrone McCombs, Ph.D.

Master of Arts in Higher Education

The goal of this study was to investigate if there is a correlation between minority students retention and encountering, whether through teaching a course or having an advisor, minority faculty. Moreover, the study investigated how the minority students felt on a predominantly white campus. The subjects included were freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior students who resided on-campus at Rowan University. The students data and information will be collected via an online survey. The findings of the data will consider the attitudes of minority students and if they feel that their experience would be different if they had more minority faculty who were their academic advisors, instructors, or even within their college's program.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
List of Tables	vii
Chapter I: Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Purpose of the Study	2
Significance of the Study.....	3
Assumptions and Limitations.....	3
Operational Definitions	3
Research Questions	4
Overview of the Report	4
Chapter II: Literature Review	6
Higher Education Faculty and Staff.....	6
Higher Education and Culture.....	6
Faculty Consideration of Representation.....	7
Social Climates of Higher Education Institutions	8
Summary of Literature Review	11
Chapter III: Methodology.....	13
Context of Study	13
Population Sampling	13
Data Collection Instruments.....	14
Data Gathering Procedures.....	14
Data Analysis	14

Table of Contents (Continued)

Chapter IV: Findings.....	15
Profile of the Sample.....	15
Analysis of Data.....	19
Research Question 1	19
Analysis of Data.....	21
Research Question 2	21
Chapter V: Summary, Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations.....	25
Summary of the Study	25
Recommendations for Practice	25
Recommendations for Further Research.....	26
References.....	27
Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter.....	29
Appendix B: Open-Ended Comments.....	32
Appendix C: Survey Email Sent via Qualtrics.....	34

List of Tables

Table	Page
Table 1. Student Demographics (N=81).....	16
Table 2. College and Academic Experience (N=81)	17
Table 3. Faculty Encounter (N=81)	20
Table 4. Faculty Encounters (N=81)	21
Table 5. Campus Resources (N=81).....	22
Table 6. Hometown Community (N=81)	24

Chapter I

Introduction

Higher education institutions are becoming more and more competitive, but those who are accepted into an institution, reap its benefits: student growth, learning skills, and professional development. However, that is just the beginning. The students who do complete their program within 4-6 years may have individual hardships or stressors during their higher education career. Higher education institutions offer a variety of assistance to students who may need that additional guidance. Within these students lies a very important demographic and that is Black and Hispanic students. These students may come from backgrounds where they need additional help in adjusting to the journey they will embark on after they are accepted to an institution. One strategy these Black and Hispanic students could use to combat the challenges of adjusting to the college life could be connecting with faculty or staff members who look like or represent them.

With the heightening social and political climate of higher education institutions, it is more imperative now more than ever, that these students have someone who can relate to their struggle. Byrd (2017) estimated that White students are less likely than Black and Hispanic students to feel self-conscious, hear derogatory remarks, or feel discriminated against by faculty, staff and students. Adding the piece of representation allows for Black and Hispanic students to feel more comfortable speaking to faculty and staff members about any concerns they may have.

Statement of the Problem

With the rise of minority students enrolling in higher education institutions, Wellman (2017) reported that retaining and educating them properly, seems to be more

challenging. The report stated two main reasons why minority students are struggling and those were financial reasons (minority students enrolling in for-profit or community colleges and college costs being greater for minority students) and an achievement gap.

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (2016), 20.4 million students are enrolled in a higher education institution for their undergraduate years in the United States. Of these students, around 30% of them are Black and Hispanic students (a percentage that rose from 20% in 2000). Currently, minority students are 22% less likely to graduate in six years than white students. A report by the Young Invincible (2017) show that in 1974, 14% of white students, 5.5% of black students and 5.5% of Hispanic students had completed four years of college. This indicates Black and Hispanic students lagged behind Whites by 8.5%. In 2015, 36.2% of white students, 22.5% of black students and 15.5% of Hispanic students had completed four years of college. That's a 13.7% gap between black and white students, and a 20.7% gap between Hispanic and White students, both much higher than the earlier 8.5% figure.

Both visual representation and guidance from Black and Hispanic faculty and staff could be a key component in ensuring that when Black and Hispanic students arrive their freshman year, that they learn, grow, and develop just as much as their white counterparts.

Purpose of the Study

This study will be conducted to get a better understanding if representation matters to non-white students at a predominantly white institution. A secondary purpose is to see if Black and Hispanic students are equally given the same opportunities and resources to succeed like the

rest of their peers. Are these students at an advantage or disadvantage in regards to representation at a predominantly white institution?

