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CULTURAL VALUES AND PERSISTENCE IN MUSCOGEE (CREEK) COLLEGE
STUDENTS:

ATTRITION IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

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CULTURAL VALUES AND PERSISTENCE IN MUSCOGEE (CREEK) COLLEGE
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Abstract

Cultural Values and Persistence in Muscogee (Creek) College Students:

Attrition in Post-Secondary Education

Subjects participating in this research project were interviewed to gather data for this study. These participants were college students who were attending or had attended the University of Oklahoma and are members of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. These interviews investigated reasons for student enrollment, retention and withdrawal. The findings of this research study addressed family conflicts such as departing home life for an education and future success, socio-economic variance and learning disabilities that may not be obvious. This study researched independent variables of kindness, independence, honesty, social responsibility, reciprocity, social skills, religiosity and self-control as they related to educational goals of persistence, the dependent variable. The significance of this research study defined Native American education and its role in the holistic preparation of future Native American leaders. Religion and family values were identified in this research document. Most noted religion and family values were found to be correlated to post-secondary persistence.

Chapter I

Introduction

“I think being a good role model to kids for me is continuing to be who I am and just continuing to be humble and set a good example, and just try to lead by example.”

Sam Bradford, Cherokee Tribe, Football Quarterback St. Louis Rams
and former University of Oklahoma Football Quarterback

Nestled in the north eastern portion in the state of Oklahoma is the city of Okmulgee and home of the Creek Nation. The Creek Nation or the Muscogee (Creek) Nation is a federally recognized Indian tribe and was originally located in the southeastern part of the United States (OIAC, 2010). It was later integrated as one of the “Five Civilized Tribes” while included the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole tribes in the late 19th century. The term “civilized” referred to their adoption of horticulture and other European cultural assimilations (Foreman, 1934). Today, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation has modernized into both an economic mogul and a pioneer in student education advancement. Muscogee (Creek) economic status is reflected through high profits in gaming revenues totaling \$127 million in 2009/2010 (Adcock, 2010).

The statement that the Muscogee (Creek) Tribe is also a pioneer in student education advancement is based on the introduction of the College of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in 2004 (Gipp, 2007) and the Nation’s commitment to supporting its tribal members to other institutions of higher learning. All tribal members are encouraged to seek more education at institutions of their choice (L. Longhorn, personal communication, February 5, 2010). This research project reviewed the cultural values and researched persistence in Muscogee (Creek) college students attending or attended the University of Oklahoma from School Years (SY) 2000-

2007. The significant finding of this project revealed that 87% of all participants have completed a post-secondary education or still seeking a post-secondary education at the time of this report.

The purpose of this project is to give a holistic assessment of the Muscogee (Creek) college student attending the University of Oklahoma during the first years of this century. Native American and American Indian are interchangeable terms throughout this paper. It has identified various explanations regarding the persistence (or remaining in college) for Muscogee (Creek) college students. Theory and practice of earlier and modern learning methodology towards post-secondary education have been included. This project identified the methodological assessments selected in the acquisition of quantitative and qualitative analyses with the introduction of independent variables (cultural values) correlated with a dependent variable (persistence). Correlation analyses, conclusions and recommendations regarding persistence in Muscogee (Creek) college students are included. Lastly, this project proposed a research model be conjoined with other populations for future generalizability and potential adaptability across other Native American tribes.

Colleges and universities today continue to face the challenges of quality education at an affordable price. These institutions of higher education offer numerous ways to attend college utilizing private or public financing. In this day and age of economic plight and instability, colleges and universities offer numerous financial opportunities in the form of scholarships and grants at the federal, state and local levels. These opportunities provide assistance to the college student, including Native American students, to retain or keep students in class. Retention is the key to a

successful college career, and persistence is the lock that binds students to their college curriculum. Tinto (1993) argues that [the] “key to effective retention...lies in a strong commitment to quality education and the building of a strong sense of inclusive educational and social community on campus” (p.145).

Colleges and universities must conjoin their resources with local community resources to provide a holistic partnership for each student’s learning process. The college will provide educational support and the community will provide social cohesion. A new student may experience feelings of anxiety, isolation or ‘homesickness’. Homesickness may be an archaic term, but it may explain a feeling of lost norms and beliefs of the previous association (J. Barnett, July 9, 2007). It is at this point that the college can also offer social cohesion in the form of support groups. Tinto (1993) further argues that “the secret to effective retention lies not in the types of programs for their students, but in the underlying commitment to students that inspires these programs” (p.146). Inspiration coupled with motivation expressively challenges the new or seasoned student to aggressively seek education to satisfy their needs. The question arises: how to inspire or motivate a student to seek education?

Student motivation must begin with a desire to learn. Wlodkowski (2008) argues that motivation to learn must come from within the learner. He offers five pillars to enhance student motivation: expertise, empathy, enthusiasm, clarity, and cultural responsiveness (p. 26). Wlodkowski’s five pillars may offer a motivational schema towards an internal desire to learn. These five pillars may collectively bring to awareness in the student a need for a director or leader within each student’s personal desires or needs. This director or leader may take on the role of instructor,

teacher, tutor or role model. Instructor, teacher, or tutor may be seen as a helper or may be seen as an assessor in the student's educational path. Many students view the instructor, teacher or tutor as one who possesses superior knowledge, age, experience and size for extra leverage or added influence over the student (Wlodkowski, 2008, p. 27).

This superior view may cause some students to feel less important, to avoid an instructor, or reject a class or course. Tinto (1993) argues that adjustment, difficulty incongruence and isolation may affect student departure over retention (p. 37).

Students often shun an instructor's assistance due to feelings of inadequacy.

Therefore, it is important to support the student through these troubling times. The introduction of a role model or leader may further support a student's motivation and interest in school.

The introduction of a role model or leader offers a positive answer to Tinto's earlier arguments involving adjustment, difficulty, incongruence and isolation. Stated earlier, new students may experience feelings of anxiety, isolation or 'homesickness'. All students may gain additional motivation to learn when someone of charismatic or leadership appeal is introduced into the academic climate. Native American students may also share in this necessity of a role model to thwart the high attrition rate among American Indian students. Attrition or drop-out rate may be related to family conflicts, socio-economic variance, socio-psychological and personal lack of preparation for college, learning disabilities or motivational depression in any society (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Many students at the University of Oklahoma have found a successful and prominent role model in Sam Bradford, former University of

Oklahoma football quarterback and now starting football quarterback for the St. Louis Rams.

Sam Bradford is the recipient of the 2008 Heisman Trophy (Sooner Sports, 2008), other numerous awards and is a member of the Cherokee Nation. Bradford is 1/16th Cherokee and gets his Cherokee blood from his father, Kent Bradford and from his great-great grandmother, the late Susie Walkingstick, a full-blooded Cherokee (Hoover, 2008). Bradford fully supports education for all students and defines his role as both role model and leader. Bradford accepted an invitation to speak at the Sequoyah Schools in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Bradford comments at a ceremony in his honor in Tahlequah, Oklahoma:

“God has given me a great platform, and my Native American roots extend that platform even more. Obviously I’m Native American and I’m proud of it ... but beyond knowing I have roots with this culture, I don’t know much more than that. For me to come here today, it’s just a way for me to learn about the culture.” (Mahan, 2009).

Bradford further relates his quiet leadership style to future students:

“Something I try to do with my leadership abilities, something I believe is important in all leaders, is to lead by example...It’s real easy for people to talk the talk, but it’s a lot harder to walk the walk.”

It is this analogy from Sam Bradford that brings strength and character to this future Native American star and proffers him as a role model. Bradford also thanks his family for keeping him focused through life. Bradford explains:

“I’ve really got to give credit to my family and my friends for that. Something my parents have always taught me is surrounding

myself with good people. I've really tried to do that. My friends are such a great group of guys. They really keep me down to earth, whether I come back from winning a game or losing a game, or winning an award. They could care less – I'm still Sam to them.” (Mahan, 2009).

Success of any society has long been gauged by the leadership and organization style it has adopted. Success in a society can be assessed through its relationship with its inhabitants, the association or organization's collective approach to a common goal, the companionship among its inhabitants and a biological or physiological commonality among those inhabitations (Merriam-Webster, 2002). Society's environment can be measured in its preparation of its young inhabitants. Bronfenbrenner (1979) reports that environment impacts societal success as “a product of interaction between the growing human organism and its environment... to state what is almost a commonplace in behavioral science. A child's ability to learn to read in the primary grades may depend no less on how he is taught than on the existence and nature of ties between the school and the home” (p. 16).

Leadership, organization and environment proffer a possible ontology of societal success in the forward evolution of social society. It is also possible that this collective ontology may be the key to increasing an effective solution to the educational stigma facing all college students: persistence in post-secondary institutions.

Another factor affecting the organization and leadership or its organizational leadership within the societal environment is a necessity for leaders to guide the inhabitants through successful goal achievements. Leaders [like Sam Bradford] may develop a charismatic style (Weber, 1947) or may develop a transformational style

(Burns, 1978). According to Weber, “charisma occurs during a social crisis, when a leader emerges with a radical vision that offers a solution to the crisis and attracts followers who believe in the vision” (Yukl, 2006, p. 249). The term *radical* has various definitions; here, radical refers to a departure from the usual or traditional (Merriam-Webster, 2002). Some have considered that charismatic leaders are involuntarily selected through their natural abilities (e.g., physical stature, facial looks, and size) or through their personal accomplishments (e.g., achievements, and accomplishments) (Riggio, 2010). Transformational leaders appeal to “the moral values of followers in an attempt to raise their consciousness about ethical issues and to mobilize their energy and resources to reform institutions” (Yukl, 2006, p. 249). One such goal in any society, including Native Americans, is the educational advancements of its population. All societies, including Native Americans must ensure their leaders keep education paramount for current and future inhabitants. We will explore this educational necessity later in this paper. At this time, the exploration of leadership, organization and environment is crucial to the illumination and importance of this ontological collage.

Leadership is a subject that continues to hold both simplistic meanings and meanings that branch across different cultures, organizations and societies. The term leadership brings to mind images of power, dynamic individuals who “command victorious armies, shape courses of nations” (Yukl, 2006, p. 3) and directs volumes of people towards various, if not treacherous courses of action in the completion of certain goals. House (1999) argues that “leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and

success of an organization...” (House et al, 1999, p. 13). As with any term that has multiple meanings, Northouse (2004) identifies four characteristics or components to leadership: (1) it is a process, (2) involves influence, (3) occurs within a group context, and (4) involves goal attainment (p. 3). Therefore, leadership cements a foundation in the existence and advancement in cultures, organizations and societies.

Robbins (2005) defines organization as a “consciously coordinated social unit, composed of two or more people that functions on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a common goal or set of goals” (p. 3). Organizations, as with leadership juxtapose inhabitants or people in the pursuit of common goals or sets of goals. Goal achievement provides purpose and principle in a society or organization in establishing and shaping behavior in its members. All societies, including Native American societies define their organization or tribe in similar pursuits to obtain common goals or sets of goals. These goals of common pursuits towards organization and leadership were seen in 1971. In 1971, the Muscogee (Creek) nation for the first time in their history elected a principal chief and later in 1990’s became known as a sovereign nation (Muscogee, 2008). Selection of a new principal chief by vote may have provided a new political venue for others to become elected officials within the tribe. Female members of Indian tribes are rising to obtain prominence in Indian political affairs. Currently, there are nine female members serving on the National Council Committee for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (Muscogee, 2010).

The early Muscogee (Creeks) were similarly structured the same as European cultures. Family was an intricate part of both Native American and European American societies. Family reflected a similar appearance of an organization

reflecting a collection of family members and purported its own collage of family members. Whether nuclear families inhabited a single dwelling or multiple families were present, the American family unit offered physiological, security, emotional, and spiritual cohesion to its inhabitants (Maslow, 1943).

Environment or surroundings also are crucial to the success of any society. Student success can also be gauged by the surroundings or environment a college or university displays. Tinto (1993) argues that some institutions have placed more emphasis on societal factors such as social status, race, institutional prestige and opportunity structure in lieu of individual needs. Tinto also argues that to return students to the classroom, institutions must align the institutions' operating needs with student needs. Students are more satisfied with their institutions when they are made a part of the institution. Simply, students are more willing to accept considerable hardships when they feel accepted by the institution (p. 88).

Native American college students experience high rates of collegiate attrition. Attrition or drop-out rate may be related to family heritage, family conflicts, socio-economic variance, socio-psychological and personal lack of preparation for college, learning disabilities or motivational depression (Bean & Metzner, 1985). The review of each of these attrition criteria deepens a continuing concern in educators, teachers and, in some cases, parents of these children. Secondary education institutions sustain an active role in the preparation of students interested in attending college. College preparation involves a holistic approach with the student, the college, and external academic organizations. Once in college, students may require motivation and goal attainment to create college persistence.

Persistence refers to the prolongation of an action or situation beyond a normal timeframe. Tinto (1993) further defines the importance of social and academic integration to extend persistence. Native Americans comprise approximately 1.9 percent of the total population of the United States (U.S. Census, 2000). In 2006, American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) were status drop outs (15%) in comparison to whites (7%) (USDOE, 2008). American Indian/Alaska Natives between the ages of 16 and 24 experienced status drop as a result of high school attrition, lack of preparation for college and feelings of alienation from school personnel. This drop out status may be indicative of attrition in American Indians college students.

Therefore:

Is there a relationship between Muscogee (Creek) cultural values and collegiate persistence?

What is the relationship between Muscogee (Creek) persistence and college completion? What attributes are intrinsic in Muscogee (Creek) college students and how are they related to persistence?

The hypotheses to be tested are:

1. Collegiate completion (persistence) is positively related to cultural values in Muscogee (Creek) Indian students.
2. Collegiate completion in Muscogee (Creek) Indian students may be directly related to personal beliefs and attitudes. Personal beliefs and attitudes can be learned through tribal values. Tribal values are inherent to family cohesion, family unity and tribal solidity.

The dependent variable (DV) is persistence in the Muscogee (Creek) college student. The independent variables (IV) are kindness, independence, honesty, social responsibility, reciprocity, social skills, religiosity and self-control. These independent variables emerged from the Social Value Survey (J. Trimble, personal communication, 2008) and later the Cultural Values Survey (Hobson, 1994).

American Indian Census

American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) are terms that refer to people having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment to one or more tribal associations (U.S. Census, 2000). Moreover, Indians are “the only governmentally defined ethnicity (with a matching federal ID card) and brings with it a measure of sovereignty separate from the United States...” (Kramer, 2003, pg. 141). Statistically, the US population lists 182,211,639 Americans (25 years or older) at the time of this report. Within the US population, the US Census recorded 1,350,998 American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) (one race reported) and 71,300 Muscogee (Creeks). For the 2000 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau asked individuals to list all of the “races” of which they consider themselves a part. An individual could mark one race or multiple races. The Census recipient held the option to list their racial identity thereby addressing tribal definition through the categories of “pure blood” or other level of blood quantum (US Census, 2000). However, this study utilized the citizenship guidelines of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

In 2003, twenty-seven percent (27%) of the total U.S. population (25 years and older) had achieved post secondary education (U.S. Census, 2000). Moreover,

11.5 percent of all AIAN's (25 years and older) reported earning a bachelor's degree during the 2000 census. U.S. citizens (25 years and older) achieving post secondary credentials was 1:5. AIAN ratio reflected 1:12 and Muscogee (Creeks) were 1:7 (U.S. Census, 2000). The overall numbers reveal that the Muscogee (Creek) Tribe possessed a higher ratio of educational completion when compared to other AIAN groups. The Indian population is relatively young, with a mean age of 28. Close to one-third (450,331) of the total Indian population is under the age of 18 (Pedersen, Draguns, Lonner, & Trimble, 2002). Therefore, two-thirds (900,662) are eligible for post-secondary admission.

During the 1995-1996 school year, the U.S. Census reported approximately 15,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives received college degrees. Although 15,000 AIAN's received college degrees, this quantity still falls short of the overall expected AIAN population eligible for enrollment into a college degree program. In 1996, approximately 134,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN) were enrolled in post-secondary educational institutions. The U.S. Census (2000) projects that by the year 2050 the number of American Indian and Alaska Natives will increase to 4.4 million (for the "race alone" category).

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Census

The US Census reported 71, 300 Muscogee (Creek) Nation members in 2000. Seventeen percent of the total Muscogee (Creek) population (25 and older) were not enrolled in post-secondary education in 2000 and reflected a loss of education potential to the remaining 59,179 Muscogee (Creek) who have not attained post-secondary education. The significance of this revelation conveys a serious problem to

those Muscogee (Creeks) in search of a better way of life through attaining higher education.

Persistence and Retention of Muscogee (Creek) College Students

This dissertation researched the persistence and retention of Muscogee (Creek) postsecondary students during the School Years 2000-2007 at the University of Oklahoma. It utilized quantitative and qualitative avenues of methodology through factor analyses of data and in-depth interviews, ethnography and attendance in resident Native American classes, including Muscogee (Creeks), respectfully. Following the research findings, recommendations are offered for increasing Muscogee (Creek) collegiate retention.

Definitions

The following terms are used in this document:

1. Attrition – “...the discontinuance of all higher education.” (Grace, 1957). One form of discontinuance is the total stoppage of educational advancement. A second form is the stoppage of education at one college and a third form is the continuance in college without fully utilizing their abilities.
2. Cultural values – Ideas or beliefs held by one group of society and accepted by all members of that society (Hobson, 1994).
3. Persistence – “...the existence to prolong an action or situation beyond a normal timeframe” (Tinto, 1993).
4. Retention - A process of remaining in an educational field of study throughout its maturity (Tinto, 1987, 1993).

Chapter II

Literature Review

Durkheim's Theory

The purpose of the literature review is to lay foundation for the persistence or retention for any college student to remain in school. This foundation would then explore the purpose or reason to attend college and remain in college. Retention is a process of remaining in an educational field of study throughout its maturity (Tinto, 1987, 1993). Factors in retention in educational study could be internal or external. Internal reasons for attendance may relate to self-fulfillment or just the enjoyment of learning. The enjoyment of learning is centered in one's desire to attain new information or enhance existing information. Wlodkowski (1999) argues that learning is a human operation of making meaning from experience through acquiring knowledge and applying it to a culture, society or environment (p. 10).

External reasons for attendance may relate to economic advancement or status within one's community (Wlodkowski, 1999) or in one's own desire to help in his or her family, friends or associates. Each form of attendance may be related to motivation. Motivation or the desire to learn may be one aspect necessary to sustain collegiate interest (Wlodkowski, 1999). Moreover, extrinsic motivation may be easily assessed and viewed through rewards such as school grades, eligibility and economic success. Motivating extrinsic values are inherent with personal preparation towards education, employment, and advancement within one's own goal attainments (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Wlodkowski, 1999). Another aspect of college attendance and retention may rest with university or college interest groups, student affiliations and Indian college alumni. These alumni groups can offer advice,

mentorship and college stability in both on and off campus classes and functions. Furthermore, these groups may represent important social relationship needed to persist.

Emile Durkheim's theory of suicide offers a conduit of social solidarity with education (1897). Durkheim (1897) and later works of Spaulding and Simpson (1951) argued that education reinforces social solidarity, maintains social roles and preserves a division of labor. A loss of one or more of these educational functions could result in one form of suicide: anomie. According to Durkheim (1897), anomie described a condition or malaise in individuals, characterized by an absence or diminution of standards or values (referred to as normlessness) and an associated feeling of alienation and purposelessness. He believed that anomie was common when the surrounding society had undergone significant changes in its economic configuration resulting in positive or negative variation, or when there was a significant discrepancy between the ideological theories and values commonly professed and what was actually achievable in everyday life. This perception of anomie was directly opposite to previous theories on suicide which generally maintained that suicide was precipitated by negative events in a person's life and their subsequent depression. Modern day Durkheim followers or Durkheimian scholars continue to delve into the Durkheim (1897) suicide theory. Tiryakian (2009) discusses anomie in modern terms and its place among many ethnic groups. Social solidarity became a strong focus in Tiryakian's studies. Social solidarity may be a bridge that connects the 19th Century Durkheim with 21st Century Tiryakian.

Durkheim (1897) deviated from the general meaning of suicide and offered a two-concept explanation. All societies, including those of Native Americans, exist in a simplistic, non-specialized culture called a mechanical society. The term “non-specialized culture” is not derogatory in nature. Rather, it is about simplicity in its dealings with outside cultures and civilization. Cultures, like Indian tribes have existed in their mechanical society for centuries. Simplicity or a mechanical status offers more cohesion and solidarity to this form of society or tribe. Indian simplicity becomes threatened when outside contact or interests invade Indian lands. Upon this form of invasion, a process of adaptation begins. This adaptation process spawns a socialization process whereby basic social behavior previously supplied by elders and families transforms the recipients from enculturation or current cultural stability to resocialization or acculturation (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 359). This new adaptation is in line with Durkheim’s movement from mechanical to organic. From mechanical, societies evolve to a higher level of complexity, termed organic (Durkheim, 1897). According to Gudykunst and Kim (2003), original thoughts and a masking of original habits or deculturation shift current values and cultural habits in a forward motion to new ideas and a loss of old ideas (p. 359). This masking can be associated with Muscogee (Creek) cultural values that were assessed during this study.

