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College Choice of Minority Students Admitted to Institutions in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities



Abstract

The study examined the factors that affected minority students' choice to enroll at private four-year faith-based institutions in the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) in the United States. The study utilized the data from the College Board's Admitted Student Questionnaire PLUS (ASQ PLUS) survey. The final sample included 283 admitted minority students from eight CCCU member institutions that participated in the ASQ PLUS survey between the years 2005 and 2010. The results from Chi-Square and t-Tests revealed that race, parents' income, high school GPA, institution's distance from home, financial aid awards (i.e., grants and loans), institutional recruitment strategies (i.e., campus interaction, electronic communication and Web site), and perceived institutional characteristics (i.e., extracurricular activities, recreational facilities, academic facilities, availability of majors, and academic reputation) were significantly related to minority students' decision to enroll at a CCCU member institution. However, in the final logistic regression, only high school GPA, campus interaction and promotional materials remained significant. The findings of this study can potentially aid CCCU member institutions to improve their marketing strategies and eliminate the barriers in the enrollment process to better recruit and serve racially diverse students.

The diversity of students in private faith-based institutions has been a longstanding problem to which much energy and effort has been devoted at the national level (Paredes-Collins, 2009). In 1999, the former president of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), Robert Andringa, identified diversity as a key issue and challenge for its member institutions. The CCCU is an association of 110 Christian higher education member institutions nationwide that are committed to "advancing the cause of Christ-centered higher education" and helping their member institutions "transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth" (CCCU, 2010, para 3). They are fully-accredited, US-based institutions that distinctly hire Christians for all full-time faculty and staff positions. In 2005, only 15 percent of the students enrolled in the CCCU member institutions were minority students compared with a national average of 27.4 percent (Noel-Levitz, 2010). In 2009, minority enrollment at CCCU member institutions had only increased to 19 percent, while the national average reached 33 percent (Institute for College Access and Success, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2010; Noel-Levitz, 2010). Thus, recruiting and retaining racially

diverse student populations continues to be a struggle for faith-based institutions.

One small step toward increasing diversity across CCCU member institutions was to examine and address the barriers in the admission process for minority students. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine what factors affected minority students' choice to enroll at private four-year faith-based CCCU member institutions in the US. The questions that guided the study were: (1) What was the profile of minority students admitted to private four-year faith-based CCCU member institutions in the US? (2) How did admitted minority students' demographic and background characteristics, financial factors, perceptions of institutional characteristics, and institutional marketing strategies affect their decisions to enroll at private four-year faith-based CCCU member institutions in the US? Understanding what factors are related to minority students' college choice can potentially aid CCCU member institutions by improving their marketing strategies and eliminating the barriers in the enrollment process to better recruit and serve racially diverse student bodies.



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Theoretical Framework and Review of Relevant Literature

Chapman (1981) was among the first who developed the college choice model and examined the factors that influenced a student's decision to enroll at an institution. Chapman's (1981) theory stated that college choice was guided by external influences and student characteristics. The external factors included significant persons in students' lives, fixed institutional characteristics, and institution's efforts to effectively communicate with applicants. Student characteristics in Chapman's (1981) theory comprised four categories: socioeconomic status, aptitude, educational aspirations, and high school performance.

Hossler and Gallagher (1987) continued to refine the theory by developing a three-phase college choice model, which became the most widely cited model to date. The three phases of the model included a predisposition phase, a search phase and a choice phase. The first or the predisposition phase was part of the developmental process where the students determined whether they would pursue an education beyond high school and started to gather information about the institutions of interest. During the second search phase, the students began to narrow down the list of possible institutions into a "choice set" to which they applied. In the third and final choice phase, which is the focus of this study, admitted students made the final enrollment decision.

According to Hossler and Gallagher (1987), factors that played a role in the final choice phase were students' individual preferences, key attributes of the institution and the courtship procedures between the student and the institution, including financial aid awards and intentional communication strategies. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) indicated that during this phase, the courting of admitted students was critical to enrollment, yet much of this final decision was determined by students' perceived quality and image of the institution. However, Maguire and Lay (1981) argued that it was critical for institutions to stay involved in the courting process until the final decision was rendered by

the admitted student. According to Maguire and Lay (1981), the image-making and decision-making phases of the choice process were not sequential, but rather concurrently active in the choice process. Therefore, the institution's facilitation of this process was critical to the student's final choice.