Significance of the Study

With more and more students attending higher education institutions, it is imperative that they have the resources needed to succeed. It is equally important to determine how to best assist non-white students, whether indirectly or directly, through representation at a PWI or HBCU. With Hispanic and Black students attending colleges and universities where they are the minority and if they are not offered the guidance that they need, this could be catastrophic to their continuation at a particular institution.

Assumptions and Limitations

This mixed-methods study assumes that the survey was taken responsibly, honestly, and without bias. Moreover, this study assumes that the students surveyed are representative of the race/ethnicity from which they belong to. Last, this study assumes that the students who are currently attending a PWI utilize the resources given to them by the institution. A few limitations are the number of students that are available to complete the survey. Moreover, the shortened time of the completion of the studies might be a factor. Researcher bias may also be a factor, considering that the researcher might know one or more subjects and is a member of a minority group. Also, the researcher works within the Residential Learning and University Housing Department.

Operational Definitions

1. Attain- A student who received their bachelor's degree after 4-6 years.
2. Non White student-For the purpose of this study, students who identify as Black or Hispanic are classified as non-white.

3. Predominantly White Institution - A higher education institution where majority of the students enrolled identify as White/Non-Hispanic.
4. Representation: The percentage of Black and Hispanic higher education professionals such as: faculty, administrators, and staff that the student comes in contact with throughout the semester.
5. Retain: A student who has completed at least one (1) year at an higher education institution.
6. Semester: Two complete quarters or marking period of nine weeks.

Research Questions

This study will investigate the following questions:

1. What is the impact of Black and Hispanic faculty and staff involvement in the non-white students undergraduate career?
2. What is the impact of representation at a PWI to non-white students?

Overview of the Report

Chapter II contains a literature review, in which a relation to how the question and the study have been conducted. In addition, this chapter will state any current or past, relevant research to this study.

Chapter III discusses the methodology and how the analysis of the study worked, with considerations of how the study was conducted, with what tools, and how the data was collected and analyzed.

Chapter IV reports the findings of the study that were based on the research questions. The data are summarized and provide a profile of the study subjects.

Chapter V explains the major findings and offers suggestions and

recommendations for further study on the topic.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Higher Education Faculty and Staff

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, in fall of 2015 1.6 Billion faculty and staff members (52% full-time, 48% part-time) were accounted for in and across college campuses in the United States. Out of that number 42% were White males and 35% were white females, while just 10 % were Black and Hispanic respectively.

Located in Glassboro, NJ, Rowan University, Rowan is considered a PWI (Predominantly White Institution), meaning that more than 50% of the institution's student population are white students. Rowan's campus has approximately 18,500 students with approximately 15,000 enrolled as undergraduate students. In addition, Rowan has approximately 4,000 employees with 1700 being faculty members according to their school website.

Higher Education and Culture

According to Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey (2002) in 1996, 12% of students thought that racial discrimination was “no longer a problem in the United States” and in 2002, that percentage went up to 21% of students believing that racial discrimination was not a problem. This evidence would suggest that racial issues continued from 1996 to 2002 and still could continue. Today racial issues on college campuses will continue to be a problem until America combats and recognizes the issues. Often times, issues on college campuses may not be known immediately until it is on the news and by then, it may be too late. Smith, Altbach and Lomotey (2002) state that not only are students

greatly impacted by racial relations on college campuses, so are faculty and staff. They have to figure out how to introduce ideas that are sensitive to the class and try to have an in-depth dialogue about race. As college students are seen as the future leaders of America, it is imperative that students and faculty are open to discussing the racial climate in America and on their campus. Giroux (2015) writes that, higher education's impacts the American community and the American community also impacts higher education. It is imperative to set an example for the future leaders of America and to assist in raising the public consciousness of racial issues in higher education.

Faculty Consideration of Representation

In order for Black and Hispanic students to actually see this representation on a college campus, the racial composition of the faculty to also be considered. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2016), only 10% of faculty at all Carnegie Classified institutions, are black and Hispanic combined. This is in comparison to 75% white faculty members. White faculty members surely can assist in helping to retain Hispanic and Black students, but that connection with a person that looks like them might still be missed.

At Stockton University, they host an annual Black Faculty and Staff Gala in which Black, Hispanic, and even white students have the opportunity to speak at and relay what this gala and group of people mean to them. Although, a small percentage, this is a form of connecting the faculty to students who can relate to them. This is only one option to reach out to those who represent Black and Hispanic students. What could be missed here is that other minorities groups, such as Asian or Native American groups, could feel left out.