Retention Model

Tinto (1975) argued that retention of higher education students is contingent upon successful “integration.” (Appendix A, Figure 2). Tinto’s longitudinal model of

institutional departure integrates academic and social cohesion. This integration juxtaposes a spatial and temporal advancement in conjunction with the integrator or student. Academic integration enhances personal performance, assesses student enjoyment in education and inquires of the student's satisfaction with the educational institution. Social integration looks at how many friends one has and if one "fits" in (Draper, 2002). Tinto further argues that integration also depends upon the environment and setting of the college student. Two-year and four-year colleges have different degrees of student attrition. A student attending a two-year college may only be planning a 24 month program and depart the school upon graduation. Four-year students may be unsure of the 48 month collegiate program, and therefore may not be fully integrated at the onset of this curriculum. Tinto's (1975) attrition model reviews each of these examples and provides a cartographic design for explanatory inquiries.

Native American Values or Cultural Inheritance

All societies pass down indigenous values and cultural habits from previous generations through the use of stories, fables and myths (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005). Muscogee (Creeks) pass down values and cultural habits through the use of story tellers or utilizing the Creek cosmos. This cosmos is rich, diverse, and complicated, including astronomical, mythological, spiritual, and physical aspects. All aspects of Muscogee origins, existence in the physical realm, and interaction with the spiritual world are accounted for in the stories told by the Creek storyteller, considered one of the most important people in the village. According to Wickman (1999), the importance of the role of the storyteller cannot be overemphasized:

“Cultures in which the entire responsibility for replication and perpetuation of the cosmogony is bounded by the ability of its members to hold its elements within the living memory of each generation, without recourse to written codification, embody a type of dynamism within themselves that is unique to orally codified cultures. This dynamism is both parent and child of the process: such cultures are constantly required to perform, at the same time, twin activities, regenerative and perpetuative. They encode and institutionalize a ritualized cosmic past that objectifies the culture, even as they reinvent and reinvigorate a social present that uses as its benchmark the very cosmogony that is constantly being reinstitutionalized. This is the process by which, within orally codified societies, the reproduction of a structure become[s] its transformation.” (p. 60).

By Wickman’s definition, the storyteller quite literally is the link between generations that allows the tribe to simultaneously preserve its culture while evolving from many distinct cultures into the wholly new one that became, and is constantly becoming, the Creek Nation.

As stories were part of the Muscogee way, Muscogee oral traditions fall into several classes: 1) stories of the origin of the earth, which is related to animal spirits, 2) stories having to do with a time when the Master-of-Breath took charge, and 3) stories that divide the people of the earth into two categories: people made from the red earth (who constituted the old Creek Nation), and white people who, the Creeks believed, were made from the foam of the sea (Ryal School, 2009). Many societies adhere to the same values or teaching, but there is some similarity in the overall Native American value system (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005). The Anishinabe and Dakota people believe the value system originated with the Creator. The Anishinabe (meaning first men) and Dakota (meaning friends or allies) were widely known as inhabitants of upper Minnesota. Early historical accounts suggest that the Creator “Waynaboozhoo” (otherwise known as Nanaboozhoo, Manaboozhoo, Manabush or

Nanabush) and “Unktomi” were sent to the people to teach them how to live and how to behave.

Some believe that value systems were sent down by the Creator through oral teachings and traditions (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005). The center of this value system is respect for the Creator, elders, family, community, Mother Earth and land (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005; Appendix A, Figure 1). Respect is shown through practicing traditions, learning the language, listening, cooperating, honoring elders, showing patience and tolerance, acceptance, humor, humility, gratitude and respect for all living things.

The value of respect is at the core of the American Indian values. It is believed that the Anishinabe and Dakota people placed respect at the core with which to show its importance throughout all other values. The respect for the Creator, family, elders, Mother Earth and land may be one of the definitive factors affecting Muscogee (Creek) students’ to stay in college. Generations teach their children that respect extends to all living creatures: animals, plants and all people. All living things depend upon each other for survival, and survival is inherently dependent upon our children.

Muscogee (Creeks) cultural values are greatly connected to their religiosity. The religious ceremonials were centered on the celebration of the corn harvest. The cultivation of corn was one of their chief occupations, so Creek religious activities were highly concerned with this important product. The Creek people sing and dance around a fire seasonally for their sacred ceremonies. These people were known as Stomp Dancers. The native Creek beliefs were that all creations and nearly all reasons for being alive were simply attributed to the "Master of Breath" or "Hesaketvmese."

They believed a good life would be rewarded. They also had prophets who they believed conferred with the supernatural in diagnosing disease and predicting the future. The Creeks highly regarded the prophets because they believed their special powers came from the One above. In the 1700's the Stomp Dancers would not let the Creeks convert to Christianity. The early Christian Indians had to hide or be punished for the new religion and life they had accepted. Many of them broke away from much of the Creek culture. Today the Muscogee (Creek) people in Oklahoma still belong to the two factions: the traditional and those professing Christianity. The later are predominantly Methodists and Baptists (Ryal Public School, 2009).

Respect for land provides the nourishment to sustain life. Land is nature, and nature directs man through the cycle of all living things. Land is where we breathe our first breath; land is here when we breathe our last breath and are placed in the land that outlived us all. Children are taught to respect Mother Earth and to take care of her resources. The strength within this relationship offers lifelong support and sustains that strength throughout the life cycle. Many Native Americans lost thousands of acres of valuable land and land rights throughout their history (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005).

Non-interference holds children to high values of respect for the decisions of elders, family and the community. Children are taught to behave in such a way that does not interfere with the choices of others. Choices in all avenues of interests await the approval of elders and family. This mode of respect may be a place where young college students are met with concerns related to attendance. Moreover, honoring elders cement the decision-making process in a deep respect for age, knowledge and

wisdom held by the elders. American Indians collectively value the counsel of the elders and the maternal role of the grandmother in American Indian tradition as the first teacher of the children. Adults honored the elders through visitations, celebrations and often provide gifts of respect such as deer meat, wild rice, syrup and fish. Muscogee (Creeks) gave thanks for their corn harvest. Many communities continue to teach young people that the first corn harvest is shared with the community, particularly the elders. These gifts are also part of Muscogee (Creek) stories relating to the Stomp Dancers, and the fables centered on the search for wild rice by Waynaboozhoo (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005; Ryal Public School, 2009).

Respect for all living things also means to be thankful for all things. Gratitude is important to American Indian values. Gratitude and generosity juxtapose an obligation to share from the thankfulness one offers the Creator for the gifts one has received. Giving thanks to the Creator is seen in community festivities such as the powwow for the wild rice harvest or feasts given at the first of the harvest season in such bounties as the first syrup, fish, berries, deer or other staple foods. Gratitude is also heard in the native words for thank you from Anishinabe children (Miigwech), in Dakota children (Pidamiva) and Muscogee (Creek) (Mvto) (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005).

Generosity and sharing are inherently embedded in the American Indian cultural value system. Each of these values utilizes the collectiveness in the community. Generosity is practiced in the survivability of the entire tribe through the sharing of basic needs such as food, water and shelter. As elementary as Abraham Maslow's (1943) *Hierarchy of Needs*, sharing is a basic instinct of survival. Adults

continue to share traditional gifts. Staple items such as wild rice and maple syrup are supplied to those known to be in need. The value of generosity and sharing ensures overall community survival. Elders instruct their children to share at school thus cementing the American Indian value across cultures.

Courage and bravery are inherently embedded in the American Indian. Courage and bravery are reflected in day to day activities and generally expected from the warriors of the tribe. In the 21st century Indian, courage and bravery are expected in all American Indians, including the Muscogee (Creeks). The Creeks, along with the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw and Seminoles (comprising the Five Civilized Tribes) were forcibly moved from lands in the eastern United States to lands designated in Oklahoma. This forced move resulted in a human struggle for survival. The “Trail of Tears” relocated over 17,000 Cherokees as a result of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The Trail of Tears or in the Cherokee language it is called Nunna daul Isunyi—“the Trail Where We Cried” further deepens the courage and bravery in each American Indian to this day (Ehle, 1988).

Honor was an intricate part of the cultural value system. Honor was given to the elders in the community with the highest levels of loyalty and obedience. Honor can be conferred through awarding leadership roles. Leadership roles begin by giving an eagle feather, having a feast in honor of an individual and having a song dedicated for an individual. The powwow or veteran dance also awards honor for service or achievement. The veteran’s dance honors all military veterans, especially combat veterans. The dance called the “49” is honored for their bravery and courage and accepts this honor with humility.

Humility captures the selflessness in the American Indian. The value of the community is placed above the needs of the safety and well-being of the giver. A person does not place oneself above others regardless of job, possessions, accomplishments or abilities. Humble is shared equally with humility. Humor is also shared by the Native American. Humor is a useful, behavioral tool to offset tragedies and sorrow within the tribe. It is meant to release stress for those who need help in understanding the problems faced by all. Humor may be mistaken as some form of disrespect. However, an old Indian proverb suggests that “one should not laugh at an Indian until the Indian laughs at them, and then laugh with them” (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005).

Cooperation in the American Indian culture solidifies harmony and balance in the world. With humility and humor, cooperation blends these values throughout the Native American’s way of life. This way of life is in activities such as foraging, hunting, fishing and other community functions to benefit the community as a whole. Inherent within the American Indian cultural values, the importance of cooperation extends from the elders through the adults to the children and onto the community.

Consensus is the Muscogee commonality with democracy. The democratic decision within the tribes is made by the tribal members rather than the American way of democracy. This democracy elicits all tribal members in the decision making process and practices dignity and respect for all members engaged. All concerns and opinions are addressed. Only when all persons have spoken can there be a decision reached on the issue.

Patience and tolerance are American Indian values that are highly attuned to young children. During instructional periods or teaching, tribal elders exercise great understanding to these teachings and also observe young ones as they experience new ideas and new Indian ways. New Indian ways are seen and felt through observing the seasons, weather, environmental and cultural situations and also develops a harmonious balance with nature. Patience and tolerance may also correlate with Indianness when used to formulate acknowledgement or answers to inquiries. Western cultures expect quick turn around answers to questions. Western cultures should be more attuned to the ways of Native American students.

Equality and acceptance holds similar values as do other Western cultures. American Indian values accept others on the same cultural scale. No one is placed above the other, and all are accepted as equal. American Indians share mutual dignity and individual capability to make decisions.

Work value and productivity achievement are important values to the American Indian. Work achievements are seen in a person's ability to provide for the nuclear family and the extended family, if applicable. As values are extended outside the reservations or local areas, American Indians assimilate to the host culture or host environmental work ethic.

Core values handed down from Muscogee (Creek) elders and used by the College of the Muscogee Nation are respect, integrity, responsibility, humility and wisdom. Respect is defined as we value our Native culture, language and community, and honor the rights and dignity of all people. Integrity is defined as fair, honest and accountable for all our actions. Responsibility encompasses loyalty, reliability and

diligence in all tasks. Humility includes kindness, concern for the well being of other and to embrace equality. Wisdom gains insight from scholarly learning and the knowledge plus experience of our elders (College of the Muscogee Nation, 2004).

Trimble's (1976) study regarding value orientation and counselor preference identified eight values inherent within American Indian culture. These values were honesty, independence, kindness, reciprocity, religiosity, self-control, social responsibility and social skills. A survey was devised to query 791 American Indians in five different areas of the United States. The survey results indicated the eight values reflected a suitable measure for a civilized culture (Demmert, 2001).

Native American Communication

Communications is an important aspect of any society or culture. Talking, writing and understanding message dialogue are critical factors related to cultural issues that affect Native American students' school experience and attrition rates (Gordon, Piana, & Keleher, 2000). American Indians are continually stereotyped as taking too long to answer questions in a traditional Eurocentric class setting. Silence or lapse in real time response can be misinterpreted as disrespect or lack of attention when received by non-Native American teachers or non-Native American recipients. However, communicating one's thoughts or expressing one's opinion may be a form of communication to which the Western world has become too well accustomed. To the American Indian, silence or lapse in real time is not a conflict; it is a way of life. Here it may be important to discuss the heritage and upbringing of Native American children. This discussion may illuminate the behavior, nature and personality of these children as they mature into adulthood.

A civilization or culture can be one of the most important behavioral impacts on the inhabitants of that culture. Geertz (1973) argued that culture is "...a school of thought holds that culture is composed of psychological structures by means of which individuals or groups of individuals guide their behavior" (p. 11). Culture is a product of individuals or groups of individuals interacting with each other through a normal span of life. However, the survival of this culture is inherently contingent upon the next culture. The next culture must learn the physical, mental, spiritual and behavioral parameters to properly carry forward their ancestral inculcation.

American Indians solidify their survival through their offspring. Tribal leaders or elders pass on ancestral heritage through the use of stories, fables and myths (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005). Moreover, tribal elders instill behavior, personality and cognition in the tribal children. The parents have the main responsibility for support of their children. The grandparents offer their familial services as chief or main authority figure. The belief was that the elders had lived a long time and acquired much knowledge. They wanted their grandchildren to learn all that they had found out in their life. Respect for parents and grandparents were expected and received (Opler, 1994). The American Indian values of respect, respect for others and patience and tolerance (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005) are extended to the elders for their knowledge and wisdom.

Cherokee children are raised to respect their elders and listen when spoken to by the elders (Llewellyn & Hoebel, 1967). As with Jicarilla Apaches, Cherokee children knew if elders were talking, the child was taught to cease talking, be quiet, and listen. The Cheyenne believed that "...When there is respect for the aged, the

mores are safe" (Llewellyn, 1967). Thus, in the presence of elders, teachers and adults, responsive hesitation and silence are normal tribal attributes that further embed respect in the children as well as respect for each other. The personality and behavior of these American Indian children are embedded with respect for all things and all people (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005). Swisher and Pavel (1994) argue that "pragmatism or thinking in concrete rather than abstract or theoretical terms is a value which is reflected in instructional practices with American Indian children." (pp. 59-77). Patience or a gradual response to immediate inquiries is a commonality or value observed in classrooms attended by American Indian students.

Many American Indian children deliberate on their responses and do not respond rapidly to questions. The feeling of not being wanted or a lack of patience from their teachers further corroborates a deficiency in understanding from non-American Indian educators. Respect for age and wisdom is a value which is also often manifested in the classroom in various ways. Many American Indian children are taught that making eye contact with an older person or questioning an older person is a sign of disrespect (J. Barnett, personal communication, July 9, 2007). Evidently teachers attribute these behaviors to American Indian culture, but they may not regard them as values which have an effect on learning styles (Swisher and Pavel, 1994).

Pavel (1994) further argues that teachers of American Indian/Alaska Natives (AIAN) be prepared to teach Native American students. Deloria and Wildcat (2001), drawing on earlier works of Fuchs and Havighurst (1973) concluded that Indian education must become a process "that moves within the Indian context and does not try to avoid or escape this context" (p. 85). American Indian educational instruction

must allow for the inclusion of valued interconnectedness (Jacobs & Reyhner, 2002, Eric ED459990). Value and interconnectivity imbue tribal children within family life and outside family life. Utilizing the inclusion of valued interconnectedness, it seems plausible that American Indian students could benefit from tribal teachers and tribal 'guess speakers' in the classroom and in the assistance with the overall educational forum (Jacobs & Reyhner, 2002, Eric ED459990). This plausibility is at the very root of many problems facing students of American Indian culture. A possible answer to this plausibility for college students rests with their early preparation for post-secondary education. Teachers must recognize the importance in the preparation of American Indians towards education (Jacobs & Reyhner, 2002)

“...so Western (European American) paradigms can coexist with Native worldviews about life's complex interconnections among peoples and with nature. They focus especially on the need to relate to one's local community and geography, an approach to learning referred to as "place-based education," a relatively new term for how American Indians traditionally viewed teaching and learning” (pg. 1).

Davis (1992) suggests that success is connected with family unity. The value of education coupled with a desire to please family members subsumes a dyadic relationship with all family members. Though specific pressures to attain collegiate success were not exerted, these students graduated under the auspices of the parents and supporters (p. 29). Thus, motivation can be both direct and indirect.

Jacobs and Reyhner (2002) classify high expectations, values and reciprocal contributions and family support and role models within valued interconnectedness

(pp. 1-2). In further definition of Native American communications, high expectations address the student success and test scores ratio. Traditional American schools bond successful learning with the height of the student's grade point average (GPA). American Native and Alaska Indian (AIAN) learning differs by the inclusion of the whole child in educational instruction (Jacobs & Reyhner, 2002). Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern (1990) introduced a model for expectancy to challenge Western ideas relating to learning theories, discipline, youth empowerment and school structure for "at-risk" learners that include AIAN students. "At risk" learners may be classified as such due to various levels of learning disabilities or may be the student who is in danger of a negative future event (Capuzzi & Gross, 1989, & Peterson & Nisenholtz, 1999). These students may also possess the capability but lack the applicability for success.

Fostering self-esteem in American Indians is crucial for at-risk learners. Young people from any culture or background may develop social, psychological or learning problems if self-esteem or feeling good about themselves and their abilities are absent from their personality (Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern, 1990). Coopersmith (1967) researched childhood self-concepts. From his studies, he developed four basic components of self-esteem: significance, competence, power and virtue (Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern, 1990, pp. 44-45):

Significance is found in the acceptance, attention and affection of others. Lack of significance threatens one's loss of position and removal within a group.

Competence brings understanding and satisfaction to bear. Achievement is enjoyed, while the loss of achievement promotes a lack of motivation.

Power is one's ability to control behavior and attitude over others. The lack of power withdraws control over others and thwarts direct influence.

Virtue is worth; worth is value rich in significance towards others. Without worth, life breeds emptiness.

Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern's (1990) model for expectancy is based on a specific set of needs inherently mandated for successful adult development.

Taken from Native American culture, the expectancy model or the Circle of Courage coalesce the interconnectedness of four quadrants regarding the social and behavioral needs of young people. The four quadrants are belonging, mastery, independence and generosity (p. 172). Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern (1990) further contend if these needs are not met, the child is..."at risk and is in danger of being hurt. A hurting child hurts others" (p. 173).

Values and reciprocal contributions also offer another avenue of approach into valuing interconnectedness. Respect, as earlier stated, is emulated through practicing traditions, learning the language, listening, cooperating, honoring elders, showing patience and tolerance, acceptance, humor, humility, gratitude and respect for all living things. Moreover, spirituality is heavily embedded in Native American theology (Slattery, 1995). To further motivate learning, place-based education combines traditional educational environments such as the classroom with one's local habitat. Students can associate learning with all course subjects such as geography, art, liberal studies, science and history (Dewey, 1915). American Indian education encapsulates the whole child in the learning process as many tribal elders do at home and further addresses the learning values taught in the early years of each American Indian child.

New students may experience feelings of insecurity when outside their own environment. Concerns over collegiate attendance may be in question. Family support and role models can enhance family unity and community solidarity. Moreover, family support can bring positive reactions to students in times of anxiety, stress and being away from home. A study of ten Crow, Northern Cheyenne and Blackfeet college graduates (Davis, 1992) cited role modeling as criteria for success in students (pp. 28-29). These students did not earn high grade point averages; however, their motivation to succeed was attributed to family support. Davis (1992) argued that

“...family support was a major factor in the graduates’ success. Family involvement in the school system, or even one member of the extended family who work in the school system as a teacher, teacher-aide or counselor, becomes an example to many people on the reservation.”

(p. 29).

Davis (1992) suggests that family-placed educational motivation is a strong criterion for AIAN success. Though these students received no parental pressure to attend, these graduates completed their post-secondary education under the auspices of indirect family support. Their family direction for education cites the student path “...in whatever they chose to do” (p.29). Thus, family support offered an indirect approach that ultimately resulted in collegiate success.

The silence they practice is natural to them whether in non-tribal elementary and high school, or their hesitation to answer questions or discuss certain subjects in class may be related to cultural insensitivity by teachers (Bower, 1993; Doyle, 1992), poor student-teacher relationships (Bower, 1993; Coladarci, 1993), teachers’ lack of

respect for American Indian students or their culture and traditions (Bower, 1993; Mender, 1991) and the disconnect between school culture and the students (Perry, 2002; Platero, Brandt, Witherspoon, & Wong, 1986). Simply, American Indian students feel that they are not wanted in the classroom (Bower, 1993; Deyhle, 1992; & Wax, 1967) and consideration for leaving school becomes an alternative to remaining enrolled.

Another aspect of Native American communications is the environment of the classroom. Non-Native Americans may believe that the Indian classroom is a reservation traditional "Teepee" or some gathering out in a field aside a running stream or brook. The blue sky is above, and the wind sweeps through the high brown fields of wheat or grass. Some tribes still remain on reservations while others, such as the Muscogee (Creeks) of Oklahoma, reside in single and multi-family dwellings as do other Oklahoma residents. Non-Native American classroom or the classrooms of a majority of elementary and high schools are set up to reflect traditional tables, chairs, textbooks, American or English alphabet and minimum amount of distance from student to teacher (Charles, 1998).

American Indians are also walking in two worlds (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005). Muscogee (Creeks), as do other American Indians, walk in their native world and the host or majority world of existence. The majority culture mandates definitive characteristics upon the American Indian, and therefore the American Indian must acquire these characteristics or values such as behavior and skills. People at all ages have important work to do. They share their work ethics with others who may not

know the American Indian ways. It is with this work ethic that American Indians live and work responsibly in their own culture and in their host environment.

Values and habits cement learning values and processes synonymous with the host generation. The Hopi, Pueblo Indians from northeastern Arizona believe they are descended from the same matriarchal ancestor, and therefore must ensure all clan information is passed on from generation to generation (Heider, 2001, p. 268). Attrition of family education is not present as children seek the teachings of the elders. Indigenous people such as the American Indian go through life awaiting their place as elders. Mechanical society is a “same task, same goal” procedure that may develop or transform into the organic society or tribe that is no longer tied to one another. Changes in the mechanical society often cause chaos on the invaded society.