In addition to college choice theories, Critical Race Theory (CRT) provided a theoretical lens to frame and analyze the racial barriers experienced by students of color in the college choice process. Soloranzo, Villalpando and Oseguera (2005) identified five defining elements of the CRT: (1) centrality of race and racism to identify the structures, practices and discourses that are perpetuating racism in higher education; (2) challenge to dominant ideology and the traditional claims of objectivity, meritocracy, color blindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity in higher education; (3) commitment to social justice and praxis throughout all segments of the academy to eliminate all forms of racial, gender, language, and class subordination; (4) importance of experiential knowledge to legitimize all experiences of students of color; and (5) historical context and interdisciplinary perspective through which to analyze race and racism in the higher education setting.

Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, and Renn (2010) identified four major themes that helped further define CRT. The first theme indicated that racism provided a common thread that was woven through life in America. The second theme noted the importance of considering the voices of people of color to understand the privilege of white people. The third theme suggested that the voices of color would only be acted upon if the dominant culture derived some sort of benefit from their suggestions. The fourth and final theme noted that the belief in color blindness and race neutrality must be challenged because it rendered people of color invisible. These four themes of the CRT served as a lens to understand the barriers minority students faced in their college choice process in this study.

This study's extensive review of existing research identified several key factors related to the

college choice process of minority students, including students' demographic and background characteristics, type and amount of financial aid, institutional marketing and recruitment strategies, and perceived institutional characteristics, such as the reputation of the institution, its location, or diversity of the student body, (e.g., Cabrera and LaNasa, 2000a, 2000b; Carter, 1999; Freeman, 2005; Freeman and Gail, 2002; Hearn, 1991; Hu and Hossler, 2000; Hurtado, Inkelas, Briggs, and Rhee, 1997; Kim, DesJardins, and McCall, 2009; McDonough, 1997; Perna, 2000, 2002; Perna and Titus, 2005; Person and Rosenbalum, 2006; St. John, 1999; St. John and Noell, 1989; St. John, Paulsen, and Carter, 2005; Weiler, 1996). While the literature about the college choice of minority students was fairly well developed, the college choice process of minority students admitted to private four-year faith-based institutions is limited. The research was especially lacking on how minority students who are admitted to a variety of institutions finalize their decision to enroll or not in a private faith-based institution. This study attempted to address this gap in the existing research and examine what factors related to college choice of minority students admitted to private four-year faith-based CCCU member institutions.

Method

Research Design

We utilized the combination of correlational and survey designs in this study. The correlational design allowed us to “describe and measure the degree of association between two or more variables or sets of scores” (Creswell, 2008, p. 356). The data

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for this study were collected using the College Board's Admitted Student Questionnaire PLUS (ASQ PLUS) survey at one point in time; therefore, the survey design was more specifically classified as a cross sectional survey. ASQ PLUS survey is developed by The College Board and administered by institutional admission offices (College Board, 2010). ASQ PLUS survey consists of 70 questions that measure admitted students' perceptions about the academic image and reputation of the institution, effectiveness of the recruitment process, interaction with admission personnel,

institutional facilities, and cost of attendance (ASQ PLUS User's Manual, 2010).

Sample

The sample for this study included admitted minority students from CCCU member institutions who participated in the College Board's ASQ PLUS survey between the years 2005 and 2010. Admitted students were individuals who had officially been admitted to the institution but may or may not have chosen to enroll (Hossler and Gallagher, 1987). Minority students referred to any individuals who were not of Caucasian race. In other words, individuals who on the ASQ PLUS survey identified themselves as American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander; Mexican American or Chicano; Puerto Rican; Latin American, South American, Central American, or other Hispanic; Black or African American; and Other. International students or non-resident aliens were not included in the sample.

Of all admitted students surveyed at nine CCCU institutions between 2005 and 2010, a total of 3,199 admitted students responded to the ASQ PLUS survey and of those, 504 were minority students. Of the sample of 504 admitted minority students, we eliminated any cases where students did not indicate where they intended to enroll in the next 12 months. As a result, the final sample included only 283 minority students admitted to eight CCCU member institutions who indicated that they were enrolling in either a respective CCCU member institution to which they were admitted or any other non-CCCU member institution. Of 283 minority students in the final sample, 87 (30 percent) indicated

that they were of Hispanic origin, 50 (17.7 percent) were African American/Black, 97 (34.3 percent) were Asian American/Pacific Islander and 49 (17.3 percent) were American Indian or Other.