Social Climates of Higher Education Institutions

An article, *Stop Sustaining White Supremacy* (2017) by Shaun R. Harper, discussed Harper's speech at the University of Virginia a few days after the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville. Harper basically asked students and faculty to hold each other accountable and "do something about" the white supremacy on campus. He urged them to condemn these people. He compared the jobs that the black workers (mainly custodial and groundskeeping) had compared to the white workers (deans and faculty members) and stated that "That is white supremacy too." He ended his speech by asking for four commitments by UVA employees which were to " (1) this university will confront its historical and present-day racism, (2) this university will not graduate racists, (3) alumni of this university will not be sustainers of racial inequity in our society, and (4) white faculty members and administrators will play a major role in fighting white supremacy. To begin the process of enacting these commitments, I suggested the university must design a high-accountability process of racializing its curriculum, develop a cohesive series of race-focused out-of-class learning experiences for students and engage in departmental and campus wide conversations about race." He also noted that "whites must be meaningfully engaged" in these discussions, not just the black staff.

Within two articles post-Charlottesville, they allude to more about what is going on on our campuses. The first article was *Supremacists on Campus* (2017) by Scott Jaschik, which detailed how the head of the National Policy Institute, Richard Spencer, was planning on targeting college campuses in November of 2016 for the promotion of "the heritage, identity and future people of European descent." He requested to speak at Auburn University and he was met with some criticism. The University itself did not

want him at any event, but a federal judge ruled that it was Spencer's First Amendment right to do so. Another incident happened when he wanted to speak at the University of Florida and he was once again met with vitriol. The University's President "denounced all symbols of hate," but encouraged students to have an open dialogue about racism. The students at this institution were going to protest this speech if he were to come. The last request was to speak at Texas A&M, which caused the student body to create hashtags and memes denouncing the National Policy Institute and even creating student wall called the "Maroon Wall" that would "block passersby from having too see it and hold adjacent protests to resist racism" (Jaschick, 2017).

During the fall semester of 2015, the University of Missouri erupted with racial tensions across its campus that were already visible prior to incidents like racial slurs graffitied on campus or verbal statements said to students. The student body had enough. Many students and faculty who opposed these racial epithets labeled themselves "concerned student 1950," in conjunction with the activist group on campus that fought to end racial injustice happening on the University of Missouri Campus (Bryant, 2015). The black student population, in particular, called for the resignation of the school's chancellor at the time, Tim Wolfe, since the students did not see an end to what was happening on their campus. Another group of students decided to go on a hunger strike and still no word from the chancellor. Even after students bombarding chancellor Wolfe during homecoming weekend at the University of Missouri, he chose to remain silent and neutral on the racial issues happening on campus. The straw that broke the camel's back was the University of Missouri football threatening to forfeit their next game if something was not done in regards to Tim Wolf or the racial tensions at the school. The

school would have lost approximately one million dollars if the football team had forfeited their game (Bryant, 2015). Thankfully, Chancellor Wolfe resigned before the school could lose out on the money, but it should not have taken virtually a full semester to rid the school of someone who did not stand up for all students.

Even out west, racial tensions were high at the same time the University of Missouri was going through their issues. The former Dean of Students at Claremont McKenna (located in Claremont, California) Mary Spellman, was also forced to resign after a racist email she sent to a Latina student (Watanabe & Rivera, 2015). Within the email, Spellman noted that the Latina student would best serve the students who “don’t fit the CMC mold”(Watanabe & Rivera, 2015). Keep in mind, that this is the Dean of Students. A job that *InsideHigherEd* described as “A dean of students has to have a bit of a split personality. You need to be upbeat, outgoing, and comfortable with all kinds of students” (Dad, 2009). It seems that Spellman was not as comfortable as the definition states. The students at the institution called for a reform and funding increase in their multicultural affairs department during and even after the resignation of Spellman. So where does it end? Where does it begin? Is it an administration or student issue in regards to racial tensions leading to protests on campus? Some of these questions have to be asked. How does administration vet these people and are hidden biases known prior to their hire?

According to Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey (2002) in 1996, 12 percent of students thought that racial discrimination was “no longer a problem in the United States” and in 2002 they found they found that that percentage went up to 21 percent of students believing that racial discrimination was not a problem. This evidence would suggest that

racial issues continued from 1996 to 2002 and still could continue. Racial issues on college campuses will continue to be a problem until America combats and recognizes the issues. Often times, we do not hear about issues on college campuses until it is on the news and by then, it may be too late. Altbach, & Lomotey (2002) state that not only are students greatly impacted by racial relations on college campuses, so are faculty and staff members. They have to figure out how to introduce ideas that are sensitive to the class and try to have an in-depth dialogue about race. As college students are seen as the future leaders of America, it is imperative that students and faculty are open to discussing the racial climate in America and on their campus.