At the heart of the socialization process rests the necessity for change (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Changes in a society could cause an anomie. However, indigenous learning follows a methodology embracing knowledge of one’s own culture throughout their history (Brennan, 1997, p. 31). Indigenous learning experiences a methodological style that views consistency and stability as part of the learning process. This learning process is at the core of the indigenous or American Indian’s heritage.

Durkheim’s (1897) theory of suicide refers to human self-termination. However, this theory also refers to a loss of educational status. I would argue that suicide is analogous with self-termination when students extinguish their educational pathway through voluntary or involuntary removal from school. Tinto (1975) argued that retention of higher education students is contingent upon successful

“integration.” Tinto’s model amalgamates academic and social integration. Academic integration marks personal performance, assesses student enjoyment in education and inquires of the student’s satisfaction with the educational institution. Social integration looks at how many friends one has and if one fits in (Draper, 2002). Durkheim’s suicide theory and Tinto’s model of retention has been instrumental throughout this research dissertation.

Generally, adult learning is inherently connected to culture and intrinsic motivation. Brookfield (1996, cited in Wlodkowski, 1999) emphasizes the need for one’s culture to match or mesh into one’s personality, learning abilities and related demographics. Simply, motivation to learn is dependent upon the learning atmosphere and the learning subjectivity. Deyhle and Swisher (1997) argue that numerous barriers or restrictions affect Indian success in school and retention throughout subsequent years.

Many barriers may be related to family conflicts. Indian culture suggests that those who leave their homes may disgrace their parents and grandparents. Other barriers may address learning problems already identified. However, current research refutes the notion that all college bound Indian students have difficulty in school. Research shows that those students with fewer ties to their tribal or Indian community have a higher retention rate than do students who reside on tribal or Indian communities (Hobson, 1994). Moreover, Davis (1992) concluded that one key factor in the success of Crow, Northern Cheyenne and Blackfeet college students was familial emphasis on education or a desire to please a family member. This desire to please is echoed in recent research into motivation (Wlodkowski, 1999).

Common Indian Values in Relation to Creek Values

Many Native American tribes share similar core values. The existence of a Creator or a religious belief is at the center of many Native American tribes. Additionally, family, community, Mother Earth and land (Sullivan & Bergstrom, 2005) are important included in cultural values. Respect is at the core of American Indian values and to extend this respect to all living creatures: animals, plants and all people. Muscogee (Creeks) emulate this respect through their core values. Humility, responsibility and integrity are shared through many of the American Indian tribes.

In summary, we have discussed Durkheim's theory of relating to suicide. Initially, suicide refers to the taking of one's life through self-termination. However, Durkheim offered a two-concept explanation. Many societies, including Native American, exist in a simplistic, non-specialized culture called a mechanical culture. Simplicity or a mechanical status offers more cohesion and solidarity to these societies. From this status, evolution to organic offers societies a higher level of complexity and resocialization or acculturation. A civilization or culture can be one of the most important behavioral impacts on the inhabitants of that culture. Culture is a product of individuals or groups of individuals interacting with each other through a normal span of life. However, the survival of this culture is inherently contingent upon the next culture. The next culture must learn the physical, mental, spiritual and behavioral parameters to properly carry forward their ancestral inculcation. Within a culture, Native American values allow for the enculturation to flourish. Respect, generosity, sharing, courage and bravery, honor and bravery, humility, cooperation and consensus, patience and tolerance, equality and acceptance assist many Native

American to continue their native ways while existing in their host nation society. Generally, adult learning is inherently connected to culture and instinct motivation. Adult learning is contingent upon motivation of the student. However, current research refutes the notion that college bound Native American students have difficulty in school. Fewer ties to tribal or Native American communities have a higher retention rate than those students who reside on tribal or Native American communities. Therefore, non-tribal residing Native Americans prefer to stay in school over those students attending tribal college institutions.

Chapter III

Theoretical Framework

According to Bean and Metzner (1985), perseverance in college students is due to many interrelated elements. These elements may be high school academic achievement, financial aid and employment, goal commitment and socio-environmental compatibility between the student and the university. Student retention, persistence and rites of passage may also be integrating parts of post-secondary educational criteria. Durkheim's (1897) theory of suicide provided an explanation of voluntary withdrawal from various situations specific to humanity: human existence and social environment. Suicide, in its most familiar status, relates to the voluntary withdrawal from human existence. Drawing on Durkheim (1897), Spady (1970) sought to review the character of the social environment, its social and intellectual or normative attributes that could not be accounted for through researching psychology or economics.

Durkheim distinguished four types of suicide: altruistic, anomic, fatalistic and egotistical (Tinto, 1993, p. 100). Altruistic suicide is the taking of one's life which society deems morally justified. Japan's nineteenth century hara-kiri suicides and World War II Japanese kamikaze warfare are considered two examples that the host society approved (Tinto, 1993, p. 100).

A second form of suicide is anomic suicide. It is a temporary disruption of specific norms which unite people together. Anomie or normlessness emerges under stress, war, religious or economic difficulties that tear at the fabric of humanity. In

communities affected by natural or serious situations, looting, rioting and family dissolutions are examples of anomic suicide.

A third form of suicide is fatalistic suicide which is a result of excessive normative control. Durkheim stated that "...suicide deriving from excessive regulation, that of person with futures pitilessly blocked and passions violently choked by oppressive disciplines" (1897, p. 276). Excessive normative control contrasts to anomic suicide by the taking of one's life to perceive blocks of hopelessness relating to human behavior.

The fourth form of suicide is what Durkheim refers to as egotistical suicide. Egotistical suicide arises when individuals are unable to become integrated and establish membership within one community or society. Durkheim dichotomized egotistical suicide into social and intellectual integration. Social integration arises when individuals experience the results of personal affiliations and from daily interactions with society's members. Intellectual integration occurs when individuals share similar values with those societal members. Durkheim further argued that insufficient integration and the absence of societal acceptance may result in isolation or alienation from members of a new society. The essence of Durkheim's theory of suicide cements the importance of individual integration on the social and intellectual plateau. This plateau of integration became pretentious when combined with the tools of sociological analysis for the benefit of its community members (Tinto, 1993).

Durkheim (1897) also believed that traditional mechanisms of integration, namely, church and family could not provide the required cohesion to ensure societal and intellectual integration. Therefore, Durkheim postulated an alternative

mechanism in the forms of the state and its modern educational system. The state and its modern educational system would appear to provide an immediate and limited level of integration inherently designed for college-bound Muscogee (Creek) students. With an alternative to traditional methods of integration, Durkheim recognized the necessity of researching individual behavior with regard to college structure and functionality.

Institutions of higher learning may appear to contain the same societal norms and values as collegiate institutions. However, colleges tend to the business of education and exist in a bipolar existence (Tinto, 1993) dealing with distinct academic and social connotations. Moreover, individual attendance in college must also assimilate group norms and values into the individual's values. Unlike previous studies of Durkheim and Van Gennep (1960), colleges expand student values and norms to a combination of compatibility among individuals (student) and groups (members and faculty). This combination of compatibility is not cemented in academia. Therefore, it is important to recognize the significance of student persistence and student retention as well as student departure.

Tinto's (1975) model of student retention provides some explanation of collegiate losses at universities and post secondary schools (Appendix A, Figure 2). Additionally, Van Gennep (1960) purports the process of relationships among succeeding groups can be measured through three phases or stages of the rites of passage (Tinto, 1987, 1993, p. 92). The rites of passage are separation, transition and reincorporation. Van Gennep (1960) describes these rites of passage as old pre-ritual

state, rite of separation, ritual period transition, rite of reincorporation and new post-ritual state.

Rites of passage have been referenced throughout history to provide a pathway or avenue of interconnected maturity and the change from childhood to adulthood. The Grand Valley Dani is the tribal home to some 50,000 Dani living in central Indonesia. The Dani practice the rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960) through the ritual periods of separation, transition (or liminal period) and reincorporation (Heider, 2001). Dani boys are removed from their living areas (separated), sequestered into specially built compounds called the Sacred Place (wusama), where their impurities are purged. A four-day seclusion consists of eating strange foods and taking early morning cold-dew baths (transition). Once transition is completed, the Dani boys are returned to the tribe (reincorporation) where they are hailed as adult Dani members.

The Nuer in upper Nile region of East Africa practices similar rites of passage called gar. Boys are stripped, their iron bracelets are cut off, and all body hair is shaved. Their foreheads are cut, and they are inverted and "...waddle upside down on all fours into the secluded hut, where they are fed special foods" (Van Gennep. 1960) and later engage in "...licentious horseplay and the singing of lewd songs" (Evans-Prichard, 1940, p. 250) until the reincorporation is concluded (Heider, 2001, p. 371). Van Gennep's stages define the separation, transition and incorporation of adults in various levels of existence (1960). Here, Van Gennep interlaces these rights of passage to students facing the staying or leaving of college.

According to Van Gennep, individuals begin at a point of origin following high school similar to the creation of a new life. Norms, values and skill sets are learned within the original environment. A point of origin may change as life matures and places a traveler or student in motion towards a new location, possibly post secondary education. With a change in life, this movement advocates what Van Gennep refers to as separation or relocation from the origin to a new place. Separation is marked as a reduction to members of the original group and an introduction of new ideas, norms and values. Van Gennep (1960) argues that

“...[I]solation, training and sometimes ordeals are employed as mechanisms to insure the separation of the individual from past associations and the adoption of behaviors and norms appropriate to membership in the new group” (Tinto, 1993, p.93).

Mechanisms may materialize as verbal or non-verbal communications, gestures, language variations or possibly changes in dress and appearance (Heider, 2001). Transition occurs as the interaction of new members and a new group to which the transitioner wishes induction. Here the traveler learns the new procedures to effectively interact with the transitioned location.

Van Gennep (1960) also believed that rites of passage can apply to college students (Tinto, 1993). College students leave home, travel to a new college, establish new friends and new surroundings and must begin a different educational schedule at the collegiate level. Van Gennep interlaced loss of the former environment with the induction of the new environment. Separation, transition and incorporation could offer an explanation for student retention, student persistence or student leaving. The

new college student applies to a university that is not within his or her hometown. Upon acceptance, the new student departs for his new college location (separation). Upon arrival at new location (dormitory or apartment, etc), the new college student begins to settle in (transition). A new student may experience feelings of anxiety, isolation or 'homesickness'. Moreover, losing these norms and beliefs without new friends and faculty to assist could cause the likelihood of departure from college prior to incorporation. The need for belonging has already been discussed in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. However, Native Americans and Alaska Natives (AIAN) hold family values at a high level of cultural significance, encompassing kindness, independence, honesty, social responsibility, reciprocity, social skills, religiosity and self-control.

Among the criteria above, goal attainment and commitment may well be the deciding factors on college retention. Tinto (1975) posits integration as an important prerequisite for academic and social satisfaction in college life. Academic integration can cement the intellectual motivation of the new student while social integration bridges the temporary familial absence of one's own family with a new collegiate family. However, this integration is contingent upon a strong family foundation rich in encouragement and strong in support (J. Barnett, personal communication, July 9, 2007). How much does the degree of cultural difference affect the ability of Native Americans to integrate into the new community? This dissertation has uncovered an answer to this question.

Tinto's model of attrition or the longitudinal model of institutional departure (1993, p. 114) provides a theoretical conduit that can offer pre-entry attributes

through institutional experiences thus achieving the final outcome. This model further exploits a virtual plethora of possibilities for any and all students wishing to attend college and also wishing to complete their educational goals. Though labeled the institutional model, this representation of Tinto's answer to college attrition supplies a specific legend or map-like checklist for prospective and current college student solidarity. Broadly defined, this model gauges intellectual (academic) and social (personal) integration (Tinto, 1993, p. 115) with goal attainment (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Wlodkowski, 1999) and collegiate commitment as stated earlier in this prospectus.

Pre-entry attributes or early entry elements help to solidify student participation in college with post college enrollment. Pre-entry attributes can be family background, skills and attributes, pre-college achievements and educational experiences (Tinto, 1975). These pre-entry attributes may be related to goal attainment and college completion. Tinto's (1975) model of retention coupled with Trimble's (1976) Social Values Survey provides the proper elements to gauge student persistence in this study.

This study searches for the following answers:

1. What are the cultural values inherent towards college persistence in Muscogee (Creek) students?
2. What personal attributes are most related to college persistence?
3. What personal attributes are present in persisters and non-persisters?

Based on the earlier works of Tinto (1975), Trimble (1976, 1981) and Hobson (1994), the hypothesis to be tested is:

1. Muscogee (Creek) college student completion (persistence) is positively related to cultural values in Muscogee (Creek) Indian students.

2. Collegiate completion in Muscogee (Creek) Indian students is directly related to Tribal values. The dependent variable is persistence (college continuance) and the independent variables are the cultural values. The cultural values are kindness, independence, honesty, social responsibility, reciprocity, social skills, religiosity and self-control.

Following the works of Hobson (1994), a second set of variables was used explain additional demographics of this project. These variables consisted of age, gender, current income, family income, years of school completed, high school GPA and college GPA (current or at time of departure). These additional variables were paramount in determining persistence over removal.

Chapter IV

Methods

Population and Sample

Participants in this research project were members of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation who attended the University of Oklahoma (OU), Norman, Oklahoma. The Registrar's office of the University of Oklahoma provided a list of 435 possible participants. This information was queried against criteria approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Oklahoma on February 18, 2009. Criteria approved by the IRB stated that current and former OU students who are attending or had attended OU during the School Years (SY) of 2000 through 2007 were eligible participants. Additionally, participants were American Indians of Muscogee (Creek) descent. This descent was reported or "coded" on student admission's records as specifically by the tribe codes of 10, 16, and 31. The tribe codes are 10 (Creek Nation); 16 (Kialegee of the Creek Nation); and 31 (Thiophlocco of the Creek Nation).

Of the population totaling 435 Muscogee (Creek) students, 193 possible participants were deleted due to out of state permanent addresses, attending OU in SY 2008 or unverified tribal affiliation. Therefore after reviewing all criteria and the recommendations of the IRB panel, 242 possible participants were selected. The population selection consisted of those students who successfully completed a baccalaureate degree (persisters), and those who dropped out of college and never returned to complete their degree (non-persisters).

Two hundred and forty-two (242) possible participants were contacted via US Postal Services, utilizing the participant's permanent mailing address supplied by OU. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, all participants were instructed to complete the survey and mailed the completed survey to the College of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Sixty-five unopened participant packets were received by the College of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation due to insufficient or improper address. Of the remaining 177 possible participants, 63 completed surveys were received by this researcher and became the basis for this research project. Membership in the Muscogee (Creek) tribe was determined based on their tribal enrollment and their attendance at OU.

The selection of this tribe was based on two factors: 1) Muscogee (Creek) college research has not been fully defined at the University of Oklahoma; and 2) Muscogee (Creeks) may provide additional scholarly research findings through their present population, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians in Atmore, Alabama. A review of the Poarch Band is outside the scope of this study and may occur after the conclusion of this study. Thus, present and former college students will provide a look into the persistence or resistance towards completing a college degree.

For the purposes of this dissertation, Muscogee (Creek) college students are college attendees enrolled in basic classes on main campus from school year's 2000 to 2007. Moreover, those Muscogee (Creek) college students who continually persisted from 2000 to 2007 (to complete their baccalaureate degree) further defined persistence in the quantitative methods. Part-time students, graduate students and those enrolled in the Continuing College of Education (CCE) were exempt from this research project. Specific student information was obtained from the University of

Oklahoma's Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost, Registrar's Office and utilized live Internet web-based data sources on OU's Provost Hyperlink. Additional information was obtained from OU's Office of Institutional Research and Report (IRR) or other student services departments.

American Indian or Alaskan Native (AIAN) had a combined student enrollment of 1633 students at the beginning of OU's fall semester (OU, 2007). Further contact with OU Student Services delineated the population of 1633 students to Muscogee (Creek) or Creek affiliated students. Fall attendance, 2008 at OU revealed current Muscogee (Creek) or Creek affiliated students at 147 admitted, with 80 Muscogee (Creek) students enrolled. Information was also requested from OU's Native American Studies (NAS) Division and OU's American Indian Student Association (AISA). Moreover, an endorsement letter for student assistance was received from the College of the Muscogee Nation, Okmulgee, Oklahoma. The endorsement letter is at Appendix B.

Upon approval from the Muscogee (Creek) Division of Human Development, Office of Higher Education in cooperation with the College of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, a list of OU students, both current and former was obtained from the Institution of Research and Report (IRR) and the Office of Enrollment Services at the University of Oklahoma. Based on this list, a sample size of 50 ($n=50$) was initially targeted towards a group of persisters ($n=25$) and non-persisters ($n=25$). Persistence was determined based on students who completed or completing their baccalaureate degree, and those who did not complete their baccalaureate degree as defined in student records on file. Sample size was adjusted (up or down) after all demographic

information was obtained from OU's Student Services. Data was collected utilizing a cross-sectional methodology. The Cultural Values Survey, herein referred to as "CVS", was distributed by mail to all sample participants. The contents of the mailing contained a letter from the Office of Muscogee (Creek) Division of Human Development, Higher Education explaining the purpose of the study. The Muscogee (Creek) letter of introduction, instructions on the completion of the Cultural Values Survey and Informed Consent form concluded the mailing. Questionnaires were sent to all prospective participants at the same point in time. All participants were requested to return their completed questionnaires to the Office of the Registrar, College of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The questionnaire packets were collected by this researcher upon notification from the College of Muscogee (Creek) Nation that all packets have been collected.

Prior to data collection, the CVS was pilot-tested on Muscogee (Creek) students at OU to determine proper word content and cultural suitability. The format for the CVS was prepared using the Internet web program, SurveyMonkey.com as approved by the OU'S IRB. The SurveyMonkey dot com format was emailed to 100 Muscogee (Creek) college students currently enrolled at OU, utilizing their students' OU Exchange Outlook email account. Thirty-four respondents completed the survey on-line. No changes to the CVS were reported. This pilot-test served as a preliminary look at the Cultural Values Survey to assure Native American students understand the survey. Factor analysis was employed to check validity with the instrument and verify no interrelationship among the sub-scales. Reliability was checked with a 0.73 alpha coefficient indicating a significant reliability level (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

Instrument and Assessment

Trimble (1976) devised a self-assessment tool for identifying the cultural importance of education in Native American values. The Social Value Scale (Trimble, 1976) assessed Native American college students during a study conducted in Oklahoma. The Social Value Scale was modified and used in the works by Hobson (1994) to assess Comanche college students' persistence in completing post-secondary education. The Cultural Values Survey was the result of a pilot study on Native American college students to determine the overall acceptance of college life from family values to cultural values. This spectrum of student interaction can be assessed by the use of the Cultural Values Survey as well as the educational perceptions of both the parents and children as the children prepare for college life.

The Cultural Values Survey utilized sub-scales mentioned previously. These sub-scales were kindness, independence, honesty, social responsibility, reciprocity, social skills and religiosity. Self-control was removed from the original eight independent values as there were no queries relating to self-control on the CVS. Kindness sub-scale referred to being considerate toward others. Independence sub-scale aligns one's own ability to sustain the self. Honesty sub-scale promoted trust and adulation to others. Social responsibility sub-scale extended one's own ability to others. Reciprocity sub-scale was defined as the giving and receiving from others. Social skills sub-scale allowed for adapting behaviors to a new environment. Religiosity sub-scale proffered one's beliefs in a higher being and in one's ability to engage in reverence. Generosity, family and Indian sub-scales were removed as they were not directed associated with the CVS.

The remaining items (i.e., gender, family income, current income, age, and years in school, high school GPA, college GPA and social interaction during college attendance) were realigned with the format of the CVS providing a greater review of the data sets. The result of this realignment revealed demographic data associated with college degree, number of years attended or attending OU, age, gender, yearly income, yearly income while attending college, mother's education level, father's education level, high school GPA and college GPA. The sub-scale measured and the demographic data further assessed the relationship of persisters and non-persisters with cultural and family values. From this relationship, a coefficient measurement was used to determine the outcome of each assessment statement. A 6-point Likert-style scale ranging from "very good" (1) to "very bad" (6) was used to assess participants' answers.

Data Collection

With the sample size defined and the pilot-test concluded, the Cultural Values Survey was delivered by U.S. Postal Service to Phase II sample participants. Adherence to OU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and procedures were maintained at all times. This researcher mailed all participant packets to those current and former Muscogee (Creek) college students designated via the University of Oklahoma, Office of the Registrar. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation's Division of Human Development, Office of Higher Education served as the receiving point for all questionnaires. This method of return secured the interviewee's identity. A letter of intent and explanation accompanied the Cultural Values Survey along with a letter of consent to solidify each interviewee's permission for inclusion within this project

(Appendix B). A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included within the mailing packet.

The questionnaire format contains structured and unstructured statements and questions. Structured questionnaire format contains concrete statements with six possible answers or considerations and responses are quantitative in nature which aid in tabulation and analysis. The Cultural Values Survey also contained open-ended questions whereby the respondent can write a personal response based on their feelings or experiences.