All eight CCCU member institutions included in the final sample were classified by Carnegie as private, not-for-profit and baccalaureate-diverse institutions (Carnegie Classification, 2010). They were located in the Northeast, East Coast, Midwest, Northwest, and West Coast. The denominations of these institutions included

Catholic Dominican, Brethren in Christ Church, Church of God, Church of the Nazarene, Evangelical Covenant Church, Interdenominational, and Presbyterian Church USA. The enrollment of these institutions ranged from 1,550 students to 2,800 students, and the representation of enrolled minority students ranged from 7.5 percent to 40 percent.

Variables

Dependent Variable

The outcome variable in this study was a dichotomous variable that indicated whether the student chose to enroll or not at the respective CCCU institution to which he or she had been admitted. In question 19 of the ASQ PLUS survey, respondents were asked to report if they planned to enroll in college in the next 12 months and to indicate where they were going to attend. The respondents were coded as 1 if they indicated that they chose to enroll at the CCCU member institution to which they had been admitted. The respondents were coded as 0 if they chose to enroll at any other non-CCCU member institution.

Independent Variables

The predictors in this study consisted of four sets of variables: demographic and background characteristics; financial factors; admitted students' perceptions of institutional marketing strategies; and institutional characteristics as perceived by admitted students. Demographic and background characteristics included: gender, race/ethnicity, parents' income, proximity of the institution from home, high school GPA, and high school type. High school GPA was coded as: 1 = "A" average GPA and 0 = GPA below an "A" average. The responses on the high school type variable were collapsed into a dichotomy: 1 = attended independent, religiously affiliated high school and 0 = attended any other high school (i.e., public or independent, not religiously affiliated).

Financial factors included two variables that indicated whether or not the admitted student was awarded loans and grants/scholarships: 1=yes and 0=no. Five institutional marketing strategies were examined in the study: campus interaction, electronic communication, Web site, promotional materials, and college-sponsored visits. Admitted students' ratings of each of these institutional marketing strategies were coded as: 1=not used, 2=poor/fair, 3=good, 4=very good, and 5 = excellent. Finally, students' perceptions of institutional characteristics were represented by the following five variables: opportunities for extracurricular activities, recreational facilities, academic facilities, availability of majors, and academic reputation. Admitted students were asked to rate these institutional characteristics using a four-point Likert scale: 1=poor/fair, 2=good, 3=very good, and 4=excellent.

Table 1. Students' Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Total N = 283	Enrolling n = 108	Not Enrolling n = 175	Chi- Square
	Frequencies (percent)			
Gender				
Males	89 (31.4)	38 (35.2)	51 (29.3)	1.065
Females	193 (68.2)	70 (64.8)	123 (70.3)	
Race				
Hispanics	87 (30.7)	31 (28.7)	56 (32.0)	33.122***
African American / Black	50 (17.7)	36 (33.3)	14 (8.0)	
Asian American / Pacific Islander	97 (34.3)	23 (21.3)	74 (42.3)	
American Indian / Other	49 (17.3)	18 (16.7)	31 (17.7)	
Parents' Income				
Below \$30,000	45 (15.9)	23 (21.3)	22 (12.6)	29.573***
\$30,000-\$39,999	25 (8.8)	13 (12.0)	12 (6.9)	
\$40,000-\$59,999	32 (11.3)	19 (17.6)	13 (7.4)	
\$60,000-\$79,999	36 (12.7)	11 (10.2)	25 (14.3)	
\$80,000-\$99,999	27 (9.5)	6 (5.6)	21 (12.0)	
\$100,000-\$149,999	38 (13.4)	9 (8.3)	29 (16.6)	
\$150,000-\$199,999	14 (4.9)	5 (4.6)	9 (5.1)	
\$200,000 and Over	27 (9.5)	2 (1.9)		
Note. *p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001				

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to respond to the first research question and examine the characteristics of admitted minority students and their responses on each variable used in the study. Chi-Square and t-Tests were also examined to observe whether or not the differences between enrolling and non-enrolling students on all the variables examined in the study were significant. Logistic regression analysis was conducted to respond to the second research question. Logistic regression allowed us "to predict a discrete outcome such as group membership from a set of variables that may be continuous, discrete, dichotomous, or a mix" (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007, p. 437). In other words, logistic regression was used to predict which of the two categories of the dichotomous outcome variable (i.e., enrolling and not-enrolling) an admitted student was likely to belong to (Field, 2005). Logistic regression was also an appropriate statistical technique for our analysis because we had a mix of both categorical (e.g., GPA, high school type, etc.) and continuous (e.g., students' ratings of institutional marketing