Students across the nation have different issues that they feel are vitally important to their beliefs. In 2014 UCLA surveyed approximately 140,000 first time, full-time students around the country and the survey had some daunting numbers. Some findings were that, nearly 1 in 10 students were likely to protests at some point of the college career, that students who identify as Black were more likely in 2015 to participate in protests than in 2014, and that these numbers were some of the highest noted since the genesis of this survey is 1967 after protests like those that focused on the military, apartheid, at Kent State.

Summary of Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to ensure that that the benefits and any normality's are understood in regards to representation on college campuses for Black and Hispanic students. Finding research on representation was a bit difficult to find, but the percentages were easier to come by. These studies ranged from 2007-2017. Within these years, many topics were discussed and can be used for future research.

The social and political protest could also play a role in black and hispanic students not feeling wanted or safe on college campuses. Giving faculty and staff members the resources to guide these students would go a long way to ensure they are safe, secure, and are able to succeed.

Some students might be able to relate to representation on campus and some might not be able to. Further research would need to be conducted on students feeling of faculty and staff representation, faculty representation and what it means to them, and whether or not representation matters to any student on campus regardless of race.

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of Study

This study will be conducted on the campus of Rowan University in the town of Glassboro, NJ during the spring semester of 2019. Rowan is a PWI (Predominantly White Institution), meaning that more than 50% of the institution's student population are white students.

Rowan's campus has approximately 18,500 students with approximately 15,000 enrolled as undergraduate students. In addition, Rowan has approximately 4,000 employees with 1700 being faculty members. Its minority rate of the student population is 30%, which includes different ethnic makeups including 67% White, 6% Asian, 10% Black or African American, and 10% Hispanic/Latino.

Rowan's ethnic diversity rank is 1,239 out of 2,718, which puts it above the ethnic diversity national average. However, within Rowan University's *Fast Facts* website, the percentage of minority students is noted vaguely at 30%.

Population Sampling

The target population of this study was undergraduate students who identify as Black or African American and Hispanic at Rowan University. The available population was undergraduate students who identified as Black or African American, White, or Hispanic at Rowan University. Simple random sampling and convenience sampling was used to select the students at Rowan University. A sample of 60 undergraduate residential students who identify as Black or African American, White, or Hispanic were selected for my study.

Data Collection Instruments

A survey via Qualtrics will be used to collect data. Each student will completed a 27-item survey probing relations between the undergraduate students and their connections to non-white faculty, their hometown, basic demographics, and academic coursework. These students will live on campus for easier to access them. The survey will be distributed by the Resident Directors of a sophomore, junior, and senior hall, Rowan Boulevard, and a Resident Director of a freshman and sophomore hall, Chestnut Hall.

Data Gathering Procedures

Prior to collection of any data, an Institutional Research Board application will be completed and approved. All subjects will read a consent agreement before the survey was administered. No personal information will be collected during the survey administration and subjects will be allowed to withdraw at any point during the administration of the survey if they feel uncomfortable.

Data Analysis

Data from the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Data were analyzed using measures of central tendency including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Sample

This study was conducted at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. The university is a medium-sized public research institution. The subjects of this study were Rowan University students who identified as Black/African American, White, and Latinx during the 2018-2019 academic school year. Of the 81 surveys that were distributed, 75 were completed, which yielded a completion rate of 92.6%. Table 1 corresponds to the demographics from the students who responded. There were 32 males (39.5%), 39 females (54.2), and 1 transgender student (1.2%). In regards to race/ethnicity, 52 (64.2%) identified as white, 3 (3.7%) identified as Hispanic/Latino, 11 (13.6%) identified as Black/African-American, and 5 (5.4%) identify as Asian/Pacific Islander. In table 2, detailing the student's college and academic experience, many of the students identified as Juniors 27 (33.3%).

Table 1*Student Demographics (N=81)*

Subjects	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Male	32	39.5
Female	39	54.2
Transgender	1	1.2
Missing	9	11.1
Family Income During Childhood		
Less than \$24,999	7	8.6
\$25,000-\$49,999	10	12.3
\$50,000-\$74,999	16	19.8
\$75,000-\$99,999	12	14.8
\$100,000 and up	20	24.7
Prefer not to answer	7	8.6
Missing	9	11.1
Race/Ethnicity		
White	52	64.2
Hispanic/Latino	3	3.7
Black/African American	11	13.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	5.4
Prefer not to answer	3	9.4