Data Analysis

This research project employed a mixed methods assessment. For quantitative analysis, applied logistic regression analysis (ALRA) was used to predict a dependent variable on the basis of continuous and/ or categorical independent variables and to determine the percentage of variance in the dependent variable that is accounted for by the independent variable. Logistic regression is a variation of ordinary regression when an observed outcome is restricted to two values, which usually represents an occurrence or non-occurrence of some outcome event (usually coded 0 or 1). It produces a probability of that occurrence as a function of the independent variables. Ordinary regression deals with a continuous dependent variable to one or more predictors or values. Here, a logistic regression model utilizes a binary outcome based on answers provided from persisters and non-persisters. The dependent variable (persistence) addressed a binary response (yes/no) to college completion. Thus, the dependent variable was formulated to resolve the hypothesis.

After receiving all survey packets, 63 participants completed the survey and 55 of the participants or 87% of all observations had completed a post-secondary degree or were actively attending post-secondary education. Muscogee (Creek) students expressed a strong persistence to college retention. Logistic regression computations revealed a form of regression when the dependent variable is a dichotomy (college completion or not) and the independent variable(s) are of any type (Garson, 2006). Logistic regression analysis was used to test a binary dependent variable (yes/no to persistence) against multiple independent variables (cultural values and personal demographics) (Menard, 2002) using Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) © (Goodnight, 2008). Discriminant analysis was not incorporated into the SAS output to determine the original sample's division into two groups (persisters and non-persisters) as the overall sample size was too small. Chi-square analysis assisted in the determination of various demographic data such as college GPA and attendance and was assessed during data analysis using Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) © (Goodnight, 2008).

One statement requested participants' years in college but only four (4) participants answered. Review of Muscogee (Creek) college student attendance from School Years 2000-2007 did not provide data along a quantitative continuum for the assessment of persistence. Longevity of student attendance (SY 2000-2007) was not compared with the eight independent variables (IV). This longevity of student attendance was not measured as questions did not request specific longevity information from the participants.

Cronbach's coefficient alpha testing was initiated to determine the overall reliability of the Cultural Values Survey. Tests with high reliability will achieve an alpha coefficient of 0.75 or more on a scale of 0 to 1 where the high score indicates high reliability (Cronbach, 1951). The initial findings of the alpha testing revealed a .63 with all observations and all variables. This finding is below the suggested value of 0.70 given by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Further analysis was run to test the reliability of each dyad group, persisters and non-persisters. The reliability of the persisters' group was confirmed by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.46 using the PROC CORR with alpha program embedded in the Small Analysis System (SAS). For non-persisters, the overall alpha finding yielded 0.76 thus exceeding Trimble's initial study and the suggested value of 0.70 given by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

A review of all variables (kindness, independence, honesty, social responsibility, reciprocity, social skills and religion) revealed the lowest average or mean from the answers to the Cultural Values Survey (CVS) was religion (\bar{x} =5.02) followed by social skills (\bar{x} =9.3). The figure below reflects the lowest (and strongest) average derived from the Cultural Value Survey. Note: that some of the tables listed in List of Tables are shown in graphic design throughout this dissertation.

Table 1. *Mean of the Independent Variables*



The strongest correlation among the observations and variables were the dyad relationships of reciprocity and kindness at .44 ($p > .0003$) and religion and kindness at .50 ($p > .0001$) to persistence. This finding would suggest that kindness is positively correlated with reciprocity and religion. To recall, the kindness sub-scale refers to being considerate toward others. Independence sub-scale aligns one's own ability to sustain the self. Reciprocity is the sub-scale of the giving and receiving from others. Social skills sub-scale allows for adapting behaviors to a new environment. Religiosity or religion sub-scale proffers one's beliefs in a higher being and in one's ability to engage in reverence. This triad (kindness, reciprocity and religion) is further explored within the qualitative research analysis to follow.

The qualitative data analysis for this research project involved a general inductive approach. The purposes of using an inductive approach are to 1) succinctly reduce raw text to measurable data; 2) to interlace research with usable data strands and 3) to link researched data with a functional and analytical framework (Strauss &

Corbin, 1990; Creswell, 2002). An inductive approach to research theorizes reasoning or thinking from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories. This “bottom up” approach allows for more open-ended and exploratory cognition of the research question, data-gathering techniques and ultimately findings and conclusions (Trochim, 2001). Trochim argues that inductive reasoning follows a theoretical pathway of observation, pattern, tentative hypothesis and theory. In contrast, deductive reasoning is quite the opposite using theory, hypothesis, observation and confirmation. For inductive reasoning, this dissertation observed and measured patterns, and developed categories thus discovering similarities within the proposed hypotheses. These hypotheses finally developed general conclusions and recommendations.

An inductive approach further condenses raw data into a succinct format, offers a conduit between data and research and develops a framework to better understand the underlying message or thought within the data (Thomas, 2006). An inductive approach proffers a more concise look into the participants (Berg, 2007). Upon conclusion of the personal interviews, data was analyzed and recorded.

The Cultural Values Survey (CVS) was a compilation of multiple choice statements and opened ended questions. Multiple choice questions were evaluated earlier in this project. The opened ended questions ask respondents to assess their own personal values and beliefs from a Native American point of view. The results of this assessment yielded a strong attention to religion and several values already embedded within the CVS. In 63 observations, religiosity was discussed 50% among respondents. Belief in God, belief in a Supreme Being, prayer and Hesaketvmese

(Muscogee Creek word for Master Breath of Life - the only one who can give or take life) cemented a sense of religiosity among the Creek respondents. An expression of peace with one's self, a calmness, an answer to anxiety and troubled times were quelled through a spiritual connectivity with the Supreme Being or Hesaketvmese. Moreover, cultural values, similar to those within the CVS, were mentioned as part of Native American beliefs. Those values include, but not limited to trust, kindness, independence, honesty, compassion, common sense, loyalty to family and you, confidence, humility, teamwork and love, integrity, dedication, faith, self-discipline, strong work ethic, morality, perseverance, and patience.

Qualitative data were obtained from interviews, ethnographic study and field notes. HyperRESEARCH© assisted in the analytical coding of text, images, audio and visual sources. The theoretical basis for this portion of the study utilized Strauss and Corbin's (1994) grounded theory. Grounded theory begins with a research idea, then design, data collection, analysis, reflection and finally offers explanation and comparison to determine answers to the hypothesis. Though well known for its case study analysis, grounded theory offers researchers' constant consideration of what is being unearthed, making comparisons between information and interpretations obtained by the researcher (Berg, 2007). Coupled with grounded theory, an additional tool for qualitative research analysis is symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969). Blumer, considered the founder of symbolic interactionism, posits human behavior depends upon learning rather than biological instinct. Human beings communicate what they learn through symbols, the most common system of symbols being language. Blumer also argues that human beings account for meaning in two

ways. First, meaning may be seen as intrinsically attached to an object, event, phenomenon or other form. Second, meaning may be understood as a “psychical accretion” or is treated as being an expression of constituent elements of the person’s psyche, mind, or psychological organization. The constituents of the individual’s psychological makeup that go to form meaning, then, are all of the sensory and attitudinal data that the person brings to the instance of meaning formation with her. Native American beliefs mirror these meanings when they attach symbols to their lands, their dreams, their stories, to animal and fowls, and other non-human meanings to legends handed down through tribal generations. Muscogee (Creeks) used a form of symbolic interactionism when they named many of their crops after animals and fowl. Examples of this symbolic interactionism would be Halpadalgi (Alligator), Katsalgi (Panther) and Yahalgi (Wolf) (Aspensen, 2004).

Personal interviews were conducted with willing participants using the Cultural Values Survey (CVS) (Trimble, 1981). Twenty-two (22) interviews were selected to confer or retrieve the importance of American Indian values. Interview questionnaires received demographic data such as age, gender, religion, tribal affiliation (to ensure Creek participation), numbers of years in college or student status (i.e. freshman, sophomore, etc.), area of study and intent of persistence (remain or remove) toward post-secondary completion.

Theory and Model Application

Qualitative research is recognized as a methodology whereby the researcher becomes an integrated part of the overall study. Grounded theory is a research method designed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and searches a relation with fit, understanding,

generality and control (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It is a general technique that gathers data for coding and analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Coding is a systematic approach to exploring text, pictures, themes or other data and providing an in-depth study of the material. Three forms of coding were involved: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. This coding typology advanced from general exploring to more definitive, from open to selective, respectively (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Open coding looked for naming categories in a general mode. Axial coding further defined the coding archetype, thus seeks causality among the categories. Selective coding further defined the relationship among the categories and measures validity. Validation was accomplished through hypothetical relationships among the previous defined categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Data were collected through qualitative or quantitative methods.

This research project progressed with existing theory of Emile Durkheim's (1897) theory of suicide, Vincent Tinto's (1975) model of student retention and Joseph Trimble's (1981) Social Value Scale. These three methodologies supported quantitative and qualitative research that was incorporated into this dissertation.

Hypothesis Statement

The unit of analysis is the Muscogee (Creek) college student. As stated earlier, the following hypotheses are to be tested:

1. Collegiate completion (persistence) in Muscogee (Creek) Indian students is directly related to Muscogee (Creek) cultural values.

Null hypothesis:

H_0 = There is no relationship between cultural values and Creek persistence.

Alternate hypothesis:

H_1 = There is a relationship between cultural values and Creek persistence.

DV: college graduation or achievement

IV: college student, family values and positive perseverance.

EV: age, gender, education level

2. Collegiate completion (persistence) is positively related to personal attributes in Creek Indian students.

Null hypothesis:

H_0 = There is no relationship between college completion and Muscogee (Creek) personal characteristics.

Alternate hypothesis:

H_1 = There is a relationship between college completion and personal attributes.

DV: college graduation and persistence

IV: college student

EV: age, gender, education level

Assumptions

In any research project, assumptions must be addressed. This is especially true when researching cultural values and ethnicity. The following statements are assumed in this study:

1. It was assumed that participants are knowledgeable and fluent in English and their native language as present or former college students.
2. It was assumed that the Muscogee (Creek) College would endorse this project.
3. It was assumed that the assessment model chosen would provide the optimum return of data required.

4. It was assumed that timelines stated for completion of questionnaires were sufficient for return to this researcher. It was assumed that the results of this research project will show a direct correlation of cultural values and Muscogee (Creek) college persistence.

Chapter V

Discussion

Issues or Problems to Emerge

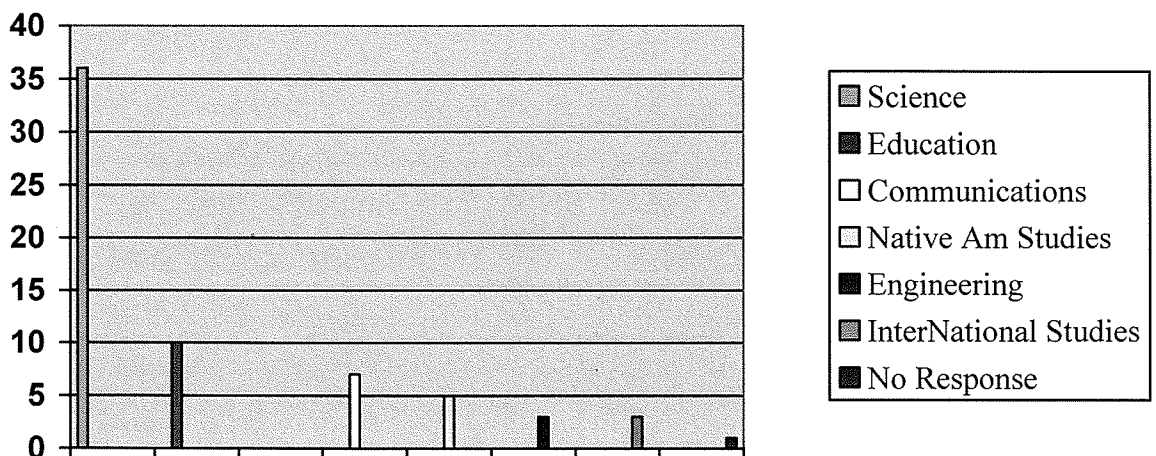
Some issues or problems emerged during this research project. The research project was limited to the Muscogee Nation and specifically Muscogee (Creek) college students at OU. The sample size was restricted to Muscogee college students as verified by Muscogee (Creek) Office of Higher Education. The sample appeared truncated or sparse; however, this project yielded significant information regarding the Muscogee (Creek) Indians and their quest for a college degree. By limiting the sample to a specific tribe, by examining one college in a vast American Indian population (University of Oklahoma), and by minimizing the collegiate location (OU), this project offered a definitive margin of information. This information had not previously been documented in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma. Moreover, a robust and rich data analysis explained vigorous educational significance utilizing a multi-cultural lens of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. This research project discovered the cultural, ethnic and family values related to college persistence in Muscogee (Creek) college students.

Findings and Results

Findings from this research project revealed 63 observations or participant responses to the Cultural Values Survey (CVS). Respondents were 39 females (62%), 21 males (33%) and 3 (5%) non-respondents. The mean or average age of respondents was 26.6 years, thus suggesting a non-traditional student density. Traditional student ages range from 18 to 24 years of age. The average age of

persisters was 28.4 and the average age of non-persisters was 27.8. Respondents reported a significant professional level of education. With regards to respondents' major studies, 55 students are currently seeking post-secondary degrees from the University of Oklahoma. Science-related studies (health-physical education, pre-pharmacy, social-philosophy-psychology, and physics) were the most frequent discipline (38%). General Education, Early Childhood, and Elementary Education were the next major emphasis of study (20%) and Communications (Journalism, Public Relations) followed (12%). Nine percent (9%) majored in Native American studies and six percent (6%) of the respondents majored in Engineering (Chemical, Computer). International studies and letters (moral philosophy) were next with six percent (6%) each. Finally, one (1) respondent provided "no report" thus completing the remaining respondents' emphasis of study. Note: that some of the tables listed in List of Tables are shown in graphic design throughout this dissertation.

Table 2. *Degrees Sought*



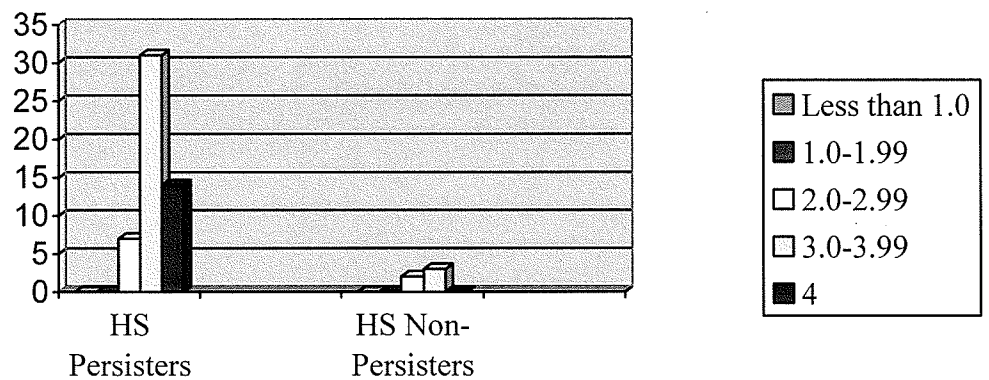
A modest percentage of all respondents had present incomes over \$35,000 range (38%). Additionally, a significant percentage of all respondents had college incomes in the over \$25,000 range (67%). However, a disparity occurred when comparing incomes of persisters and non-persisters. While attending college, a notable amount of persisters (67%) earned over \$35,000 per year compared to non-persisters (50%) earning less than \$10,000 annually. This economic disparity among persisters and non-persisters may be linked to non-persisters' collegiate continuance.

Education levels of persisters and non-persisters revealed some disparities. Within this project, fifty-five persisters and five non-persisters were queried. Mothers of non-persisters and fathers of persisters earned higher educational credentials than fathers of non-persisters and mothers of persisters. Mothers of non-persisters earned college degrees at the post-secondary level (80%) compared to mothers of persisters (51%). Moreover, mothers of non-persisters did earn one graduate level degree (20%) compared to mothers of persisters earning six graduate level credentials (20%). Fathers of non-persisters earned slightly lower percentage of college credentials (40%) compared to fathers of persisters earning college credentials and graduate level degrees (44%).

A review of high school grade point average (GPA) and college GPA among persisters and non-persisters reflected a marginal range at the 3.00 – 3.99 GPA level. Persisters maintained the 3.00 – 3.99 GPA throughout high school and college (56%, 81% respectfully). Non-persisters maintained GPA from high school to college (60%) at the 3.00 – 3.99 rating. Persisters significantly lowered their 4.0 GPA from high school onto college (31%, 2% respectfully) compared to zero percent (0.00%) of

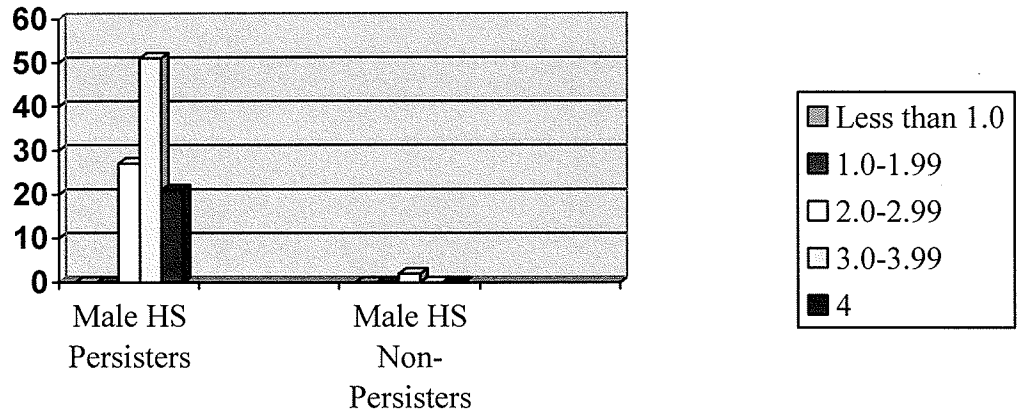
non-persisters attaining a 4.0 GPA from high school to college as shown below. Note: that some of the tables listed in List of Tables are shown in graphic design throughout this dissertation. Note: that some of the tables listed in List of Tables are shown in graphic design throughout this dissertation.

Table 3. *High School Persisters GPA and High School Non-Persisters GPA*



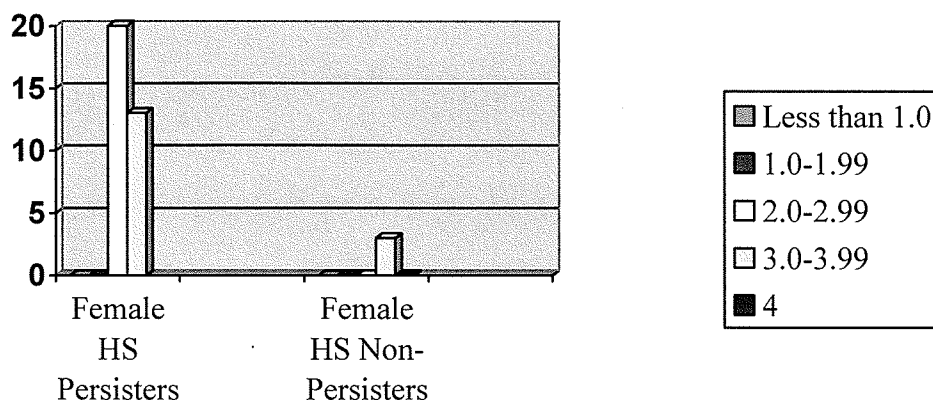
In a further review of high school and college GPA, gender GPA was most significant. Eleven high school males maintained the 3.00 – 3.99 GPA in over half of the persisting respondents (57%) and increased their post-secondary GPA to the 4.0 level (63%). Non-persisting high school males had two respondents at the 2.00 – 2.99. One respondent maintained the 2.00 – 2.99 GPA, and the second respondent increased GPA to 3.00 – 3.99 at the post-secondary level. However, non-persisters had not completed their post-secondary education at the time of this report. Note: that some of the tables listed in the List of Tables are shown in graphic design throughout this dissertation.

Table 4. *GPA for Male HS Persisters/Non-Persisters*



Twenty (20) high school female respondents reported 3.00 – 3.99 GPA (56%) and increased to 33 respondents (92%) at the post-secondary level. Post-secondary level non-persistent females split significantly with the post-secondary persistent females (67%, 91%, respectfully) at the 3.00 – 3.99 GPA. However, only one persistent female attained 4.0 GPA in post-secondary education and zero non-persistent females reached the 4.0 GPA level. Note: that some of the tables listed in the List of Tables are shown in graphic design throughout this dissertation.

Table 5. *GPA for Female HS Persisters/Non-Persisters*



Reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's coefficient of reliability or consistency of 0.63 using the procedure of correlation (PROC CORR) with alpha program embedded in the Small Analysis System (SAS) software (Cronbach, 1951). This finding is below the suggested value of 0.70 given by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Further analysis was run between the two groups of respondents, persisters and non-persisters resulting in an unusual change in Cronbach's coefficient. Non-persisters factored a Cronbach's coefficient of 0.76 whereas the Cronbach's coefficient for persisters rated 0.46. This imbalance in the overall coefficient ratings would suggest that the rating by non-persisters yielded a stronger correlation than persisters. However, the non-persisters correlation did not support the findings relating to persisters' educational completion. Simply, non-persisters did not complete a college education despite the higher (0.76) correlation with Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

Logistic regression was tested among all observations and also within each of the two groups: persisters and non-persisters. Recalling the previous comments

regarding the correlation among the cultural values of reciprocity/kindness and religion/kindness, logistic regression was initiated using SAS. Statistical analysis such as SAS utilizes various labels or terms to describe specific portions of the analytical process. Two of those terms are maximum likelihood estimate (MLE) and Wald Chi-Square. MLE is an estimator of the best probability (likelihood) among the sample data. Simply, MLE provides a robust or “best bet” estimate among the parameters as shown in the sample being researched (Hayes, 1994). A Chi-Square test or the distribution of the random variable χ^2 (lower case Greek chi, squared) is any test that uses a standard distribution or Gaussian distribution (bell curve model) making inferences about a single population (Hayes, 1994). Wald Chi-Square is a parametric descriptor that can be used to test the significance of independent, individual variables.