Table 2. Students' Background Characteristics and Financial Factors

Variables	Total N = 283	Enrolling n = 108	Not Enrolling n = 175	Chi- Square
Frequencies (percent)				
High School Type				
Private Religious High School	34 (12.0)	17 (15.7)	157(89.7)	2.332
Any Other Type of High School	247 (87.3)	90 (83.3)	17(9.7)	
Distance From Home to College				
Under 50 Miles	64 (22.6)	37 (34.3)	27 (15.4)	17.010**
51 to 100 Miles	35 (12.4)	15 (13.9)	20 (11.4)	
101 to 300 Miles	79 (27.9)	22 (20.4)	57 (32.6)	
301 to 500 Miles	24 (8.5)	7 (6.5)	17 (9.7)	
More Than 500 Miles	72 (25.4)	22 (20.4)	50 (28.6)	
High School GPA				
Average GPA of "A"	171 (60.4)	38 (35.2)	133 (76.0)	46.637***
Average GPA below "A"	108 (38.2)	68 (63.0)	40 (22.9)	
Loans				
Awarded Student Loans	150(53.0)	71 (65.7)	79 (45.1)	12.842***
Not Awarded Student Loans	113(39.9)	29(26)	84 (48.0)	
Grants and/or Scholarships				
Awarded Grants	82(29.0)	40(37.0)	42 (24.0)	6.079*
Not Awarded Grants	174 (61.5)	57(52.8)	117 (66.9)	
Note. *p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001				

strategies and perceptions of institutional characteristics) predictor variables (Field, 2005). Furthermore, in logistic regression "the predictors do not have to be normally distributed, linearly related, or of equal variance within each group" (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007, p. 437). Before conducting the logistic analysis, the data were checked for multi-collinearity and outliers to make sure that the assumptions for logistic regression were met. The correlations between each of the independent variables were all below .5. The lowest Tolerance value was 0.426 and the highest VIF was 2.533, which indicated that multi-collinearity was not detected.

Results

As illustrated in Table 1, The results from the Chi-Square test demonstrated that there was a significant association between admitted students' race and their likelihood to enroll or not at a CCCU member institution, $\chi^2(3) = 33.122$, $p < .001$. The examination of frequencies and percentages indicated that African-Americans

Table 3. Students' Perceptions of Institutional Marketing Strategies and Institutional Characteristics

Variables	Total N = 283	Enrolling n = 108	Not Enrolling n = 175	t-Test
Means (SD)				
Range 1 - 5				
Marketing Strategies				
Campus Interaction	2.76 (1.31)	3.53 (1.11)	2.29(1.19)	8.391***
Electronic Communication	3.53 (1.36)	3.88 (1.22)	3.32(1.40)	3.330**
Web Site	3.70 (1.15)	3.90 (1.08)	3.59(1.17)	2.199*
Promotional Materials	2.65 (0.98)	2.66 (0.99)	2.65(0.98)	-.064
College Sponsored Visits	1.90 (1.12)	1.91 (1.15)	1.90(1.10)	.012
Range 1 - 4				
Institutional Characteristics				
Extracurricular Activities	3.34 (0.73)	3.47 (0.74)	3.25(0.71)	2.353*
Recreational Facilities	3.21 (0.76)	3.41 (0.72)	3.07(0.76)	3.445**
Academic Facilities	3.22 (0.77)	3.41 (0.69)	3.09(0.80)	3.194**
Availability of Majors	3.15 (0.85)	3.44 (0.75)	2.98(0.87)	4.483***
Academic Reputation	3.17(0.81)	3.37(0.70)	3.06(0.85)	3.085**
Note. *p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001				

(33.3 percent) were the most likely to enroll. On the other hand, Asian American/Pacific Islanders (42.3 percent) were the least likely to enroll. The results from the Chi-Square test also demonstrated that there was a significant association between the income of admitted minority students' parents and their likelihood to enroll or not at a CCCU member institution, $\chi^2(7) = 29.573$, $p < .001$. Of those who intended to enroll at their surveying institution, the largest group included 23 (21.3 percent) individuals who reported an income below \$30,000.