Table 2*College and Academic Experience (N=81)*

Subjects	<i>f</i>	%
Class Standing		
Freshmen (0-29 credits)	8	9.9
Sophomore (30-59 credits)	24	29.6
Junior (60-89 credits)	27	33.3
Senior (90+ credits)	16	19.8
Missing	6	7.4
GPA		
2.0-3.0	18	22.2
3.0>	57	70.4
Missing	6	7.4
Are you a first generation college-student?		
Yes	24	29.6
No	51	63.0
Missing	6	7.4
Studying is essential to getting good grades in college?		
Yes	58	71.6
No	17	21.0
Missing	6	7.4

Subjects	<i>f</i>	%
Are you a member/on the executive committee of any clubs or organizations on camps?		
Yes	40	49.4
No	30	37.0
Missing	11	13.6
Would you say Rowan has a diverse student population?		
Yes	41	50.6
Maybe	18	22.2
No	11	13.6
Missing	11	13.6
I attend Rowan for reasons unrelated to diversity (finances, proximity to home, friends)?		
Yes	60	89.6
Maybe	5	6.2
No	2	2.05
Missing	14	17.3

Subjects	<i>f</i>	%
Rowan cares about me as a student?		
Yes	30	37.0
Maybe	27	33.3
No	11	13.6
Missing	11	13.6
Would you say Rowan has a diversity faculty/administrator population?		
Yes	32	39.5
Maybe	19	23.5
No	17	21.0
Missing	13	16.0
I consider my high school diverse		
Yes	36	44.4
Maybe	9	11.1
No	22	27.2
Missing	14	17.3

Analysis of Data

Research Question 1

What is the impact of Black and Hispanic faculty and staff involvement in the

non-white students undergraduate career?

Table 3 and 4 provides a summary of the impact on representation on a student's college experience. A likert-scale allowed subjects to rate their responses as 1=Rarely, 2=About half the time, 3=Most of the time and (1=Extremely unlikely, 2=Somewhat unlikely, 3=Neither likely nor unlikely, 4= Somewhat likely, 5=Extremely likely). The results indicated that students are more likely to encounter non-white faculty members in their designated academic programs. In addition, Table 3's results show that an overwhelming amount of students do not think that having more non-white faculty had an impact on their college experience.

Table 3

Faculty Encounter (N=81)

Statements	R		H		M	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I am likely to encounter a non-white faculty member <i>M</i> =1.82, <i>SD</i> =.77	15	18.5	26	32.1	27	33.3
I have seen a non-white faculty member in my academic program <i>M</i> =1.94, <i>SD</i> =.75	17	21.0	30	37.0	21	25.9

Note. 1=Rarely, 2=About half the time, 3=Most of the time

Table 4

Faculty Encounters (N=81)

Statements	EU		SU		N		SL		EL	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I am likely to take a class by a non-white professor. <i>M=2.50, SD=1.18</i>	3	3.7	12	14.8	19	23.5	16	19.8	18	22.2
Seeing more non-white faculty would help make my experience at Rowan better. <i>M=2.75, SD=1.08</i>	7	8.6	3	3.7	33	40.7	16	19.8	9	11.1
Having non-white faculty members as my academic advisor would make my experience better. <i>M=2.84, SD=1.04</i>	6	7.4	4	4.9	41	50.6	7	8.6	10	12.3

Note. 1=Extremely unlikely, 2=Somewhat unlikely, 3=Neither likely nor unlikely, 4=Somewhat likely, 5=Extremely likely

Analysis of Data

Research Question 2

What is the impact of representation at a PWI to non-white students?

Table 5 and 6 provides a summary of the impact on representation on a student's college experience. A likert-scale allowed subjects to rate their responses as 1=Rarely,

2=About half the time, 3=Most of the time and (1=Extremely unlikely, 2=Somewhat unlikely, 3=Neither likely nor unlikely, 4= Somewhat likely, 5=Extremely likely). The results indicated that subjects are not that active in visiting their Student Affairs/Academic Affairs advisors, therefore asking the question about the impact of representation to these subjects would be rendered irrelevant since the subjects rarely come in contact with their advisors. In table 6 many students said that they come from a diverse community in their hometown. This information is based on the students personal opinions and should be considered when studying representation.