Maximum likelihood estimates (MLE) for kindness (.008, Pr>.95) and religion (-0.11, Pr>.68) as estimate and Wald Chi-Square (0.76/0.52, respectfully) suggest a moderate relationship or correlation with kindness and religion. Additionally, MLE for reciprocity and religion estimated a strong similarity (.03/-0.11, respectfully) and Wald Chi-Square (.076/0.52, respectfully). Therefore, kindness and religion proffer a stronger correlation and stronger regression than reciprocity and religion within this project. This correlation or regression suggests that those Creek students who possess cultural values such as kindness, reciprocity and religion will succeed in post-secondary education and subsequent post-secondary completion.

Qualitative data were acquired and analyzed from the Cultural Values Survey. To recall, three phases encompassed this project: Phase I, Phase II and Phase III. Phase I employed an electronic mail CVS to current OU Muscogee (Creek) students requesting clarity and competence in regards to this 21st century CVS document. Phase II sent via US Postal mail the CVS packet to current and former OU Muscogee (Creek) students (from 2000 to 2007) to ask their input on the CVS. Phase III interviewed willing Phase II participants on a one-on-one basis.

Phase I of the Cultural Values Survey (CVS) asked current Muscogee (Creek) College students attending the University of Oklahoma to preview and comment on the CVS. CVS was emailed to all Muscogee (Creek) college students as requested by this researcher and approved by OU's Institutional Review Board (IRB). CVS was prepared using SurveyMonkey dot com software (as suggested by and approved by IRB) thus making the electronic mail (e-mail) transmission quicker. Upon completion of Phase I, Phase II was prepared for all Muscogee (Creek) college students attending or previously attended OU from School Years (SY) 2000 through SY 2007. Potential participants' names and addresses were approved by OU's IRB and obtained from the OU Registrar.

Two hundred and forty-two (242) potential participants were mailed via US Postal Services the CVS and other documents. These other documents included letter of intent and explanation accompanied the Cultural Values Survey, a letter of consent to solidify each interviewee's permission for inclusion within this project and a self-addressed, stamped envelope addressed to the College of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The survey revealed similar parallelisms to those findings observed in the

quantitative analysis. Within the CVS, kindness, independence, honesty, reciprocity, social responsibility, social skills, religiosity and self-control were independent variables (IV) determining their effect on persistence (DV). Each IV was associated with each multiple choice question and assessed from 1 to 6 by the respondent's answer. The IV's were not known to the respondents nor did the respondents know which statement within the CVS was assessing a specific IV. Therefore, the significance of the aforementioned statement is corroborated through the answers to the open-ended questions and also parallels personal interview information obtained by this researcher. Within the 63 respondents' answers and drawing on previously discussed beliefs such as trust, kindness, independence, honesty, compassion, common sense, loyalty to family and you, confidence, humility, teamwork and love, integrity, dedication, faith, self-discipline, strong work ethic, morality, perseverance, and patience assisted with qualitative analyses relating to the responses to the open-ended questions as part of the CVS. This analysis yielded significant information.

The Cultural Values Survey asked 63 respondents their beliefs or values regarding their Native American heritage. Four open-ended questions were asked of the participants:

1. As an American Indian, what values do you think are important in guiding your life?
2. Which of these values has helped you in difficult times?
3. A belief is an assertion that is perceived to be true. Beliefs are not necessarily facts in the objective sense, because we often believe things that are not objectively true. As an American Indian, what beliefs describe your feelings as a Native American?
12. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about, concerning your values concerning an American Indian?

Question one asked the respondents to comment on values that guided their lives. Various answers were received; however, the most important values reported throughout this first open-ended question were family, religion, honesty, and ethics. Other values were intermittently received including hard work, Indian heritage, and perseverance. One respondent offered: "Trust in God and trust yourself to know what is right and wrong. Accept your decisions. Always be thankful for what have or receive". One theme to emerge is the possibility that family and religion are strong in Muscogee (Creek) college students.

Question two asked the respondents which values have helped in difficult times. Again, various answers were received. Respondents reported that family and religion were instrumental in difficult times. Other values were intermittently discussed including honesty, and self-confidence, ethics, hard work, independence and kindness each). One respondent commented: "Trusting and believing that God will help in some way. As my mother and grandmother said: "God will never forsake you. Always keep your faith strong." One theme to emerge is the possibility is that family and religion are extremely strong in Muscogee (Creek) college students.

Question three defined beliefs relating to this research project and asked respondents to describe their Native American beliefs or feelings. Respondents collectively reported that the most important beliefs or feelings relating to their beliefs were religion, ethics, and social responsibility. Family was in the minority of the respondents to question three and supernatural or witchcraft was mentioned in regards to the afterlife or Native American eternity. One respondent believes: "All people matter. Everybody is here to learn something. Find something to believe in

and find it for yourself. And when you do, pass it on to the future.” Questions four through eleven ask demographic information about the respondents such as college degree obtained, present age, gender, approximate yearly income, income during college, highest education obtained by mother and father, high school GPA and college GPA. One emerging possibility to question three is that learning and religion (for future generations) is extremely strong in Muscogee (Creek) college students.

Question twelve (12) asked all respondents to provide any further information regarding their Native American beliefs. Seven respondents offered their beliefs or feelings. One respondent stated that “thirty-eight percent of American Indians were raised by African-Americans. I believe in Christianity.” Another respondent stated “it was difficult to live my daily life with Native American values while trying to succeed in the world around me.” Another respondent stated, “I’m proud to say I’m Native American, however growing up and still in present day, I did/do not participate in traditional cultural activities. I respect those different events/activities, but being highly involved is not something I’m currently interested in.” Additionally, one respondent commented, “it is essential that no one forget their people’s past or their language. To do so would be horrendous, as it takes more than just genetics to say that one is an American Indian.” Finally, one Native American seized the opportunity to excel and reports, “I went to law school at the University of Oklahoma College of Law. Now I practice Indian law.” One observation to the above answers regarding question twelve (12) is that the practice of Native American activities is not extremely strong nor is participation actively engaged. A second observation to question twelve (12) is that Muscogee (Creek) college students may not actively

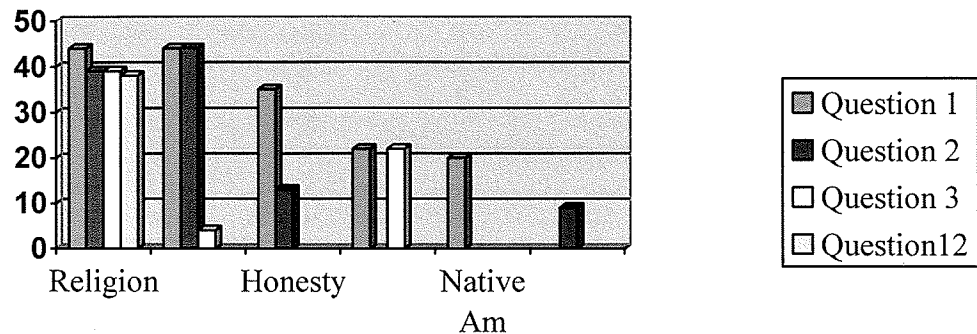
engage in their Native American cultural activities but are aware of their Native American heritage.

In sum, answers from the open-ended questions included in Phase II reflected:

1. As an American Indian, what values do you think are important in guiding your life? Family, religion, honesty and ethics. Other values were intermittently received including hard work, Indian heritage and perseverance.
 2. Which of these values has helped you in difficult times? Family and religion. Other values were intermittently discussed including honesty, and self-confidence, ethics, hard work, independence and kindness.
 3. A belief is an assertion that is perceived to be true. Beliefs are not necessarily facts in the objective sense, because we often believe things that are not objectively true. As an American Indian, what beliefs describe your feelings as a Native American? Religion, ethics, and social responsibility. Family was in the minority supernatural or witchcraft was mentioned in regards to the afterlife or Native American eternity.
12. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about, concerning your values concerning an American Indian? Seven respondents offered their beliefs or feelings relating to religion, Native American values.

Note: that some of the tables listed in List of Tables are shown in graphic design throughout this dissertation.

Table 6. Percentages of Answers to CVS Value Questions 1,2,3 &12



Cultural and familial values may solidify a stark cementation in the pursuit of a successful collegiate career. Guillory, Wolverton and Appleton (2008) report institutions of higher education remain a symbol of hope to Native American college students. Additionally, persistence factors such as pre-college academic preparation, family and financial support, supportive and involved faculty and institutional commitment are crucial elements to students' ability and or desire to persist in college (pgs. 51-52.).

One possibility to emerge to question four is that almost half (44%) of the Muscogee (Creek) respondents hold religion, family and ethics high in their beliefs and feelings. As previously stated fifty-five of sixty-three respondents (87%) have earned post-secondary credentials or actively completing their post-secondary education at OU. An observation would be that religion, family and ethics are related to completion of post-secondary education within Muscogee (Creek) college students at the University of Oklahoma.

In some cases, students must maintain connections to traditional Indian ceremonies and activities to reduce feelings of isolation and promote solidarity (Guillory, Wolverton & Appleton, 2008). This solidarity may be the foundation for attending Muscogee (Creek) college students to persist. Nelson-Barber and Trumbull (2007) reports that a means to improve academic performance of indigenous students involves maintaining language and culture between home and school, continued native language skills and reinforcing Native American culture in the classroom (pg 133). Muscogee (Creek) college students utilize their Native American beliefs in religion, family and ethics (as seen in chart above).

Phase III Interviews

Upon completion of Phase II, Phase III asked willing respondents to agree to a one-on-one interview. Twenty-two interviewees agreed from the pool of respondents. Interview participants acknowledged their consent to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted at the University of Oklahoma. Interviews were conducted separately. Interviewees agreed to answer ten questions regarding their Native American beliefs and their attendance at OU.

The first three questions were related to the interviewee's demographic information. Questions four (4) through six (6) asked for collegiate environmental problems that the interviewee may have encountered during college attendance. Question seven (7) asked for the interviewee's opinion relating to Native American attrition or "drop out" rate from post-secondary attendance. Question eight (8) queried what percentage of Native American and American culture is taught in the classroom at OU. To recall, culture is a product of individuals or groups of

individuals interacting with each other through a normal span of life. Question nine asks for recommendations to better preserve multi-cultural relations at OU. Lastly, question ten asked for positive persistence parameters for Native Americans to remain in college and what negative attritional parameters would cause Native Americans to leave post-secondary attendance.

A compilation of all interviewee respondents revealed diverse arguments affecting college completion. Question seven specifically asked for respondents' input surrounding their persistence or attrition on college attendance. In order of importance, financial hardship, tribal assistance, parent support, social support, culture shock, high school preparation for college, cultural barriers, personal depression, university environmental socialization and reciprocity or "giving back" to the tribe were numerous issues facing Muscogee (Creek) students as well.

In Phase III, the first interviewee provided an interesting look into his attendance at the University of Oklahoma. This former student agreed to speak about his experiences while attending OU. Sam and his wife, Mary (pseudo names to protect their identity) originally attended OU after transferring from a northeastern Oklahoma college. Sam and Mary were part of a Native American program from a junior college near their hometown. Sam and Mary were Native Americans but did not hold a Certificate Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) or Tribal Membership Card from the Muscogee (Creek) tribe. Sam's great-grandmother was full-blood Creek. In his opening remarks during this interview Sam commented that he and Mary were invited to relocate to Norman OK and become part of the professional studies at OU. At that time, this program was funded for certain Native American selectees that

would participate in exchange for tuition. Sam earned a bachelor's degree in microbiology with minor in chemistry and had planned to continue in that field of study until there was a change in the requirements to be enrolled from the school of excellence. It was this change in requirements (not a CDIB holder) that was paramount in Sam's ability to continue college. Sam also tried to supplement college tuition with his Veteran Affairs (VA) dollars, but the time had expired to utilize VA funds (10 years after military service).

I asked Sam if there were any barriers or impingements affecting Native American attendance in college. Sam stated, "there were no barriers... well... maybe, I could see social barriers; pretty expensive school, the school is pretty expensive." Also, were there any ideology or theology expressed during class sessions? One issue Sam discussed was regarding a previous undergraduate history class. Sam told me that the instructor made paganistic comments regarding Native American religion. Sam commented,

"the professor was pretty down on Native Americans and uh the Nordic religions, in northern Europe that kinda hit home. They were calling; they got down on them pretty hard, that upset me and my wife both and several others. Not so much...our religions even though are, or may have, I always looked at it as a Catholic religion, they have a lot of deities you might say, but there was only one god and creator, things were created, pretty underlying with all religions, called them pagans, that NA was pagantic, Germans were pagans and well, after that, uh, we didn't do too well in that class .He was a Muslim...and I feel we got graded on our own religious beliefs. Well, Christian people were ok, Jewish people were ok, and uh Muslim people ok...but everybody else was pagan and makes you heathen (chuckle), they didn't...they weren't going to Heaven (chuckle), you know what I'm saying... that was really radical and we wrote a paper, we both got into it; she went from more of a native American standpoint and I kinda got into a Teutonic standpoint, and he (the instructor) called it plagiarism. He actually turned us in for plagiarism and we had to go to the library and do a whole bunch of time for ...doing self books which actually

fun...got to know that library real well. Then after we got done with that they said they'd take it off our record; well they never took it off our record, it's still on my record, I have a plagiarism charge against me, you know and that I thought that was, that was wrong (chuckle)... you know I went and filed a complaint about it but it never did any good." To Sam's knowledge the plagiarism charge is still on his OU school record.

The most important question I asked Sam was why Native American post-secondary college students leave college. Sam responded by saying,

"and well, there's a few, one of them would be something like that last answer (chuckle) you know, some of the things that are in the curriculum are per-say are easy to digest, that, we all know that there are a full rein of thoughts out there, to be judged on your thoughts on this level of academia (chuckle) to my point and I think that and I think that natives feel that a lot; social pressures, I believe they, um, especially ones that came up, that grew up on reservations, things they have a hard time with uh adapting to the uh multi-cultures, they, they're very strong cultured you know and, then they are pushed into situations where, they just want to go home (chuckle), or get away from this type of situation; alcohol and, and drugs, mainly alcohol, I think presents problems with the natives a lot, especially reservation, they, they not so much themselves because they came this far but their background they have in their families, it's always a tempting, you know pull like a magnet, like-da lures you that way and, then you get in this area, this level and people come to visit, you know, family comes to visit, I've seen a lot of natives' families would come visit, I would not say sponge, but would cause mental and financial stress on them, you know (chuckle), not per-se knowingly, just doing it and not be, just being that type. And that's, that's about as far as I can probably go on this one."

Sam and his wife, Mary experienced many obstacles that were not ordinarily expected of college students with one common familial goal: to graduate college and begin a successive life. Presently, they have not returned to OU.

The second interviewee discussed his devotion to the University of Oklahoma (OU), and how the education he received was instrumental in his life. John (pseudo name to protect his identity) spoke of the total dedication of the faculty and

instruction as he worked toward his bachelor's degree. John had been attending OU off-and-on for several years with a distinct interest in language studies. Specifically, John was taking as many Creek language courses as OU offered. His interest in Creek language studies stemmed from paternal pressures to stop learning or speaking Creek. His last major was international studies, though he did not complete his degree. When asked what personal beliefs were most important in his life, John stated that his beliefs were to (and I quote), "Trust in God and trust yourself to know what is right and wrong. Accept your decisions. Always be thankful for what have or receive." John was also asked what beliefs have offered guidance throughout his life. John said, "Trusting and believing that God will help in some way. As my mother and grandmother said: "God will never forsake you. Always keep your faith strong." This profound statement supports the religiosity and deep devotion in this interviewee's commitment to a higher being and to his cultural values within his family. Moreover, three generations (son, mother and grandmother) believe in God and acknowledge a strong assurance in religiosity and commitment to family and faith. John also shared that, "All people matter... Everybody is here to learn something."

As with Sam, I asked John if he had noticed or experienced any barriers or impingements while attending OU. John stated that there were no barriers or other hindrances upon attending the University of Oklahoma. He went on to say:

"not to my knowledge, it just depends upon the drive of the person I guess to learn because, when I applied and she asked us why did you want to learn the Creek language, that's when I told you (earlier in the conversation), my father made me stop and I wanted to re-learn. I mean I knew a little German, I learn German from Rose State College, as it was my father's language, and he had passed away in '91, and this was about '92, just to feel a connection with my father. My aunt had

told me we were descendents from Germany on down to Scotland...I consider myself half-European and half-Creek.”

I asked John if there were any ideologies or theologies that were taught in the OU classes. John responded by saying that ideology was apparent within the college courses. He responded by saying he did learn what the word God meant. His translation of what God meant. He used the word “Hesaketvmese, that the word for it, my grandmother told me, it means- Master Breath of Life – my grandmother told me that he is the only one who can give or take life.”

I then asked John, in his opinion, what the single most important reason why secondary students leave college? John responded,

“I don’t know if it is that per-se, I think it that Native American students that they don’t truly have a sense of themselves, like their historical perspective. My mother and grandmother raised me and they told me what was what and that’s how I had a pride to my language at four (age) you know. I always took it as that was the Indian language, and so forth but uh I think it is a matter of culture to me because a lot of people you see they had college life portrayed as a constant party and things to drink and just have fun and yet you know and when a Native American does it I think they forget like their roots and there’s a good way to put it that they don’t have their sense of their past, per-se, cause a lot of people I’ve have known a lot, from my mother’s side, my cousins’, they’re been, there like alcohols, they kind of live in a run-down area, area like Okemah and places like that and I feel that there is a big part of it. Give them (the Native Americans) the firewater; make them happy, makes them forget their prospective...they don’t have a sense of who they are, their language, their traditions, their pride in themselves and in this manner.

I asked, “Are not the Native Americans a proud people?” John responded,

“Yes they are but I mean in college they are mostly raised in the (forgive the pun) but like the white man’s standards...all of you must drink, you have to do this, you have to learn this but what about their perspective.”

I asked John what was the single most reason Creek college students leave college. John responded,

“I think it’s because they’re, I don’t know if they’re tired of like learning what’s going on, like the current status of the world. I think a lot of people may lost touch, with not from the native’s perspective, for me, any way, like their life-style, that what we have to do to survive, I mean we just basically, if we had to, we hunted food and that’s the end of that story, or we protect ourselves that way or even tradition, like I can remember when I was a boy, my mother-grandmother would chant, she would cross herself like this (John used a cross-armed movement) and she would be rocking, I could hear her singing her hymns, you know I did not know if she was in pain or not but she would say this way she had a better connection with what was going on in her life, her roots like her father taught her and so forth. I think it’s just that, to me anyway, like a lot of people lose their perspective on many things, like this is the way, like now, like this is the way it is and never mind a hundred or two hundred years ago or maybe any thing like that, I think it is too much assimilation into the culture.

The third interviewee discussed college life at the University of Oklahoma as he completed his bachelor’s degree and now completing his graduate degree. Ken (pseudo name to protect his identity) began by discussing the most important aspect of college attendance was the ability to afford college, simply being able to pay tuition. Ken continues,

“I think the single most important reason why post-secondary students leave college the financial thing. Uh you know a lot of times with Native American families you start having families really young, 19/20 might start out a community college, have babies to raise, having to work and then try and come here to larger institutions and consider this more of a commitment of how much time here, how much time at work and then the amount of tuition fees coming to a larger institutions is considerably more so that really plays into more, that plays into draining your wallet. That’s something I really didn’t have problem with my undergraduate course-work. I had a little money saved up. I had more help from my family than I would have otherwise relied on. I didn’t expect them to help me as much and I really think that’s what really pushed me through, with having the freedom and independence to finish my course-

work, the financial backing from my family, and that has contributed to...plus my parents are in education and more so being support parents. Either way, it was a good combination but I also worked during undergrad...as well, I had a couple of bills but it wasn't too much...and that's a feeling, to know that you are set up for success is so much better than dealing with the stress of a family at young age and you know, sometimes people will get financial support from tribes...Creek nation, Creek nation you can...it's not a large amount. It's hard to compare tribe by tribe. Some tribes pay full scholarships; some don't give anything. That's where I think tribes are failing is education. 'Cause some tribes feel that giving per capita payments is the best way to serve their citizens. I am opposed to that because I don't think you're really investing in the welfare of a person by giving them a check. I think you're better off empowering them through education, job training, etc. Now, sometime I thought would be a better system is to pay for a citizen's education but then to also require payback for it, like the military, I mean because...they send you off to uh the uh war college, you pay do a payback 3 or 4 years where...I think tribes would be able to benefit from that. They would send the citizen off to get their bachelor's degree and then they are required to come back to the tribe and work for ...three years. It not only enhances the efficiency of the tribe but also would give that tribal citizen work experience that they could take elsewhere; they just leave. A lot of times, people working in tribal government they just feel recycled, they don't choose to anything else, they don't think they can do it. They work in one department or tribe, get fired or just leave, they just go to a different department...it's kind of a sad cycle. But they did not have any education to know otherwise. And that's where I really think that tribes are and specifically it's hard to generalize, every tribe is different but that's just from my experience in the Creek nation is that they need some people with education and supporting them financially is the key. Maybe, maybe a secondary reason why students leave college is that they're not socially supported; you know they're not given the right direction from their parents. Their parents are coming from boarding schools, things like that, coming from places like Haskell [OK], Anadarko [OK], just institutions are taught to give Native Americans backgrounds in technical education, not academic, where they did not think of becoming educated or think about theory or anything like that. So, it's not a bad thing?! But they're not allowing their children to become independent and think that there are bigger things that they could be doing other than welding, anything in the trade industry so it's a mentality. That's something that the families

and the tribe as a whole needs to overcome; it's a shift in mentality towards positive and ambitious. I think that's more of a social reason of why they college; I don't think they're empowered to know better, to take those chances. That's why education is so very important to allow citizens the understanding to better decide.