Results from descriptive statistics and Chi-Square tests in Table 2 revealed that students who lived less than 50 miles from the institution seemed more likely to enroll at a CCCU member institution than any other non-CCCU institution. Of those who intended to enroll at their surveying institution, a distance of under 50 miles was most often reported (34.3 percent). It was also observed that students who had an average high school GPA of "A" were less likely to enroll at a CCCU member institution, $\chi^2(1) = 46.637$, $p < .001$. In addition, financial aid awards both in the forms of loans and scholarships/grants were also significantly related to admitted minority students' decision to enroll at a surveying CCCU

Table 4. Results of Logistic Regression for Admitted Minority Students' Decisions to Enroll at a four-year Faith-Based CCCU Member Institution

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Females	-.459	.552	.690	1	.406	.632
Race/Ethnicity						
Hispanic	1.780	.998	3.982	3	.263	5.931
Asian	.401	.818	3.180	1	.075	1.494
Other	.365	.833	.241	1	.624	1.441
Parent's Income	-.187	.126	.192	1	.661	.829
Private Religious High School	.153	.753	2.205	1	.138	1.166
High School GPA of "A" ***	-2.160	.566	.042	1	.839	.115
Loans	.585	.593	14.581	1	.000	1.795
Grants and/or Scholarships	-.368	.621	.974	1	.324	.692
Campus Interaction ***	1.188	.312	.351	1	.553	3.279
Electronic Communication	.339	.263	14.510	1	.000	1.404
Web Site	-.334	.318	1.664	1	.197	.716
Promotional Materials**	-.984	.353	1.100	1	.294	.374
College Sponsored Visits	-.039	.248	7.783	1	.005	.962
Extracurricular Activities	-.477	.458	.025	1	.875	.621
Recreational Facilities	-.186	.476	1.085	1	.298	.830
Academic Facilities	.530	.421	.153	1	.695	1.699
Availability of Majors	.347	.400	1.585	1	.208	1.414
Academic Reputation	.034	.478	.752	1	.386	1.034
Note. *p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001						

institution. Among students who intended to enroll, only 38 (35.2 percent) had the average GPA of "A". However, a majority of non-enrolling students (76.0 percent) reported an average GPA of "A".

Furthermore, as indicated in Table 3, both students who were enrolling and students who were not enrolling at the surveying CCCU member institution rated college sponsored visits the lowest (Mean = 1.91; SD = 1.15 and Mean = 1.90; SD = 1.10, respectively) and institutional Web sites the highest among the institutional recruitment strategies (Mean = 3.90; SD 1.08 and Mean 3.59; SD = 1.17, respectively). It was also observed that students enrolling at a CCCU institution rated campus interaction, electronic communication and Web sites significantly higher than non-enrolling students. Additionally, t-Tests also indicated that enrolling students were significantly more satisfied than their non-enrolling peers with extracurricular activities, recreational facilities, academic facilities, availability of majors, and academic reputation of the CCCU member institutions to which they were admitted.

Finally, logistic regression analysis was conducted to examine what factors influenced the enrollment choice of admitted minority

students, when all other predictors were held constant in the model. The model correctly classified 88.6 percent of those students who were not enrolling and 75.4 percent of those who were enrolling. Overall, the model correctly classified 83.4 percent of the total sample. Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke R Square statistics equaled .422 and .572, respectively; however, these statistics should be interpreted with caution, since they are not directly equivalent to the R-squared in OLS regression. The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test resulted in a non-significant Chi-Square ($\chi^2(8) = 3.329$, $p = .912$), which indicated that the model fit the data well (Field, 2005). A non-significant chi-square value was desirable because it meant that the observed data and predicted values were not significantly different, which indicated that the model was "predicting the real-world data fairly well" (Field, 2005, p. 254).

After evaluating the overall fit of the final logistic model, coefficient estimates for predictor variables were examined to identify the contribution of each individual predictor, while controlling for all other variables in the model. Table 4 provides a summary of the Wald Statistic tests, which measure the contribution of each independent variable in predicting the college choice of

minority students. Of all the variables in the model, campus interaction (i.e., contact with faculty and current students and campus visit) was the only factor that significantly and positively related to the decision to enroll at CCCU member institutions. More specifically, with every one unit increase in admitted minority students' satisfaction with campus interaction, their likelihood of enrolling at a CCCU institution increased by a factor of 3.279. In contrast, institutional promotional materials significantly and negatively influenced students' decision to enroll at a CCCU institution. With every one unit increase in the rating of promotional materials, the odds of an admitted minority student enrolling at a CCCU member institution decreased by a factor of .374. Furthermore, admitted minority students with a high school GPA of "A" were .115 times less likely to enroll at a CCCU member institution.