Table 5

Campus Resources (N=81)

Statements	R		H		M	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
How often do you visit your academic advisor?	42	51.9	17	21.0	11	13.6
<i>M=2.44, SD=.75</i>						
How often do you visit your professor during their office hours?	52	64.2	14	17.3	4	4.9
<i>M=2.69, SD=.57</i>						

Statements	R		H		M	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
How often do you come in contact with the Dean of Students? <i>M</i> =2.91, <i>SD</i> =.37	66	81.5	2	2.2	2	2.5
How often do you see your college program's Dean? <i>M</i> =2.89, <i>SD</i> =.40	64	79.0	4	4.9	2	2.5
How often do you visit the Housing Department's Office? <i>M</i> =2.80, <i>SD</i> =.47	58	71.6	10	12.3	2	2.5
How often do you participate in campus programs hosted by your academic program? <i>M</i> =2.54, <i>SD</i> =.58	41	50.6	26	32.1	3	3.7
How often do you participate in campus programs conducted by any clubs or campus organizations? <i>M</i> =2.00, <i>SD</i> =.81	23	28.4	24	29.6	23	28.4

Note. 1=Rarely, 2=About half the time, 3=Most of the time

Table 6

Hometown Community (N=81)

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I consider my hometown community to be diverse.	12	14.8	16	19.8	7	8.6	11	13.6	21	25.9
<i>M=2.81, SD=1.53</i>										
There are people who do not look like me in my hometown community.	7	8.6	8	9.9	5	6.2	21	25.9	26	32.1
<i>M=2.24, SD=1.35</i>										

Note. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

Some may say that representation does not matter in higher education. This idea was challenged for this study. From the literature review, it suggested that representation does have an impact on students' lives. This study was conducted on the campus of Rowan University in the town of Glassboro, NJ during the spring semester of 2019. This study measured whether or not representation mattered to undergraduate students.

The subjects of this study were Rowan University students who identified as Black/African American, White, and Latinx during the 2018-2019 academic school year. Of the 81 surveys that were distributed, 75 were completed, which yielded a completion rate of 92.6%. There were 32 males (39.5%), 39 females (54.2), and 1 transgender student (1.2%). In regards to race/ethnicity, 52 (64.2%) identified as white, 3 (3.7%) identified as Hispanic/Latino, 11 (13.6%) identified as Black/African-American, and 5 (5.4%) identify as Asian/Pacific Islander. Many of the students identified as Juniors 27 (33.3%). Data from the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Data were analyzed using measures of central tendency including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Recommendations for Practice

The following are recommendations for practice at Rowan University and possibly other institutions based off the findings included in this research:

1. Provide more opportunities for students to interact with

faculty/administration.

2. Recruit more students who are minority-identified.
3. Provide more resources to student clubs and organizations.
4. Allocate funds to faculty/administration to create programs for minority student connections.
5. Recruit more minority-identified faculty and administration.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following are recommendations for further research based off the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. Further studies should be conducted with a larger population with students in minority clubs/organizations.
2. A study should be conducted including faculty and administration feedback.
3. A study should be conducted that focuses more on the holistic student experience
4. A study should be conducted with minority-identifying faculty given the same study instruments.
5. Further research should be conducted on more minority students
6. A pre and post study or longitudinal study on representation in higher education and should be conducted from the student's first year to last academic year.

References

- Byrd, W. (2018, June 06). Why Social Interactions Matter for Our Conversations About Campus Climates and STEM. Retrieved from <https://www.higheredtoday.org/2018/04/30/social-interactions-matter-conversations-campus-climates-stem/>
- Bryant, H. (2015, November 10). Missouri president Tim Wolfe resigns amid student criticism of handling of racial issues. Retrieved from http://www.espn.com/college-football/story/_/id/14089689/missouri-tigers-president-tim-wolfe-resigns-amid-racial-unrest
- Dad, D. (2009, December 20). Ask the Administrator: What Makes a Good Dean of Students? | Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved from https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/confessions_of_a_community_college_dean/ask_the_administrator_what_makes_a_good_dean_of_students
- Dickey, J. (2016, May 31). College Campus Protest: U.S. Undergraduate Movement. Retrieved from <http://time.com/4347099/college-campus-protests/>
- Harper, S. R. (2017, August 21). Stop Sustaining White Supremacy . Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/08/21/what-charlottesville-says-about-white-supremacy-universities-essay>
- How Diverse is Rowan University? (2018, March 18). Retrieved from <https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/rowan-university/student-life/diversity/>
- Jaschik, S. (2017, August 14). Supremacists on Campus. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/08/14/white-supremacy-turning-campus-speeches-and-leaflets>
- Jones, J. M. (2016, April 05). College Students Oppose Restrictions on Political Speech. From <http://news.gallup.com/poll/190451/college-students-oppose-restrictions-political-speech.aspx>
- Tchekmedyan, A., Easter, M., & Oreskes, B. (2017, November 1). Eight arrested in protests as Milo Yiannopoulos speaks at Cal State Fullerton – LA Times. Retrieved from <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-milo-comes-to-fullerton-20171101-story.html>
- The NCES Fast Facts Tool provides quick answers to many education questions (National Center for Education Statistics). (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372>