My next interviewee was asked what values or reasons kept her in college. Based on Question #7 regarding Native American post-secondary attrition, what is an important factor in staying in college?

Kelly (pseudo name to protect her identity) responded,

I think that um there I know there's dropout rate, suicide rate, there's all kinds of rates for Native Americans, there really is, I think that for me being here I went to NSU [Northeastern State University, OK], Tahlequah for a couple of years before I came here, this is my third year but I chose to go to NSU because I come from a small town in Bristow and I was afraid if I came to a huge university like OU that um that wouldn't suit me, I would have some kind of a culture shock. I only graduate with 105 people. But, um, what's keeps me here is uh, um I think it all depends on the person's attitude, um I think it's how it goes back to how you were brought up, I was brought up in a family. I was brought up in a family where my mother was the first one to go to college of her whole entire family. She had brought us all up, you know, to be successful in life you have to have education. And I think a lot of that time, a lot of times, education is not pushed in your home and work is, which is very understandable now since we're in the economy we're in now, but we were always pushed um from my mother that education is always the way to go. And I really true, truly believe that. Um but some, some students I think drop out of high school, drop out of college because they are, they look at work at more important than education. I don't know how um specifically Native Americans, why we're more predominant to drop out. And I really don't have the answer to it? I don't know. But for me, for me, it was my mother who kept pushing me, all of her kids. She was a young mother, she had her first child at 17 so she's been, she did her family first, both of my two older sisters did their families first. I'm 23. I'm the oldest living woman in my um family that hadn't had a kid and hadn't married. So you kind of live and learn but I think it really does happen to deal with the whole.

So then I asked Kelly, "If mother had not pushed you, would you have considered going to college?"

Um, sure, I was ranked fifth in my college, um in my high school and college was always in my plans. I had planned to go ahead and get my masters in Native American Studies and go on to lawyer, Native American lawyer so um, from there. I think a lot of times you kind of, I don't want this to sound anything bad or, a lot of times, students get the material or they don't. And, um, I was always the student that got the material. I didn't go...I went to school with a few Native American students, I didn't go to school with a lot of Native Americans but from those students, I was one of the top, the top students of all. My mother was, she's in her doctoral program now, she was always a very educated woman, in my standards. And I would always go to her and she would kind of help me with my homework but I think about all the other students, that their mothers and their fathers weren't as educated as mine or not as privileged as I was to have some one like that and so I felt that they didn't get the materials, then there's no way they would get the materials from home, that their families couldn't help them, that their parents didn't know themselves. And I truly think that that is part of values to succeed as part of a student, you know, you have to have the self-driven but you also have to have a push. I think Native Americans are doing more and more and education be more and more important in my generation than older generations but I think my mother's generation is hers, it wasn't so much the educated as now and I think that's why she chose to do family first, education second and in my generation, education first, family second for a woman anyways, that how I feel in the Native American world. But what's interesting to me is that some of the generations that are above me, we just had our constitution convention not too long ago, one of the proposals was to have a bachelors or higher degree to sustain a uh leadership position and that failed. I asked for clarification on the last portion of this sentence. Kelly responded, "it failed...I'm pretty sure it failed. That was very interesting to me because as tribes are trying to have or become self-sustained and trying to pretty much help themselves rather than relying on governmental assistance, that would be an important issue to talk about and uh for me that was an important piece of legislation that I thought the issue would pass but it ultimately failed so I think sometimes some cultural barriers get into the way of education and I think um why that was part of the issue of that piece of legislation being failed.

I asked, "What cultural barriers?" Kelly commented, "I think that uh many times education is looked as a western society, a western view on different things. I think a lot of times many traditionals

believe that education kind of changes people, as you become educated, you know in a western society, that they're afraid that they may change and that's why they made barriers in me...the Native American tribe that this western idea of education in a linear fashion rather than a circular fashion, then that is a western ideal.

At this point, Kelly began to discuss further her mother's ability to ensure that all siblings would consider education as a successful venture. It is through this strong matriarchal support network that Kelly knew her direction would be college. Kelly continues,

"I think that what really pushes me is that you know she has taught us to be certain strong individuals and to embrace that you are Native American, you're not white, you're Native American and whether people like you because of that or not, it doesn't matter. There's people who are going to like because you are Native American. And that you have to be a strong individual to be in the minority race, it doesn't matter what minority race you're in, you have to be a strong individual because you are in a white society. And I'm not trying to be racist, that just they way she taught us. My sister just got married to native man, my other sister got married to an African-American man and we treat all with the same respect and understanding. That's how I feel on this subject. So I think that very strong family ties has everything to do with what a person wants to do in life If they have the push from their family, that has everything to do with their life. If they have the push from their family for school, that's everything in life.

My fifth interviewee discussed financial issues relating to Native American and specifically Creek College students. Tomah (pseudo name to protect his identity) spoke of several issues facing Native American students. It is this continuing concern that directly impacts these future Muscogee (Creek) citizens. When asked about issues affecting college attendance, Tomah responded,

"First off, colleges are on an every year tuition fee going up so you have to make a decision whether or not you want to stay in and pay the price. The one thing...you know people tell you there's money out there. Yeah, there is money out there, there is 35 or 45 but there are fees that affect college attendance. Fees...I'm in a lot of activities

which affect the amount of college money I need. I'm a double major and we have a lot of fees. I also in Journalism so we got to have nice cameras, print stuff so college is like living, earning a living while attending, trying to make it through, that's what they don't tell you from day one. So after I got out on my own and trying to make it here, I ask myself, "why am I here, why am I hungry, why am I depressed, why am I, why am I doing this? You know college is not the hard part; trying to make a living, trying to get through all the obstacles to get an education, that's the hard part. And that's the number one thing they never tell you, they never tell you."

I inquired, "When would be the ideal time to put that in...at the freshman year?" Tomah responded,

"Well, um, the freshman year would be good but coming from a non-traditional...I'm a traditional student but I didn't do every traditional student activities such as live in the dorm, I stayed at home my freshman year and it's kinda like living in the dorm, but every year there is a bigger transition that gone through, I've gone through and all my friends have gone through and upper classmen and lower classmen have gone through and your first year is new, everything is new, new environment, you have literally no friends. Unless you know someone from high school, new relationships are stressful. And if you come here to live in the dorm, it costs thousands and thousands of dollars. And that's one obstacle you have to worry about. Oh, I've got my scholarship check; what do I do? Hey I've got an 'app' for a credit card, I'm an adult now, I can apply for that. There's things that they don't tell you. You go out there and that's an education. The second one, transition from freshman to sophomore, now I gotta find a new place to live, I don't want to live in the dorm, where am I going to live, how am I going to pay for it, MOM? Apartment complex, month to month, oh wait, my insurance is due. I don't have a meal plan, how do I buy groceries, all off \$50 bucks a month...all these things now face me as a new sophomore. Ok I'm tired of eating Ramen...ok now what? And also you lose a lot of your scholarships your freshman and sophomore year. Oh maybe I should take out a student loan...what subsidized, what un-subsidized? What's private...ok, I got pay this \$50 bucks a month, what's that? That's, that's thing they're not telling ya? Once you get past that, oh wait a minute? I chose a major but I can take any of those courses, I got to wait a year because I didn't know of prerequisites. My advisor said that my foreign language in high school didn't count so now I have to take this over. And that's a good two years right there that. Students transitioning, preparing for college...that's a lot you have to teach us. If you look at it, there's really not a lot of time, the best thing to do is to warn them...hey this

is what may happen if you do this? Or you may lose your scholarship as it's only for freshmen and you need to start looking for other things. Your GPA wasn't good so if you're not going home this semester, you might want to take summer school, try and raise your GPA, try and get rid of those generics. You got to try and warn them; this is what you got to do. Treat them like adults, if they want to be treated like adults. That's two years right there, initially. I don't think there's any possible way to fully have a student prepared for college in a traditional way. And the junior and senior year, that's even more because most students, native and non-native, minority, by the junior year some enter internship and go study abroad, that's even more and more in debt because they don't have the scholarships or they're not helping much. Their student life representative or ethnic minority or ethnic representative regarding scholarships aren't helping as much. There are geared for freshman years. Their tribes don't help much; they're still the same thousand dollars or 500 as before and that's not bad; it just doesn't help as much...I've gone through so much; can I get more? What else is there; work...working and going to school? Ok, I'm going to enroll in 18 hours, get all this financial aid and drop down to 9 and get all this back and try to make a living off this. Next semester, next year rolls around, I won't get any financial aid, I'll drop down to part-time so what do I do now, why didn't someone tell me these things. I got \$20k in debt and \$10k is un-subsidized; why didn't anyone tell me this. I'm in a major that doesn't have a good job market. What do I do? Do I go to grad school? What's the GRE? Do I go to law school; what's the LFAB? How do I get to law school? That's some of the questions?

I commented, "What I'm gathering all that is money is a big issue, money is an issue if it is not free-flowing and problem, issue is that, we call it in the army as a briefing, presentation there is no preparing high school students for college. With conversation with Reverend Victor Cope down in Tecumseh area (V. Cope, personal communication, July 9, 2007), high school students have an opportunity to apply for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Are you familiar with this?" Tomah commented,

"I applied for that. That's a major thing and we have a couple of students who are Gates Foundation scholars and it's a great program. But to me sometimes, I think you're giving a student "a loaded gun" and they don't know how to control it. I mean, you know

their college is taken care of. You can go anywhere. One student in high school got a letter from Harvard...didn't have the grades, wasn't even thinking about going and she got everything paid for. But they don't know what is involved: they have to keep that 3.0 and declare a major, got to do community service, make sure you keep those grades up. You have to make an impact. Your grades are like a ditch versus a hill. In the first two or three semesters, you're digging that ditch and trying to keep dirt out. Oh, I failed zoology but got "A's in the other courses I'm doing great. Just a little came off, and that's ok. That's what some of the scholar's don't know until they have been in the program for a couple of years.

I asked, "So what about tribal money?" Tomah responded,

"That's, um, some students, I don't get any tribal financial aid, it's a personal choice. But some students ask, well why I don't get more? Or why don't I get this amount. Or Comanche Nation gives \$2k dollars, why can't I get the same? And sometime students don't know, they're not aware that tribes are different. You got 10,000 college students and 10,000 students needs funding, that's a lot of funding as oppose to a smaller tribe like Kiowa, say maybe have a 1,000 at best in some form of higher education, they can fund them a little bit more. Tribal, tribal grants, loans, scholarships whatever you get, I always look at that like cherry on top of the sundae. Get your FAFSA filled out, get money from other scholarships, your tribal scholarship should almost be the last money you need, your last check to come in, buy your books with it, pay your rent off or put it on your Sam's Club card and go buy groceries with it. Don't sit there and look at it as the only money you have for the month."

Then I asked, "What about your family supporting you at college?" Tomah said,

"Uh, family is very important to me as a college student because well um I not a first generation college student. My mom has her MI degree from Lang???? University (college name unclear on audio tape replay), my grandma has a nursing degree from the University of Tulsa, and my great grandfather attended school before being drafted so college is always been in my blood. School has always been pushed on me by my parents. Do you want to live paycheck to paycheck or do you want, as my mom said, you are the male of the family so you have to provide for your family. You can work at the casino, dealing blackjack cards may be good when you're in school or take another job, whether you're single, house payment, car payment and all that. Or if you have a degree, you'll be able to make more money. And one thing I heard as a freshman is that people

with a bachelor's degree, earn a million dollars more than those who don't. And I was like, that's a big chunk of change. That's like, that's like a couple of houses, so that's why I stay in college. My parents always push me, stay in school, do the work, even my grandma keeps telling me, you'll be the first grandchild to get a college degree. It takes the average college student 6 ½ years to complete a 4 year degree which a change in time is about average where now it takes the average college student 5 years to complete a 4 year degree. So for me, family plays a large part in how Native students and any students can get their bachelor's degree. Family is very important. It is very important for all tribal members to seek more education at institutions of their choice. I was always told that goes and gets more education. There's a big world out there; go see it. When you're ready, come back home...we'll be waiting for you when you get here. You can't experience the world from here; go out and see it. And that's means a lot to me. My family and my tribe are very supportive. There's a big world out there. Remember the Truman Show, the movie. There's a big world past the horizon. My parents tell me go see and then come back; we'll be here. Another option for students is to give back something to the tribe after college. Students are encouraged to consider giving back to the tribe.

Lastly I asked, "What about giving back to the tribe?" Tomah responded,

"Giving back to the tribe is something I take seriously. It is the time when I can fulfill my education, receive my degree and then return to my tribe to whatever help I can. I don't know if you are familiar with ONASE? ONASE is the Oklahoma Native American Students for Education organization and this year the organization meets at the Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. This year I am presenting my paper entitled, [Giving Back to Your Tribe or Community] on the subject regarding college students returning to their tribe to help. If you have time, I hope you can attend and meet Native Americans from all over Oklahoma."

One interviewee comments: "My values are Faith, Culture, and Family. Faith is the teachings of the church and of the ceremonial grounds, because they help keep my spiritual balance in check. If I do not keep the balance then it will start to affect their aspects of my life. I am also a culturally oriented person, because maintaining my culture keeps me true to myself and my ancestors. If I lose my culture then I am losing a big part of myself. I am also a family oriented person, because they keep my priorities in check. I know that I am not the only one, and that I have to think about others as well. They are also the support that i have when times get tough.

One interviewee comments: "I believe in the morals from many Native stories. Although the story may not be literal, the reasoning behind the story is. I forgot the exact quote but I connect with the black elk quote where he says something like "If you think it to be true, it's true."

Another interviewee reports: "We choose the course of our own lives and bear the responsibility for those choices. We must realize that we are not all going to agree, we are not all going to like each other but we do all have to live here. We should not think of ourselves as Native American, Black, White, Hispanic, Christian, Muslim, etc and instead think of ourselves as what we truly are: human."

One view to uphold: "It is essential that no one forget their people's past or their language. To do so would be horrendous, as it takes more than just genetics to say that one is an American Indian."

A belief towards tradition: "I think the idea of respect is an important part of the American Indian zeitgeist. As an American Indian, we are expected to respect a variety of things: respect for the elders of our tribes, respect for each other, and respect for the planet on which we are fortunate enough to live. I have found in my journeys that the act of respect will get you incredibly far, and you will have the act returned upon yourself."

A belief about religion: "My values are Faith, Culture, and Family. Faith is the teachings of the church and of the ceremonial grounds, because they help keep my spiritual balance in check. If I do not keep the balance then it will start to affect the aspects of my life. I am also a culturally oriented person, because maintaining my culture keeps me true to myself and my ancestors. If I lose my culture then I am losing a big part of myself. I am also a family oriented person, because they keep my priorities in check. I know that I am not the only one, and that I have to think about others as well. They are also the support that I have when times get tough... My beliefs are from the teaching of the ceremonial grounds and the Creek Baptist churches. But my main belief is to treat all people with respect. I have more, but it would take too long to discuss."

A belief about life after: "Everything is one. Love is greater than hate and fear. Doing right is its own reward, but what goes around does come around, so it's true that to give is truly to receive. If reincarnation is for real, I must've lived my right in my past lives... I got to be Creek in this one!"

As in the Circle of Courage: “that we are connected to everything as in a spider’s web.”

Upon completion of all interviews, percentages of all cultural value answers were compiled from interview respondents. The cultural values researched in this project were kindness, independence, honesty, social responsibility, reciprocity, social skills, religion and self-control. Self-control was earlier removed from the cultural values as no answers were received. The strongest values or themes recorded from respondents were: family, kindness, religion, honesty, independence and social skills. The remaining themes received from respondents were reciprocity and social responsibility. Various themes were not queried during this project but were received from interview respondents. These values were faith and respect, ethics and love and honor. Therefore, family, kindness and religion offer a strong, qualitative look into the personal attributes of these Muscogee (Creek) college students at OU.

Results

The results of this research project reveal persistence in Muscogee (Creek) college students. Twenty of sixty-three (32%) Muscogee (Creek) college participants attained a post-secondary education during the school years of 2000 through 2007. Of the remaining forty-three Muscogee (Creek) college respondents, thirty-five (35) are actively completing their post-secondary education, thus raising the overall percentage to 95%. Two students did not complete their college degree but did in fact complete almost four years of college, one student majored in international studies,

and one student majored chemistry with a minor in microbiology. Three respondents did not provide any information regarding their post-secondary status.

Pearson's product-moment correlation (or Pearson's "r") was used to analyze the relationship between the independent variables and persistence. This procedure was employed through the use of SAS©. In comparison of all cultural variables, persistence was correlated with religion ($r = .50$, $P > .0001$) and reciprocity ($r = .44$, $P > .0003$) on a quantitative scale. Persistence and social skills were correlated ($r = .35$, $P > .0044$) reflecting a slightly lower relationship. Persistence was then compared to independence ($r = .23$, $P > .068$) and social responsibility ($r = .22$, $P > .075$). The remaining cultural variable or value of honesty correlates $r = .21$ with probability of .09 ($P > .0890$). Religion proffered a stronger correlation to persistence than the other independent variables or cultural values.

From answers derived from the Cultural Values Survey, the lowest average or mean from the answers to the Cultural Values Survey (CVS) was religion $\bar{x} = 5.02$ (s.d. = 2.19) followed by social skills $\bar{x} = 9.3$ (s.d. = 2.19). CVS reflected social responsibility at $\bar{x} = 10.92$ (s.d. = 1.34), honesty at $\bar{x} = 12.22$ (s.d. = 2.68), kindness at $\bar{x} = 22.58$ (s.d. = 4.66), reciprocity at $\bar{x} = 24.38$ (s.d. = 3.43) and independence at $\bar{x} = 26.11$ (s.d. = 6.07). Recalling the Cultural Values Survey's rating of respondents' answers, lower mean and corresponding probabilities supported higher agreeability from respondents' answers. A 6-point Likert-style scale ranging from "very good" (1) to "very bad" (6) was used to assess respondents' answers. Therefore, religion ($\bar{x} = 5.02$, s.d. = 2.19) displayed the lowest and strongest quantitative relationship based

on respondents' answers. Note: that some of the tables listed in List of Tables are shown in graphic design throughout this dissertation.

Table 7. *Simple Statistics for all Observations*

Simple Statistics							
Variabl e	N	Mean	Std Dev	Sum	Minimu m	Maximu m	Labe l
OBS	6 3	32.0000 0	18.3303 0	2016	1.00000	63.00000	OBS
K	6 3	22.5873 0	4.66502	1423	10.00000	36.00000	K
I	6 3	26.1111 1	6.07244	1645	1.00000	46.00000	I
H	6 3	12.2222 2	2.68475	770.0000 0	7.00000	19.00000	H
SR	6 3	10.9206 3	1.34766	688.0000 0	5.00000	12.00000	SR
R	6 3	24.3809 5	3.43806	1536	16.00000	32.00000	R
SS	6 3	9.30159	2.19703	586.0000 0	4.00000	14.00000	SS
Rel	6 3	5.01587	2.18862	316.0000 0	2.00000	10.00000	Rel

Based on respondents' qualitative answers to Muscogee (Creek) beliefs regarding post-secondary persistence, 50% of respondents stated that family was most important, 28% of respondents stated that kindness was next and religion was third at 27%. These statistics reflect high percentage in religiosity and moderate percentage in

kindness and family connectivity in the accomplishment of post-secondary education completion.

In sum, Muscogee (Creek) college students achieve success in their post-secondary education when religion, family and kindness are a part of the Muscogee (Creek) family. An additional factor or variable has been successfully researched in this project. Reciprocity achieved a marginal finding (8.3%) in the qualitative results; however, several respondents commented about “giving back to the tribe.” This reciprocity or “giving back” has been voiced in the qualitative portions of this research project through one-on-one interviews previously introduced. To recall Ken’s comments,

“They would send the citizen off to get their bachelor’s degree and then they are required to come back to the tribe and work for ...three years. It not only enhances the efficiency of the tribe but also would give that tribal citizen work experience that they could take elsewhere; they just leave.”

Tomah also responded,

“Giving back to the tribe is something I take seriously. It is the time when I can fulfill my education, receive my degree and then return to my tribe to whatever help I can. I don’t know if you are familiar with ONASE? ONASE is the Oklahoma Native American Students for Education organization and this year the organization meets at the Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. This year I am presenting my paper entitled, [Giving Back to Your Tribe or Community] on the subject regarding college students returning to their tribe to help. If you have time, I hope you can attend and meet Native Americans from all over Oklahoma.

Chapter VI

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine cultural values and persistence in Muscogee (Creek) college students at the University of Oklahoma (OU). To answer the questions surrounding cultural values and persistence in these college students, a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative research analysis was used.