Discussion

Several important conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study. The findings suggested that African American students, when admitted to CCCU member institutions, were most likely to enroll at those institutions when compared with students from other racial backgrounds. On the other hand, Asian American/Pacific Islanders were least likely to enroll at a CCCU member institution relative to other minority student groups in the sample. Previous research indicated that Asian American students were the most determined of the ethnic groups to attend their first choice institution (Kim, 2004). Earlier research also highlighted that when Asian American/Pacific Islanders applied to multiple institutions, they were likely to enroll in a more selective college (Teranishi,

In addition to students' background and demographic characteristics, the current study also examined how financial factors were related to admitted minority students' decisions to enroll at a CCCU institution. As noted earlier, students were more likely to enroll when they came from a family who had an annual income of less than \$30,000.

Ceja and Antonio, 2004). Since many CCCU institutions may not be considered highly competitive, many Asian American/Pacific Islanders may not have considered them to be their first choice.

Distance from students' homes to the institutions was another background factor that related to the college choice of minority students admitted to CCCU member institutions. Consistent with previous research (Bergerson, 2009; Carter, 1999; Smith, 2007; Teranishi et al., 2004), this study found that students were more

likely to enroll when the surveying CCCU institution was less than 50 miles from their home. This finding suggests that minority students are more likely to enroll at an institution where the surroundings are familiar to them. The decision to stay closer to home may be driven by the need for the student to support the family, maintain a job while attending college or even reduce living expenses by living at home (e.g., Bergerson, 2009; Smith, 2007).

It should be noted that among admitted students' demographic/background characteristics, high school GPA was the only variable that remained significant in the final logistic regression analysis. The results indicated that with all other factors held constant in the logistic model, admitted minority students with a high school GPA of "A" were less likely to enroll at CCCU member institutions. In contrast, previous research revealed that minority students' high school GPA was found to be a significant and positive predictor in determining their decision to attend a private institution (Hu and Hossler, 2000). The difference might be attributed to the fact that the sample of private institutions in earlier studies may have included a broader range of private, highly-selective institutions compared to those in this sample, which was limited to only eight CCCU member institutions.

In addition to students' background and demographic characteristics, the current study also examined how financial factors were related to admitted minority students' decision to enroll at a CCCU institution. As noted earlier, students were more likely to enroll when they came from a family who had an annual income of less than \$30,000. With an income that low, many of these students

would have qualified for need-based financial aid, which often consists of significant federal grants and subsidized student loans. Earlier studies indicated that all types of financial aid had a strong, positive impact on the decision of minority students to enroll in college (Hu and Hossler, 2000; Kim, 2004; St. John and Noell, 1989). The results from Chi-Square tests in our study supported the findings from earlier research that loans, as well as grants and scholarships were positively related to the student's choice to enroll at a CCCU member institution.

Our study also examined how admitted minority students' perceptions of the institution related to their choice to enroll at a private faith-based four-year CCCU member institution. The results of the t-Tests from our study were consistent with the existing research that found that students' perceptions about the institution and its extracurricular activities, recreational facilities, academic facilities, the availability of majors and the academic reputation mattered when they made their enrollment decisions (Braddock and Hus, 2006; Sevier, 1992; Teranishi et al., 2004). When examining students' perceptions of an institution's marketing strategies in the college choice process of admitted minority students in our study, we observed that each of the marketing strategies (i.e., campus interaction, electronic communication, Web Site, promotional materials, and college sponsored visits) was rated higher by enrolling than non-enrolling minority students. Of the marketing strategies utilized, enrolling students in this study rated the institution's Web site the highest. Prior research indicated that one of the main channels of information for prospective students was the use of the institution's Web site (Simoes and Soares, 2010).

It should be noted that campus interaction was the only institutional marketing strategy that positively affected admitted minority student's decision to enroll at a CCCU institution in the final logistic regression model. Forms of campus interaction included campus visits, contacts with current students and contact with the faculty. Prior research also confirmed that the campus visit and the experiences associated with a campus visit were highly influential in a student's decision to enroll at that institution (Sevier, 1992; Smith, 2007). Previous studies have suggested that students would likely choose the institution where they had the most positive experience during their campus visit or the one that they perceived to be the best fit for them (Litten, 1982; Smith, 2007).