- Giroux, H. (2015). *Take back higher education: race, youth, and the crisis of democracy in the post-civil rights era*. Place of publication not identified: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hawkins, D., & Nicola, T. (2017, September 13). Diversity Among Higher Education Admission Professionals Is More Important Than Ever. Retrieved from <https://www.higheredtoday.org/2017/08/16/diversity-among-higher-education-admission-professionals-important-ever/>
- RACE & ETHNICITY AS A BARRIER TO OPPORTUNITY: A BLUEPRINT ... (2017, February). Retrieved from <http://younginvincibles.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Higher-Education-Equity.pdf>
- Smith, W. A., Altbach, P. G., & Lomotey, K. (2002). *The racial crisis in American higher education: continuing challenges for the twenty-first century*. Albany (N.Y.): State University of New York Press.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Winter 2015–16, Graduation Rates component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*,
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2016, Fall Enrollment component; and Fall 2014, Institutional Characteristics component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*
- Wellman, M. (2017, March 07). Report: The race gap in higher education is very real. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/college/2017/03/07/report-the-race-gap-in-higher-education-is-very-real/37428635/>

Appendix A
IRB Approval Letter

Appendix A

** This is an auto-generated email. Please do not reply to this email message.
The originating e-mail account is not monitored.
If you have questions, please contact your local **IRB** office **

DHHS Federal Wide Assurance
Identifier: FWA00007111
IRB Chair Person: Harriet Hartman
IRB Director: Sreekant Murthy
Effective Date:

eIRB Notice of Approval

STUDY PROFILE

Study ID:	Pro2019000370	Study Coordinator:	
Title:	Representation In Higher Education: A study on if representation matters to black and hispanic students		
Principal Investigator:	Tyrone McCombs	Other Study Staff:	There are no items to display
Co-Investigator(s):	James Wright	Approval Cycle:	Not Applicable
Sponsor:	Department for Education and Skills	Device Determination:	Not Applicable
Risk Determination:	Minimal Risk	Exempt Category:	2(i)
Review Type:	Exempt		
Subjects:	50		

CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS

Submission Type:		Research Protocol/Study		Submission Status:		Approved	
Approval Date:		5/8/2019		Expiration Date:			
Continuation Review Required:							
Pregnancy Code:	No Pregnant Women as Subjects	Pediatric Code:	No Children As Subjects	Prisoner Code:	No Prisoners As Subjects		
Protocol:	research survey (1).docx Email for Study.docx PROTCOLTEMPLATE-BLANK-09-04-2015-Final.docx	Consent:	There are no items to display	Recruitment Materials:	Email for Study.docx		

*** Study Performance Sites:**

Glassboro Campus 201 Mullica Hill Road Glassboro,NJ 08028

There are no items to display

ALL APPROVED INVESTIGATOR(S) MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. Conduct the research in accordance with the protocol, applicable laws and regulations, and the principles of research ethics as set forth in the Belmont Report.
- 2a. **Continuing Review:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses in approval, submit a continuation application at least eight weeks before the study expiration date.
- 2b. **Progress Report:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses, an annual progress report is required at least 21 days prior to the expiration date.
3. **Expiration of IRB Approval:** If IRB approval expires, effective the date of expiration and until the continuing review approval is issued: **All research activities must stop unless the IRB finds that it is in the best interest of individual subjects to continue. (This determination shall be based on a separate written request from the PI to the IRB.) No new subjects may be enrolled and no samples/charts/surveys may be collected, reviewed, and/or analyzed.**
4. **Amendments/Modifications/Revisions :** If you wish to change any aspect of this study after the approval date mentioned in this letter, including but not limited to, study procedures, consent form(s), investigators, advertisements, the protocol document, investigator drug brochure, or accrual goals, you are required to obtain IRB review and approval prior to

implementation of these changes unless necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects. This policy is also applicable to progress reports.

5. **Unanticipated Problems:** Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>

6. **Protocol Deviations and Violations:** Deviations from/violations of the approved study protocol must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>

7. **Consent/Assent:** The IRB has reviewed and approved the consent and/or assent process, waiver and/or alteration described in this protocol as required by 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50, 56, (if FDA regulated research). Only the versions of the documents included in the approved process may be used to document informed consent and/or assent of study subjects; each subject must receive a copy of the approved form(s); and a copy of each signed form must be filed in a secure place in the subject's medical/patient/research record.