The Cultural Values Survey used a summation scale where findings were revealed in a 6-point Likert-style scale ranging from “very good” (1) to “very bad” (6) was used to assess participants’ answers. Quantitative findings revealed that the cultural value of religion ($\bar{x}=5.02$) had the lowest average or mean of all independent variables. This scale would indicate that low mean numbers were highly significant. Following religion, social skills was next ($\bar{x}=9.3$). The strongest correlation among the observations and variables was the dyad relationship of reciprocity and kindness. This finding would suggest that kindness is positively correlated with reciprocity and religion.

Education levels among all participants revealed some disparities. Fathers of persisters earned higher educational credentials than fathers of non-persisters. Mothers of non-persisters earned college degrees at the post-secondary level (80%) compared to mothers of persisters (51%). Fathers of non-persisters earned slightly lower percentage of college credentials (40%) compared to fathers of persisters earning college credentials and graduate level degrees (44%). This finding may suggest that parents who have earned college degrees have stronger persistent influence that is passed onto their children.

A modest percentage of all respondents had present incomes over \$35,000 range (38%). While attending college, a notable amount of persisters (67%) earned over \$35,000 per year compared to non-persisters (50%) earning less than \$10,000 annually. Financial strain can impact school success. Living in poverty exacerbates normal life stresses that could negatively impact school performance, which could lead to non-persistence (Ekstrom et al, 1987). This economic disparity may suggest that persisters have less monetary concerns than do non-persisters.

Among all participants, a review of high school grade point average (GPA) and college GPA among persisters and non-persisters reflected a marginal spread at the 3.00 – 3.99 GPA level. Persisters maintained the 3.00 – 3.99 GPA throughout high school and college (56%, 81% respectfully). Non-persisters maintained GPA from high school to college (60%) at the 3.00 – 3.99 rating. Persisters significantly lowered their 4.0 GPA from high school onto college (31%, 2% respectfully) compared to zero percent (0.00%) of non-persisters attaining a 4.0 GPA from high school to college. This finding would posit high school GPA prepares pre-college students for post-secondary persistence.

The main findings in this study discovered significant cultural values (quantitative) and themes (qualitative) were present. Religion reflected correlation or a relationship to persistence in post-secondary Muscogee (Creek) students at the University of Oklahoma in both assessments (quantitative and qualitative). A possible explanation to this correlation is that in Muscogee (Creek) culture each Muscogee (Creek) member is taught to believe in and respect the Creator or Hesaketvmese, Mother Earth, family and community. Religion, family, reciprocity and kindness were

also found in both assessments of this study. Many Muscogee (Creek) college persisters reflected these themes in the CVS and in interviews. The importance of the creator, or Almighty God is reflected in the Muscogee (Creek) government as stated, “Under the guidance of the Almighty God, our Creator, We the People of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, do promote Unity, to establish Justice, and secure to ourselves and our children the blessings of Freedom, to preserve our basic Rights and Heritage, to strengthen and preserve self and local Government, in continued relations with the United States of America, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. (Muscogee, 2010).

Interviews provided a corroborating look into Muscogee (Creek) post-secondary college student’s values and themes. The strongest values or themes recorded from respondents were family, kindness, religion, honesty, independence and social skills. The remaining themes received from respondents were reciprocity and social responsibility. Post-secondary education was paramount in most all of the interviewees. Most all interviewees discussed financial barriers; however, most all had overcome financial barriers through family assistance, joining the military, part-time employment, using tribal scholarships, and utilizing good budget practices.

Their willingness to stay in college or persist provided each Muscogee (Creek) college participant a way to remain in school. Therefore, family, kindness and religion offer a strong, qualitative look into the personal attributes of these Creek college students. The significance of the interviews provided a personal look into the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and how the Nation’s members prepare their family and

their children with a proper child-rearing, training and readiness to meet and succeed in their educational goals.

Implications

This study examined cultural values and themes towards persistence in Muscogee (Creek) college students at the University of Oklahoma. The period of time was School Year 2000-2007. It further used Durkheim's Theory of Suicide, Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure, and Trimble's Social Values Survey. Collectively, this triad provided theory, model and assessment to gauge the cultural values within this study. Upon conclusion, a copy of this study will be provided to the College of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. One implication would be to use the findings and associated assessments to examine the persistence or resistance of college students attending the College of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. These findings and associated assessments can also be used to assess other Native American colleges. However, generalizations across all educational institutions may not be possible. Yet, this study yielded significant findings in the overall persistence of Muscogee (Creek) college students at the University of Oklahoma.

A second implication is that this study could promote gender advancement in Muscogee (Creek) political service. Traditional Native American leadership has been the selection of Chief through strength ("best warrior") or seizure has now become by popular vote. This study can also assist others to consider applying for political office within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Kawulich (2008) argues that in Muscogee (Creek) culture, leadership positions traditionally have been held by men

in the community. Over the last thirty or so years, however, Muscogee (Creek) women increasingly have taken on the mantle of leadership in a variety of ways. Little information is known about American Indian women's views of leadership and even less is known about the views of Muscogee (Creek) women. Kawulich further argues that being a Creek woman was that it means one has a history; it means one is unique and strong. It means one has a lot to be proud of. It means being a survivor. There also was the mention several times of discrimination they had experienced, indicating that they felt that others in the mainstream culture looked down on them. Therefore, leadership among Muscogee (Creeks) can shift from the traditional male Principal Chief to a female or accept some other leadership position.

A third implication of this study is to research Oklahoma post-secondary institutions that currently do have Native American curriculums. Oklahoma is rich in Native Americans that must search Native American curriculums in a small numbers. With the state of Oklahoma home to 32 Native American tribes, this study could bring more emphasis to the Native American population within Oklahoma and request non-Native American curriculum colleges to consider starting this curriculum (Silverhawk, 2010). Additionally, this study could assist in secondary institutions to seek Native American studies for pre-college students.

Recommendations

A recommendation for future studies is to be cognitive of all cultural values within a tribe. The Cultural Values Survey (CVS) used in this research study included several values already embedded within the summation process. One such cultural

value was religion. However, another significant view of a religious value would be spirituality. Religion can be broadly defined as... "any specific system of belief about deity, often involving rituals, a code of ethics, and a philosophy of life" (Robinson, 2000). Religion could be a pathway to God or a supreme being within many cultures. It has several labels such as Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and other labels throughout the world. Spirituality is another path to God or a supreme being. Many Native American tribes, including Muscogee (Creeks) believe in a supreme being, creator or Hesaketvmese, the Master Breath of Life. Many followers of Native American spirituality do not regard their spiritual beliefs and practices as a "religion" in the way in which many Christians do. Their beliefs and practices form an integral and seamless part of their very being. This integral and seamless part of their very being may be another avenue into the Muscogee (Creek) way of learning (Robinson, 2000).

Another recommendation for future studies rests in institutions of higher learning. Much work has been done on theories of communication, communication behavior and its relationship to learning. The umbrella of research encompasses multicultural, intercultural and cross-cultural societies throughout the world. Intercultural communication will be briefly discussed in this recommendation. Intercultural communication is an exchange of symbolic information between two or more groups with different cultures (Barnett, 1988). Each culture enters a new relationship with its own unique system of meaning. Exchanges of words, gestures and communications may hinder recognition of those meanings. This hindrance may cause some ambiguity or uncertainty within this exchange. It may lead to frustration,

anxiety and possible conflict. This hindrance may also lead to dissociation among the intercultural groups. Gebser's (1985) work on culture and consciousness and Mumford's (1963) work on dissociation offers a possible explanation of different worlds and different cultures as inhabitants (and students) search for persistence through understanding and knowledge. A possible explanation can be found in the theory of dimensional accrual and dissociation (DAD). As dimensional awareness accrues, so too dissociation increases (Kramer, 1997). The term dissociation is used to describe a state of affairs whereby a phenomenon observed and the subjective observer or traveler becomes increasingly and mutually objective, separated, and fragmentary. According to theory of co-constitutional genesis (Kramer, 1993), the subject and the object are codependent phenomena. You can not have one without the other. They form a tandem of opposing concepts. For something to become an object of critical scrutiny by a subject, dissociation must first occur. As association occurs, those people affected will shift their attention to other cultures and spiritualities that are much closer (Kramer & Ikeda, 1998). The recognition of this shift may assist those people towards a clearer understanding surrounding the theory and concept of DAD.

The theory states that as one moves from the magic univalent (or one-dimension), to the mythic bivalent (two-dimension) and to the perspectival trivalent (three-dimension) worlds, dimensional awareness accrues or increases. This does not mean that it becomes "better," for no transcendental criteria are assumed. Nor is accrual a form of progress, because no final goal is assumed (Kramer & Ikeda, 1998). Gebser further attempted an intuitive grasp at a fourth dimension of integral or the integral structure defined as full, complete and realized wholeness (Ameson, 2007). This fourth dimension may hold a

significant answer to cultural differences found in college students, including Muscogee (Creek) students.

Gebser argued that as one moves through these dimensions, awareness or collection of each dimension increases. As each dimension is obtained, some form of dissociation is also attained. However, few people can exist in the magic world. Also, it is worth noting that cultural travelers do not have to leave their host culture behind on their journeys. Gebser believes that as cultural travelers migrate they bring with them their host culture. This migration utilizes what Gebser calls "plus-migration." Gebser's concept of plus-mutation is different from the conventional idea of mutation. "Plus-mutation" describes a process of enrichment rather than destruction. The past state is not surpassed or abandoned, but instead, is added to. Therefore, the traveler retains the previous culture as the journey reaps new cultures and new experiences.

In the magic (univalent) world, objects and their power are identical and have no dissociation. Magic is a clear expression of want and identity as difference. However, identity is still predominant. Incantation is identical with the thing "evoked." Magic communication is idolistic in nature. As one travels from the magic world and enters the mystical world, mythological communication is two dimensional, am-bivalent, and symbolic. Moving into the mystical dimension increases dimensional accrual and increases dissociation. This increase coalesce dimension/dissociation thus causing confusion to the traveler. As the traveler leaves the mystical dimension, the perspectival world is characterized by a complete dissociation and fragmentation of the world. Ecological issues may occur in psychology, linguistics, politics, economics,

science, law, epistemology, and beyond. Perspectival communication is signalic, absolutely arbitrary as evinced in codes and dissociation further increases.

As the traveler becomes aware of more and more dimensions, that person's identity shifts accordingly. One becomes more and more dissociated from other phenomena in the world. The world increasingly fragments, not only psychologically and interpersonally but also in terms of measurement and mechanism (Kramer & Ikeda, 1998). At this point, the traveler has obtained dimensions and dissociation experientially. Lastly, the traveler would have the option to enter the last dimension, the integral structure. The integral is a combination of space and time free aperspectival world where the free (or freed) traveler has at its disposal all latent as well as actual forms of space and time without having to either deny them or be fully aware of them (Ameson, 2007). This final structure may offer the traveler or student and the collegiate institution a "common ground" to begin the professor-student relationship. If each is aware the existence of the dissociation and its uncertainty, then each can provide support and understanding to the other.

Additionally all cultures, indeed all people can presumably be positioned on a single line with collectivism being at one end and individualism being at the other end (Triandis, 1988). Other prominent examples of this style of thinking include high versus low context cultures and polychronic versus monochronic cultures (Hall, 1966, 1983). According to the linear logic of this variable analytic metaphor, as one moves toward one end of the line (the collectivistic end for instance), one must move away from the other end (individualism) with equal and opposite measure. The line is a ratio. Modern perspectival variable analytics posits as knowledge only dialectic of

mutually excluding oppositions. The assumption being presupposed is that an individual could not be both at once or neither (Kramer & Ikeda, 1998).

Observation however proves that depending on the people one is interacting with it is possible to be collectivistic one moment and then individualistic another. In fact a person can be both at once when he or she is in mixed company of say a group which includes family members and/or close friends, and strangers and/or enemies. While collectivism is characterized by trust, individualism is characterized by suspicion. A person can exhibit both trust and suspicion at once in a mixed group or even with an individual towards whom one is ambivalent (Kramer & Ikeda, 1998).

Gebser's theory of culture and consciousness, Mumford's dissociation theory and Kramer's theory of dimensional accrual/dissociation provides a tri-theoretical conduit for college students to persist while enrolled in post-secondary education. How so? It is theoretically possible for students including Muscogee (Creek) students to attend a college of their choice and not be culturally prepared for this new venture. It is further possible that these same students may come from a high context culture and a polychronic culture as many Native Americans do and engage low context cultures and a monochronic culture. A program must be created to assist this meeting at institutions of higher learning.

Native Americans exhibit high-context cultural attributes, expressing robust, inward reactions with stout bonds to affiliation, strong sense of family, tradition and history. Additionally, polychronic cultures suggest human interaction is valued over time and material things, leading to a lesser concern for getting things done. They do get done, but more in their own time. Aboriginal and Native Americans have typical

polychronic cultures, where 'talking stick' meetings can go on for as long as somebody has something to say. Polychronic people tend also to be high context (Hall, 1976). In contrast, Americans tend to be monochronic or M-Time meaning to doing one thing at a time. It assumes careful planning and scheduling and is a familiar Western approach that appears in disciplines such as 'time management'.

Monochronic people tend also to be low context. So what may occur when high-context, polychronic students meet low-context, monochronic professors? An individual from a high context culture has to adapt, and/or be accommodated when shifting to a low context culture.

High context cultures expect small close knit groups, and reliance on that group. This high-to-low adaption may cause some friction/confusion when Native American students attend a low context college. Many colleges have created ethnic associations to welcome and integrate all students. If not in place, some colleges should look at creating such associations to bridge the high-to-low context, polychronic-monochronic situational gaps that may occur. The University of Oklahoma has put into place many associations to assist all ethnic group cohabitation. Therefore, I recommend that all institutions whose clientele are multicultural strive to place ethnic organizations into place to ease the friction/confusion of its students to a minimum.

A further recommendation for future studies is to include other tribes in Oklahoma. With 32 Native American tribes in Oklahoma, this inclusion could offer additional cultural relationships throughout Oklahoma. Also, an expansion of the sample size will provide better representation. This study's participant size was

sparse; therefore, future studies with the Muscogee (Creeks) could provide a more fruitful find. Another recommendation is that tribal governments further explore the correlation or relationship among cultural values and higher education institutions. College and universities need to be accountable to their tribal students. Tribal governments need to pursue other types of higher education that will encourage Native American students to retain their cultural values and who will work with tribes to preserve their culture. A concern for more Native American studies can be quelled through the expansion of Native American curriculum, and the employment of more Native American faculty. Encouragement needs to be given to not just Native American students, but to all students. As Hobson (1994) expressed in her dissertation and I fully support, "When the study of American Indian culture is more thoroughly incorporated into the curricula, American Indian students will most likely successfully complete college degrees while feeling they are a part of American higher education" (p. 39).

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Cultural Values Survey - Main Research

CULTURAL VALUES SURVEY (CVS) FOR MAIN RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Main Study CVS from Lewis A. Porch

In this survey I am interested in learning about your feelings as an American Indian concerning a number of things. The following statements are about the way people behave and the way they treat each other. I would like to know what sort of things you think you should do and what kinds of things you should not do.

Please read each statement and then decide whether it is:

- * a very good thing to do
- * a good thing to do
- * a fairly good thing to do
- * a fairly bad thing to do
- * a bad thing to do
- * a very bad thing to do

SCALE:
 1=VERY GOOD (VG)
 2=GOOD (G)
 3=FAIRLY GOOD(FG)
 4=FAIRLY BAD (FB)
 5=BAD (B)
 6=VERY BAD (VB)

Please read each statement below and mark your best answer on how you feel as an American Indian:

1. Being kind to people even when they do things that are opposite to your own beliefs.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

2. Looking out only for yourself and not others.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

3. Helping another person feel more secure, even if you don't like them.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

4. Participating in American Indian organizations and activities more than non-Indian activities.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

5. Always telling the truth even though it hurt you or others.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

Cultural Values Survey - Main Research

6. Going out of your way to repay people for being kind

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

7. Never cheating or have anything to do with cheating situations, even for a friend.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

8. Helping a close friend get by a tight situation, even though you may have to stretch the truth a bit to do so.

SELECT VG G FE FB B VB

9. Telling a lie to spare someone's feelings.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

10. Borrowing money with no intentions of pay it back.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

11. Taking advantage of an unselfish person.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

12. Being outspoken and frank in expressing one's likes and dislikes even if it may hurt someone's feelings.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

13. Helping a person who has helped you.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

14. Living your religion or spiritual beliefs in your daily life.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

15. Sticking up for someone who once stuck up for you.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

16. Being able to get along with all kinds of people, whether or not you think they are worthwhile.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

Cultural Values Survey - Main Research

17. Giving support to other American Indians even when you may suffer the consequences.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

18. Putting the concerns of your family above all other matters.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

19. Helping another achieve his/her goals, even if it might interfere with your own.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

20. Being devoted to one's religious faith or spiritual beliefs.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

21. Stopping and helping a person who needs assistance.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

22. Never telling a lie, even though to do so would make the situation more comfortable.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

23. Conforming to the requirements of any situation and doing what is expected of you.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

24. Working and living in harmony with other people.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

25. Being independent, original, non-conformist, and different from other people.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

26. Missing work or school to help out a friend or relative.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

27. Demanding freedom and independence above everybody else.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

28. Arguing with people who try to boss you around.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

Cultural Values Survey - Main Research

29. Doing a favor for someone who has done one for you.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

30. Being completely free of the control of others.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

31. Winning at all costs in personal or business affairs.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

32. Going your own way in spite of what other think.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

33. Wanting to be your own boss and on your own.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

34. Cooperating with your friends or fellow workers.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

35. Hesitating to go out of your way to help someone in trouble.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

36. Charging bills without knowing how to pay them.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

37. Being sincerely concerned about the problems of others.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

38. Being stubborn when others try to force you to do something.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

39. Risking your life and limb to help someone else.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

40. Being able to get people to cooperate with you.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

Cultural Values Survey - Main Research

41. Giving someone money even if it is your last dollar.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

42. Attending religious services or ceremonies regularly.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

43. Respecting the viewpoints of older people even though they differ from yours.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

44. Forgiving others when they harm you.

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

45. Following the motto that one should "do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

SELECT VG G FG FB B VB

Please answer the following questions as completely as you can.

1. As an American Indian, what values do you think are important in guiding your life?

2. Which of these values has helped you in difficult times?

Cultural Values Survey - Main Research

3. A belief is an assertion that is perceived to be true. Beliefs are not necessarily facts in the objective sense, because we often believe things that are not objectively true. As an American Indian, what beliefs describe your feelings as a Native American?

Please complete the following information.

1. Have you earned a college degree (Bachelor's or above)?

- YES
 NO

2. If you have not earned a college degree, how many years of college have you completed?

- 1 Year
 2 Years
 3 Years
 4 Years or more

3. What was your college work?

4. Your present age in years is:

- 18-25
 26-33
 34-41
 42-51
 52-59
 60-67
 68 or older

Cultural Values Survey - Main Research

5. Your gender:

- Female
 Male

6. What is your approximate yearly income?

- Less than \$10,000
 \$10,000 to \$14,999
 \$15,000 to \$24,999
 \$25,000 to \$34,999
 Over \$35,000

7. What was your approximate family (yearly) income while you were in college?

- Less than \$4,000
 \$4,000 to \$9,999
 \$10,000 to \$14,999
 \$15,000 to \$24,999
 Over \$25,000

8. What was the highest level of education that your mother completed?

- No Formal Education
 Grade School
 Junior High
 High School
 Some College
 Technical School
 Completed College
 Graduate School

Cultural Values Survey - Main Research

9. What was the highest level of education that your father completed?

- No formal education
- Grade School
- Junior High
- High School
- Some College
- Technical School
- Completed College
- Graduate School

10. What was your high school GPA?

- Less than 1.0
- 1.00 to 1.99
- 2.00 to 2.99
- 3.00 to 3.99
- 4.00

11. What was your college GPA?

- Less than 1.0
- 1.00 to 1.99
- 2.00 to 2.99
- 3.00 to 3.99
- 4.00

12. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about, concerning your values as an American Indian? If so, please use the space below for that purpose.