The final logistic regression also indicated that promotional materials negatively influenced admitted minority students' enrollment at a faith-based CCCU member institution. The institution's promotional materials consisted of marketing items such as college videos, CD-ROMs and other college publications, such as catalogues and brochures. It is difficult to determine the possible reasons for this negative relationship. However, this finding does suggest that even if admitted students are satisfied with the institution's efforts to produce high quality promotional materials, they are not likely to choose the institution. This is an indication that an institution's promotional materials might not be an effective recruitment strategy when trying to encourage admitted minority students to enroll at an institution.

A final, notable factor, regarding the marketing strategies of an institution was that a college-sponsored visit to the admitted student's home town or high school was rated the lowest of all the recruiting strategies for both enrolling and non-enrolling admitted students. This may have been a result of the timing of the ASQ-PLUS survey. Since an admitted student generally would not interact in a hometown visit the way that a prospective student would, this strategy may have been rated lower. This finding highlights that a college-sponsored visit might not be an effective recruitment strategy for already admitted students while they are making their final enrollment decisions.

Implications for Practice

CCCU institutions must be more strategic in how they recruit minority students and work with them throughout the admission process. One recommendation that emerged from this study was that CCCU institutions should not discredit the power of financial aid awarded to minority students. Both the previous research, as well as the current study, indicated that by providing financial aid in the form of grants, scholarships and student loans, minority students were more likely to enroll. Admission counselors need to inform minority students what financial aid options are available to them, encourage them to apply and help them meet the deadlines.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the Web site become a primary method of communication. The Web site should be targeted at providing minority students with the information that they need to make an informed enrollment decision. The Web site is one area where the cost of making the changes would be insignificant compared with the potential benefits that may be realized. Institutions need to also be sensitive to language(s) that their Web sites use. At the time of this study none of the eight institutions had translated any part of their Web site to Spanish. Bilingual Web sites will allow the parents who may not be fluent in English to more actively participate in their students' college admission process.

Campus interaction (i.e., campus visit and contacts with faculty and students) emerged as critical for minority students as they considered enrolling. This finding suggested that after having a positive campus visit, students were more likely to enroll at the respective CCCU institution, which is consistent with much of the previous research (Litten, 1982; Sevier, 1992; Smith, 2007). Previous research has indicated that one important aspect of the campus visit is to help perspective students identify how they fit into the campus culture. For Hispanic students, identifying a Hispanic representative from the institution who could speak to them and for them was an important factor during a campus visit (Smith,

2007). Also, for students of color, it was important to highlight faculty, administrators, students, and even student organizations that could help the admitted minority students understand how they fit into the fabric of the institution (Engberg and Wolniak 2009; Smith, 2007). These suggestions observed through the lens of CRT would require a cultural shift within the institution, especially in faculty and staff hiring. Instead of continuing to advertise open positions through the traditional avenues, institutions need to reexamine their strategic initiatives for hiring with diversity as a priority. The positions that are filled by diverse candidates need to be extended beyond staff or student affairs professionals to faculty and leading campus administrators (Patton, McEwen, Rendon, and Howard-Hamilton, 2007). Recruiting more faculty and administrators from diverse racial backgrounds would lead to the cultural shift and create a more welcoming environment for students of color at CCCU institutions. CRT identified several major tenets that can help sensitize an observer to the undercurrents of racial issues still present in higher education. One of these tenets is to challenge the concept of colorblindness because it renders the minority group invisible (Evans et al., 2010). Each race has its own set of unique identifying characteristics that need to be recognized and embraced by the predominant race. If one ignores these unique differences and claims that everyone is the same, the racism is only perpetuated. In CCCU institutions where the predominant race is Caucasian, this tenet can be easily overlooked if the predominant race tries to address themes of racism by attempting to treat everyone the same and ignore the differences.

One way to facilitate minority student feedback might be to host a minority student campus visit day to provide opportunities for them to meet other students from similar cultural and racial backgrounds who are considering the institution and experiencing the institution in many of the same ways. A focus group feedback session after the visit day should also be considered as it could provide vital information about how minority students experienced the campus.

While diversity training is only an initial step in true culture shift that must occur for change in the make-up of the student body to take place at these institutions, it is still a necessary first step. Many topics concerning diversity need to be included in the training including how language used by faculty and staff impact minority students and examining how multicultural issues are taught throughout the curriculum (Closson, 2010; Patton et al., 2007). Much of this, however, cannot be examined by the white majority, especially if white privilege or color blindness continues to be present on campus.

There may be a need for a minority consulting team to be invited to campus to examine the areas where cultural shift needs to occur.