8. **Completion of Study:** Notify the IRB when your study has been completed or stopped for any reason. Neither study closure by the sponsor nor the investigator removes the obligation for submission of timely continuing review application, progress report or final report.

9. The Investigator(s) did not participate in the review, discussion, or vote of this protocol.

10. **Letter Comments:** *There are no additional comments.*

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email communication may contain private, confidential, or legally privileged information intended for the sole use of the designated and/or duly authorized recipients(s). If you are not the intended recipient or have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately by email and permanently delete all copies of this email including all attachments without reading them. If you are the intended recipient, secure the contents in a manner that conforms to all applicable state and/or federal requirements related to privacy and confidentiality of such information.

—

Study.PI Name:

Study.Co-Investigators:

Appendix B

Open-Ended Comments

“Curious as to what the thesis behind this survey is. Color of skin has zero affect on the person’s ability to teach/advise. Feel as though “indifferent” should have been offered as a choice for almost all of the questions because “No” can be interpreted as favoring the Caucasian race when in reality it is irrelevant:”

“Diversity at Rowan has helped me get a better understanding of black culture, coming from a mostly white hometown.”

“Diversity of students and staff is not an important factor.”

“Gender nonconforming students and faculty appear quite present at Rowan. That’s one area most people don’t normally see at home. More importantly, I’ve many gender nonconforming students who came to Rowan because of its inclusion towards them.”

“Having a minority instructor has not bettered my understanding of my major; nor has having a white instructor. Race has ZERO effect on academia, this comes the child of one American born, Italian blooded parent and the other being a Central American immigrant. I feel as if race is too focused upon today and used too much to make sociological examples. This survey, is an example of such, and by attempting to recognize such topics you make us feel as if diversity is an issue when in fact is entirely normal and should not be glorified nor undermined as it should gone as almost unseen; once you stop seeing someone as a color, you see a human being, that’s how the community should be seen. The HUMAN race. Not African American apart Caucasian, or from Latino or from Hispanic, or From Asian, etcetera.”

“I like seeing the diversity that rowan has in all of its faculty and staff as well as students that makes me proud to be rowan student.”

“I personally believe that I would receive the same quality of education regardless of the race of my professors, classmates or advisors.”

“I personally do not feel that the color one’s skin has anything to do with my experience at Rowan. If my professor is white or not, I will still get the education I am here to achieve. If my peers are white or not white, I will still make friends and feel like I belong. This school is diverse, and in my opinion, this not a problem on Rowan’s campus, nor does this affect my education.”

“I’m a white male and have felt that that the teacher diversity in my classes has been very diverse, having more non-white professors this semester than white professors.”

“My home town is 30 minutes away and our opinion (the students) might be different from the surrounding area of Rowan.”

“Race should not matter at a University. I understand it is a hot topic, but if everyone just realized there is nothing different past the skin it would not matter. White people did some horrible things to African Americans. It was disgusting. But the Black community should not hold on to that because it prohibits their ability to move on and help the racism stop. The minority of whites are not the only one pushing this racist agenda. There are people in the black community as well. The divide that is present between blacks and whites can only be stopped if the past is let go, and stereotypes become the thing of the past.”

“Rewording some multiple choice (ie not just most the time half of the time and rarely since it doesn't make sense for some of the questions like the housing one (what does going to housing dept half the time or most of the time even mean?))”

“Rowan severely lacks diversity.” “What's wrong with white people lol.”

Appendix C

Survey Email Sent via Qualtrics

Hello All,

My name is James Wright and I am a graduate student at Rowan University. I would appreciate it if you all could take 5 minutes of your time to complete this survey for my research paper: https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9Zbq0knRkhhIECh

ONLINE SURVEY (ALTERNATE CONSENT)

You are invited to participate in this online research survey entitled Does Representation Matter? You are included in this survey because we are looking to inquire if there is a correlation between representation and retention and student achievement. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will be approximately 100 subjects. The survey may take approximately five minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, do not respond to this online survey. Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey. We expect the study to last from May 9 – May 30. The purpose of this research study is to inquire if there is a correlation between the pressure of being underrepresented student and student achievement. There are no risks or discomforts associated with this survey. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study, you may help us understand if representation matters and how this could be incorporated in our daily work as higher education professionals. Your response will be kept confidential. We will store the data in a secure computer file and the file will be destroyed once the data has been published. Any part of the research that is published as part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact me/or the researcher at the address provided below, but you do not have to give your personal identification.

James M. Wright, Jr.
Resident Director, Nexus Properties, 230 Victoria & 223 High Office:
230 Victoria, Room 224
Rowan University
Residential Learning and University Housing
E: wrightj4@rowan.edu
P: 856-256-7821