Conclusion

Cultural Values Survey - Main Research

1. Your contribution to this effort is greatly appreciated. If you would like a summary of the results, please call me at (405)600-5015 or email your request to lewis.a.porch-1@ou.edu

MVTO

Figure 1, Learner Outcome Values

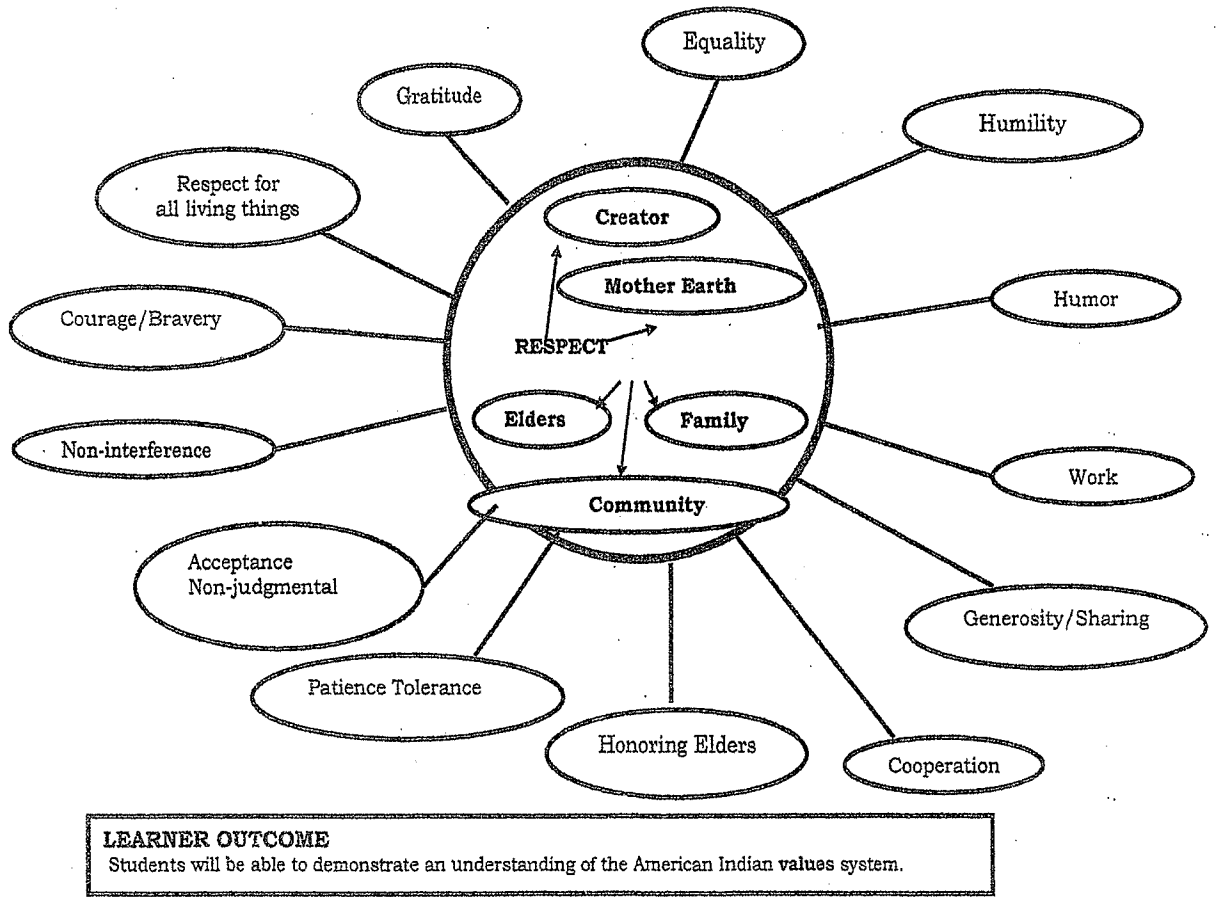
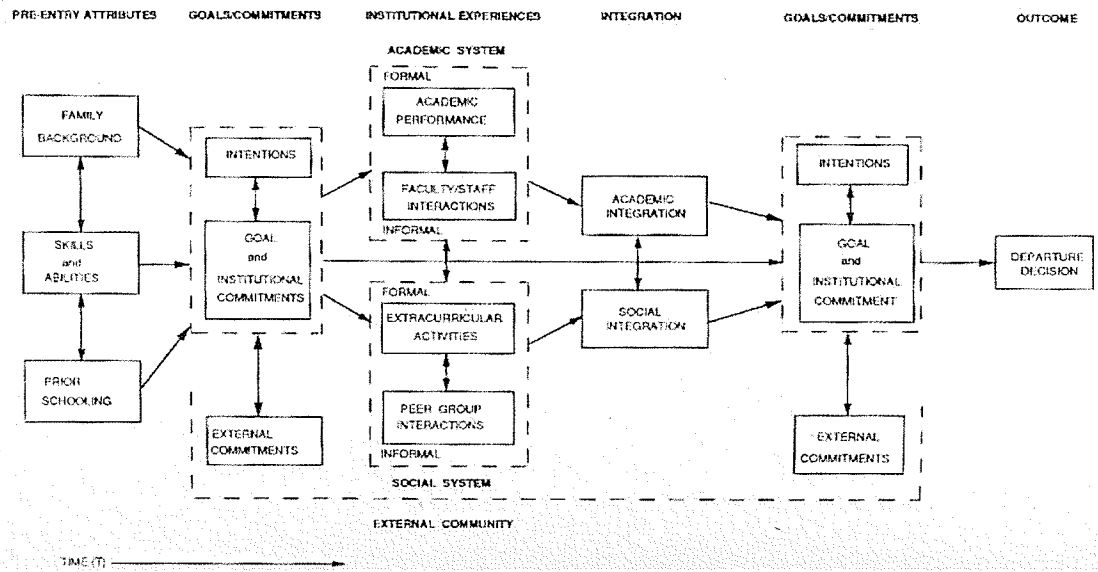


Figure 2, Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure



Appendix B
Letter to Prospective Interview Personnel

Date: TBD

Dear Muscogee (Creek) College Student or Graduate:

I am a graduate student at the University of Oklahoma (OU) working on my doctorate in Organizational Leadership. The Organizational Leadership program is sponsored by OU's College of Continuing Education and is offered to qualified students residing in Europe. I am originally from North Carolina but now I reside in Loveland, Oklahoma. I ask for your help towards learning more about Native American education.

I am very interested in learning how cultural values affect persistence or remaining in college. Earlier research studies have shown that Native Americans drop out of school for various reasons. Lack of financial aid, poor academic preparation and family conflicts often prevent Native American students from applying, or when they do apply and are accepted, find that college is not suitable. Few studies have been conducted with Muscogee (Creek) college students. Please help me to understand.

I have asked assistance from the Muscogee (Creek) Division of Human Development, Office of Higher Education by providing a list of names matching the criteria of Creek member, attendance (completed or not) at the University of Oklahoma between January, 2001 and May, 2007. I received your name from the University of Oklahoma Registrar with cooperation from the Muscogee (Creek) Office of Higher Education and ask your help by filling out a questionnaire or survey on Native American education. It is very important that you complete this survey and return it to me. Your voice can make a difference.

I assure you of complete confidentiality in this survey. No one will know who you are or what you say. Only this researcher will know of your identity.

The results of this research will be made available to the Muscogee (Creek) Office of Higher Education and other interested tribal members. If you wish, you may receive a summary of results by writing "copy of results requested" on the back of the self-addressed, stamped envelope that is enclosed with this letter. Please do not put this information on the questionnaire itself.

My email address is Lewis.A.Porch-1@ou.edu; please email me anytime you have questions or concerns. I thank you for your help.

MVTO,

Lewis A. Porch

Letter of Endorsement from the College of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation



COLLEGE OF THE MUSCOGEE NATION

P.O.Box 580
Okmulgee, OK 74447
918-758-1480
Fax: 918-758-2904

October 13, 2008

Mr. Lewis A. Porch
P.O. Box 33373
Fort Sill, OK 73503-0373

Dear Mr. Porch:

On behalf of the College of Muscogee Nation and our Board of Regents I am confirming that we will receive and store dissertation study participant's packets. The Board and I have discussed your dissertation prospectus and have agreed that we will honor your request to assist with your study.

In accordance with our communication and your written request, we endorse the Dissertation Prospectus from Lewis A. Porch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James King', is written over the typed name.

James King, Ed. D.
Interim President

Sample of Institutional Review Board Informed Consent to Participate

701-A-1

University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Project Title: Cultural Values and Persistence in Creek College Students
Principal Investigator: Lewis A. Porch
Department: Advanced Programs

You are being asked to volunteer for this research study. This study is being conducted through the University of Oklahoma via US Postal Mail delivery. You were selected as a possible participant because of your direct involvement with Native American culture and as a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Tribe.

Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study is to research how cultural values and persistence influence Muscogee (Creek) college students. This study will delve into the communal nature of Native American culture as reflected among Creeks with a view to consider some intervention concepts that might help reduce the current college attrition rates.

Number of Participants

About 50 people will take part in this study.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Agree to participate in this research project by filling out a US Postal delivered questionnaire or survey titled, "Cultural Values Survey." Upon completion of this survey, please return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Length of Participation

No caveats expected.

This study has the following risks:

No risks to persons or facilities expected or anticipated.

Benefits of being in the study are the opportunity for the interviewees and the Native American culture to address issues or concerns towards college attendance and the reduction of college attrition.

Alternate Procedures

There are no alternative procedures expected.

Injury

No injury or illness is expected from this research project. The University of Oklahoma Norman Campus has set aside no funds to compensate you in the event of any injury relating to this project.

Confidentiality

In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify you without your permission. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers will have access to the records.

There are organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis. These organizations may include the Muscogee (Creek) Office of Higher Education, Okmulgee, Oklahoma; the Muscogee (Creek) Tribal College, Okmulgee, Oklahoma and the OU Institutional Review Board.

Compensation

You will not be reimbursed for your time and participation in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you withdraw or decline participation, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the study. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question and may choose to withdraw at any time.

Waivers of Elements of Confidentiality

Your name will not be linked with your responses unless you specifically agree to be identified. Please select one of the following options

- I consent to being quoted directly.
- I do not consent to being quoted directly.

Audio Recording of Study Activities

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

I consent to audio recording. Yes No.

701-A-1

Video Recording of Study Activities

To assist with accurate recording of your responses, interviews may be recorded on a video recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording. Please select one of the following options:

I consent to video recording. Yes No.

Photographing of Study Participants/Activities

In order to preserve an image related to the research, photographs may be taken of participants. You have the right to refuse to allow photographs to be taken without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

I consent to photographs. Yes No.

Contacts and Questions

If you have concerns or complaints about the research, the researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted at the University of Oklahoma-Advanced Programs, 1610 Asp Avenue, Rm 413, Norman, OK 73072. Phone number is (405) 325-1980; email is Lewis.A.Porch-1@ou.edu . Committee Chair: Dr. Eric M. Kramer, (405) 325-2349, email: Kramer@ou.edu.

Contact the researcher(s) if you have questions or if you have experienced a research-related injury.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than individuals on the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature

Date

University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board Approval to Begin Study



The University of Oklahoma
OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

IRB Number: 12380
Meeting Date: February 17, 2009
Approval Date: February 17, 2009

February 17, 2009

Lewis Porch
18232 County Road North-South 236
Loveland, OK 73553

RE: Cultural Values and Persistence in Muscogee (Creek) College Students: Attrition in Post-Secondary Education

Dear Mr. Porch:

The University of Oklahoma Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the above-referenced research protocol at its regularly scheduled meeting on February 17, 2009. It is the IRB's judgement that the rights and welfare of the individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected; that the proposed research, including the process of obtaining informed consent, will be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46, as amended; and that the potential benefits to participants and to others warrant the risks participants may choose to incur.

This letter documents approval to conduct the research as described:

Other Dated: October 13, 2008 Support Letter - Muskogee Nation College
Other Dated: December 03, 2008 Summation Tools
Other Dated: December 03, 2008 OU Registrar Support Letter
Other Dated: December 09, 2008 Support Ltr - Muskogee (Creek) Nation - Revised
Other Dated: December 09, 2008 Support Email - College of Muskogee (Creek) Nation
IRB Application Dated: February 01, 2009 Revised
Protocol Dated: February 01, 2009 Revised
Other Dated: February 01, 2009 Pilot Recruitment Letter - Revised
Consent form - Other Dated: February 01, 2009 Information Sheet - Pilot - Revised
Survey Instrument Dated: February 01, 2009 Cultural Values Survey - Pilot - Revised
Other Dated: February 01, 2009 Main Study Recruitment Letter - Revised
Consent form - Other Dated: February 01, 2009 Interviews Recruitment Letter
Survey Instrument Dated: February 01, 2009 Interview Questions - Revised
Consent form - Other Dated: February 01, 2009 Information Sheet - Main Study - Revised
Survey Instrument Dated: January 02, 2009 Main Study Cultural Values Survey - Revised
Consent form - Subject Dated: February 06, 2009 Interview (Phase III) - Revised

As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved by the IRB. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form.

The approval granted expires on February 16, 2010. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with an IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date. The IRB will request a progress report from you approximately two months before the anniversary date of your current approval.

If you have questions about these procedures, or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Arnette Franklin, Ph. D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

300 Parrington Oval, Suite 316, Norman, Oklahoma 73019-3085 PHONE: (405) 325-6110 FAX: (405) 325-2373

Ltr_Proc_Revov_3



University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board Approval to Close Study



The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION - IRB

IRB Number: 12380
Inactivation Date: November 30, 2010

December 01, 2010

Lewis Porch
18232 County Road North-South 236
Loveland, OK 73553

RE: Cultural Values and Persistence in Muscogee (Creek) College Students: Attrition in Post-Secondary Education

Dear Mr. Porch:

Thank you for your correspondence to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) requesting inactivation of the above-referenced protocol. This letter is to confirm that the IRB has inactivated this protocol as of November 30, 2010.

Please note that this action completely inactivates all aspects and arms of this IRB Protocol. Should you wish to reactivate this study, you will need to apply for new IRB approval.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call the IRB office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Laurette Taylor".

E. Laurette Taylor, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

IRB_Proc_Inact_PI

1616 West Lindsey, Suite 150 Norman, Oklahoma 73069 PHONE: (405) 325-8110



List of Phase III Interview Questions

I wish to inquire:

1. As a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, what are your daily and weekly activities?
2. What is the makeup of students within your college? What percentage of nationalities is presented: Native American (specific), whites, Latinos, others (if applicable)?
3. At OU, what level of education is enrolled, (i.e. freshman, sophomore, or higher level) or it is a combination of education within the college?
4. Are all students proficient in the American language and able to communicate effectively within the classroom environment? Is there any form of language barrier?
5. Are there any other barriers (physical, social, psychological or spiritual) that would impinge college attendance?
6. Are there any forms of secular or religious ideology or theology expressed during in-class sessions?
7. Research on Native American students reports a more than double school dropout rate. In your opinion, what is the single most important reason why post-secondary students leave college?
8. Continuing with school dropout rates, what educational bridges have you instituted or devised to reduce school delinquency through the influence of the Native American Tribes?
9. From a multi-cultural point of view, what percentage of Native American culture is taught and what percentage of American culture is taught in the University of Oklahoma?
10. What recommendations do you have to ensure that multi-cultural education, tradition and heritage is preserved within current students of the University of Oklahoma? What is OU doing to preserve multi-cultural education?
11. What do you believe that would positively change the way Native Americans engage in college courses? What do you believe is the issue that would negatively change the way Native Americans engage in college courses?

List of Tables

Table 1. Mean of Independent Variables (IV) (In Ascending Order)

IV	\bar{x}
Religion	5.02
Social Skills	9.30
Social Responsibility	10.90
Kindness	22.60
Reciprocity	26.10
Honesty	45.00

Table 2. Degrees Sought (In Descending Order)

Science	36
Education	10
Communications	7
Native American Studies	5
Engineering	3
International Studies	3
No Response	1

Table 3. Frequencies and Percentage of High School GPA

Reported	Persisters		Non-Persisters		Not
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq %
1 Less than 1.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	
2 1.00 to 1.99	0	0.00	0	0.00	
3 2.00 to 2.99	7	12.70	2	40.00	
4 3.00 to 3.99	31	56.40	3	60.00	
5 4.00 NR	17	30.90	0		3 100%
Total	55	100.00	5	100.00	3 =63

Table 4. Frequencies and Percentage of High School GPA by Males

		Persisters		Non-Persisters		
		Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	Less than 1.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	
2	1.00 to 1.99	0	0.00	0	0.00	
3	2.00 to 2.99	4	21.10	2	100.00	
4	3.00 to 3.99	11	57.90	0	0.00	
5	4.00	4	21.00	0	0.00	
	NR				3	100%
	Total	19	100.00	2	100.00	=21

Table 5. Frequencies and Percentage of High School GPA by Females

		Persisters		Non-Persisters		
		Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	Less than 1.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	
2	1.00 to 1.99	0	0.00	0	0.00	
3	2.00 to 2.99	3	8.30	0	0.00	
4	3.00 to 3.99	20	55.60	3	100.00	
5	4.00	13	36.10	0	0.00	
	NR	0	0.00	0	0.00	3 100%
	Total	36	100.00	3	100.00	=39

Table 6. Percentages of CVS Questions (Q) 1,2,3, & 12 and Independent Variables

	Independent Variables					
	Religion	Family	Honesty	Ethics	Native American	Kindness
Q 1	44	44	35	22	20	
Q 2	39	44	13			9
Q 3	39	4		22		
Q12	38					

Table 7. Simple Statistics for all 63 Observations.

Independent Variables	M(SD) at 95% level
Kindness	22.58 (4.66)
Independence	26.11 (6.07)
Honesty	12.22 (2.68)
Social Responsibility	10.92 (1.34)
Reciprocity	24.38 (3.43)
Social Skills	9.30 (2.19)
Religion	5.02 (2.19)

Table 8. Percentages of Interviewee in Qualitative Persistence Values

Cultural Values	Freq	%
Kindness	17	28.33%
Independence	14	23.33%
Honesty	15	25.00%
Social Responsibility	3	5.00%
Reciprocity	5	8.33%
Social Skills	10	16.67%
Religion	16	26.67%
Family	30	50.00%
Ethics	5	8.33%
Respect	6	10.00%
Love	5	8.33%
Honor	2	3.33%

Faith	6	10.00%
Total Respondents	60	

Table 9. Gender of Persisters and Non-Persisters

	N	Persisters		Non-Persisters	NR
		%		%	
M	19	34.5%	2	40%	21
F	36	65.5%	3	60%	39
NR				3	3
Total	55	100.0%	5	100%	63

Table 10. Frequencies and Present Income Level for Persisters and Non-Persisters

		Persisters		Non-Persisters		NR
		Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	Less than \$10,000	15	27.00	3	60.00	
2	\$10,000 to \$14,000	5	9.00	1	20.00	
3	\$15,000 to \$24,999	6	11.00	0	0.00	
4	\$25,000 to \$34,999	7	13.00	1	20.00	
5	Over \$35,000	21	38.00	0	0.00	
	NR	1	2.00	0	0.00	
	NR					3
	Total	55	100.00	5	100.00	3=63

Table 11. Frequencies and Income While Attending the University of Oklahoma

	Persisters		Non-Persisters		NR	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	
1	Less than \$4,000	3	5.50	1	50.00	
2	\$4000 to \$9,999	1	1.80	1	50.00	
3	\$10,000 to \$14,999	5	9.00	0	0.00	
4	\$15,000 to \$24,999	8	14.50	0	0.00	
5	Over \$25,000	37	67.40	0	0.00	
	Not Reported	1	1.80			6
	Total	55	100.00	2	100.00	6 =63

Table 12. Frequencies and Percentages of Mother's Education

Reported	Persisters		Non-Persisters		Not	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	No Formal Education	0	0.00	0	0.00	
2	Grade School	0	0.00	0	0.00	
3	Junior High	2	3.60	0	0.00	
4	High School	8	14.50	0	0.00	
5	Some College	13	23.60	0	0.00	
6	Technical School	4	7.30	1	20.00	
7	Completed College	22	40.00	3	60.00	
8	Graduate School	6	10.90	1	20.00	
	NR					3
	Total	55	99.90	5	100.00	3 =63

Table 13. Frequencies and Percentage of Father's Education

Reported	Freq	Persisters		Non-Persisters		Not
		Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	Freq No Formal Education	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
2	Grade School	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
3	Junior High	3	5.50	0	0.00	0
4	High School	13	23.60	2	40.00	0
5	Some College	10	18.20	1	20.00	0
6	Technical School	5	9.10	0	0.00	0
7	Completed College	13	23.60	1	20.00	0
8	Graduate School	11	20.00	1	20.00	0
	NR					3
	Total	55	100.00	5	100.00	3 =63

Table 14. Frequencies and Percentage of College GPA

Reported	Freq	%	Persisters		Non-Persisters		Not
			Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	Freq % Less than 1.0	0	0.00	0	0.00		
2	1.00 to 1.99	0	0.00	0	0.00		
3	2.00 to 2.99	9	16.40	2	40.00		
4	3.00 to 3.99	45	81.80	3	60.00		
5	4.00	1	1.80	0	0.00		

NR					3	100%
Total	55	100.00	5	100.00	3	= 63

Table 15. Frequencies and Percentage of College GPA by Males

		Persisters		Non-Persisters		
		Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	Less than 1.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	
2	1.00 to 1.99	0	0.00	0	0.00	
3	2.00 to 2.99	7	36.80	1	50.00	
4	3.00 to 3.99	12	63.20	1	50.00	
5	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
	NR				3	100%
	Total	19	100.00	2	100.00 =21	

Table 16. Frequencies and Percentage of College GPA by Females

		Persisters		Non-Persisters	
		Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Less than 1.0	0	0.00	0	0.00
2	1.00 to 1.99	0	0.00	0	0.00
3	2.00 to 2.99	2	5.60	1	33.30

4	3.00 to 3.99	33	91.70	2	66.70
5	4.00	1	2.70	0	0.00
	NR			3	100%
	Total	36	100.00	3	100.00 =39

Table 17. Percentage of Degree/Degree Seeking Persisters by Discipline

	Discipline	Persisters		Non-Persisters
		Freq	%	N/A
1	Communications	7	12.73%	
2	Education	10	20.00%	
3	Engineering	3	5.45%	
4	English	1	1.82%	
5	History	2	3.64%	
6	International Studies	3	5.45%	
7	Letters (Moral Phil)	3	5.45%	
8	Native American Studies	5	9.09%	
8	Sciences	20	36.36%	
9	Undecided	1	0.00%	
	Total	55	100.00%	