Another element of CRT is to challenge the established ideology by recognizing the importance of hearing and acting upon the voices of individuals of color, especially when they contradict the assumptions of the predominant race (Evans et al., 2010; Soloranzo et al., 2005). It is important that when minority students are brought to campus, they are given an opportunity to speak about their experience as they exit the campus. This exit interview could take many forms, but the feelings, suggestions and perceptions of minority students should be noted and held with high regard as changes are implemented on campus to make it more inviting for students of color. One way to facilitate minority student feedback may be to host a minority student campus visit day to provide opportunities for them to meet other students from similar cultural and racial backgrounds who are considering the institution and experiencing the institution in many of the same ways. A focus group feedback session after the visit day should also be considered as it could provide vital information about how minority students experienced the campus. Faculty, student affairs officers, student groups and admission officers must listen to the voices of students of color, identify any violations of social justice during campus visits and take appropriate actions. However, in order for many of these changes to become a reality and truly affect minority student enrollment, there must be a true cultural shift across the entire campus and not just in the admission departments of CCCU institutions.

Finally, the emphasis should also be placed on the efforts to increase retention and graduation rates of minority students. Once enrolled, students must be provided the necessary support to ensure their persistence and degree completion. There is no one single program or intervention that works. Institutions need to take “an integrative approach” and incorporate both academically and socially supportive programs in their retention efforts (Lotkowski, Robbins and Noeth, 2004, p. 20). Programs that provide opportunities for increased faculty, staff and peer

interactions and services that facilitate the academic success should be implemented and encouraged. Early intervention is a key to successful retention strategies (Coley and Coley, 2010). The focus must be placed on the first-year experience programs, academic advising interventions with at-risk populations and learning support services, especially in students' first year in college (Habley and LcClanahan, 2004). According to Noel-Levitz (2011), in 2010–2011, the cost of recruiting a single new undergraduate student at four-year private colleges and universities was \$2,185. Thus, it would be in the best interest of CCCU institutions not only to attract and recruit increasing numbers of students of color, but help them succeed and persist to degree completion.

Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

One of the limitations of our study was related to the small number of admitted minority students who completed the ASQ PLUS survey at eight participating CCCU institutions. Small sample size restricts our ability to generalize the findings of this study to admitted minority students at CCCU institutions across the US. Due to the small sample size, we were also not able to disaggregate the analysis by different racial groups, which is another limitation of this study. Minority students are a heterogeneous group of individuals with very diverse experiences and backgrounds; however, we were not able to capture these variations across different minority groups. Future research should utilize the data from a larger sample of institutions to provide a more representative profile of minority enrollment trends at CCCU member institutions and examine what factors influence the college choice of each racial minority group separately. The small sample size also did not allow us to conduct the analysis separately for each CCCU institution in this study. Future research is needed to examine the role of minority students' perceptions of institutional characteristics and marketing strategies in the college choice process within the individual institutional context.

Religious affiliations of CCCU institutions might differentially affect minority students' decisions to enroll at these institutions; however, the present study did not take religious affiliations of its sample institutions into consideration. While the institutions surveyed were Judeo-Christian in their background, each of them represented a different denominational affiliation. Future research is needed to examine in what ways denominational affiliation of a CCCU institution might affect minority students' perceptions of the institution, and ultimately their college choice process.

In addition, the use of the secondary data from the College Board's ASQ PLUS survey restricted us in the choice of variables used in this study. For example, important variables such as the role of parents or admission counselors were not included in the analysis since these variables were not available in the original ASQ PLUS survey. Also, the ASQ PLUS is intended to survey only admitted students. This is a very small fraction of the number of minority students who are graduating from high schools across the US and are not applying to CCCU institutions. The findings for students who were not admitted or who had not even applied to one of these CCCU institutions may have been very different from those who were actually admitted. Future studies need to take these limitations into consideration and examine a more comprehensive list of variables as predictors of minority students' college choice, as well as an expanded sample of minority students. A follow-up qualitative study can also provide a more thorough exploration of the barriers to minority student enrollment at CCCU institutions.

Enrollment of minority students at CCCU member institutions is critical not only to better serve minority student populations, but also to create the holistic educational experience for the entire student body. CCCU leaders have a significant role to play by continually examining ways to eliminate entry barriers for minority students and actively seeking alternative strategies that increase their enrollment. Together, CCCU institutional leaders must begin to create change that celebrates minority student enrollment. This change will not only set CCCU member institutions on a better trajectory, but propel them onto the leading edge of the next century.



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