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The Branch Campus Contribution to the Mission of the Main Campus in Kentucky

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THE BRANCH CAMPUS CONTRIBUTION TO THE MISSION
OF THE MAIN CAMPUS IN KENTUCKY

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

By
Caroline Lovie Atkins

August 2015
THE BRANCH CAMPUS CONTRIBUTION
TO THE MAIN CAMPUS IN KENTUCKY

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Jay Morgan

Dean, Graduate School  Date

6-7-15
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The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of branch campuses on the mission of their main campuses in Kentucky. An online survey and key informant interviews were conducted with administrators. Both research methods identified strategies to minimize the impact of institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers (Cross, 1981) that impede the successful academic and social integration (Tinto, 1975; 1993) of nontraditional students who frequent these campuses. In addition, institutional research offices provided student enrollment and credit-hour production data for analysis by site.

The study classified demographic information on administrators, including gender, full- or part-time capacity, administrative title, and years of experience. Half of the 17 campuses were co-located with another educational or related institution with interactive television as the primary mode of course delivery. Coding of key informant interviews resulted in five themes: faculty resources, course offerings, immersion in the local community, revenue generation, and advisory boards. In spite of the fact that 81% of respondents reported that students could receive a full degree on site, consistent between survey responses and key informant interviews was the identified need for additional educational programming in support of students’ academic interests and needs.
A variety of non-credit programming was also offered at these sites to accommodate community needs.

*Key words:* branch campuses, off-campus centers, Kentucky, nontraditional students, barriers to adult learning
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In response to a query to pinpoint the typical college student, a non-academician most likely would describe a recent high school graduate in his late teens, whose parents provided financial support, while the student lived in on-campus housing, and participated regularly in a variety of campus-based activities. However, according to the U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (USED NCES, 2013), 17.6 million undergraduates were enrolled in postsecondary institutions in the fall of 2013; and 33% of those students were over the age of 25. The USED NCES (2010) predicted that by the year 2020, more than half of the students enrolled in higher education would be nontraditional. Nontraditional students represented 18.8% of the undergraduate population in Kentucky’s eight public four-year institutions in the fall of 2013 (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Nontraditional Undergraduate Student Enrollment, 25 and above
Kentucky Four-Year Public Institutions, Fall 2013 Semester Enrollment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Nontraditional Undergraduate Enrollment</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
<th>% of Total Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Kentucky University</td>
<td>3,586</td>
<td>13,851</td>
<td>25.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky State University</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>2,370</td>
<td>20.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morehead State University</td>
<td>1,777</td>
<td>10,076</td>
<td>17.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray State University</td>
<td>1,777</td>
<td>9,172</td>
<td>19.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Kentucky University</td>
<td>3,380</td>
<td>13,166</td>
<td>25.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Kentucky</td>
<td>1,942</td>
<td>21,495</td>
<td>9.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Louisville</td>
<td>3,307</td>
<td>16,151</td>
<td>20.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Kentucky University</td>
<td>3,259</td>
<td>17,517</td>
<td>18.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Four-Year Total</td>
<td>19,505</td>
<td>103,748</td>
<td>18.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education Comprehensive Database, prepared September 15, 2014.
Students who represented at-risk categories often failed to become engaged and persist in postsecondary education (Tinto & Pusser, 2006). With the increasing number of nontraditional students (including the military, working adults, community college transfers, high school students pursuing dual credit, and business and industry employees) returning to college for degree or certification programs, postsecondary institutions are faced with the sometimes daunting charge of meeting the educational needs of these unique populations. Despite increasing enrollments, nontraditional students have maintained a higher attrition rate than their traditional counterparts (Glass & Garrett, 1995; Kasworm, 1990). They were more likely to be enrolled part-time, employed full-time, and have personal or family commitments outside of school. Tinto (1982) contended that these mitigating factors led nontraditional students to be more apt to either drop out or to postpone long-term educational plans.

Branch campuses were created in an effort to increase accessibility for more students, allowing them to achieve their educational goals while living at home, maintaining jobs, and caring for their families (Dengerink, 2001b; Donhardt, 1996; Spencer, 1997). These place bound students were unable or unwilling to relocate to attend a four-year institution due to these and other obligations (Briscoe & DeOliver, 2006; Cavanaugh, 2007; Fonseca & Bird, 2007). Due to their strategic placement in local communities, branch campuses can impact the retention rates of nontraditional students by supporting and promoting the educational mission of their main campus for this population. Some research has suggested that many students may be able to attend college only by accessing the branch campus of a larger institution (Holland, 2001; Huit, 1972). While each displays unique characteristics, the purpose of the branch campus is to
serve the needs of the student population and to advance the educational mission of the main or parent institution. Coseman-Ross and Hiatt-Michael (2005) examined motivators for nontraditional students who chose to attend a branch campus. The primary motivators were the pursuit of self-improvement and a sense of achievement. Related research in the Brigham Young University system found that, among the many reasons students chose to attend a branch campus, the more common ones were ease of scheduling, smaller class sizes, block scheduling, interaction with peers in similar life circumstances, and convenient location (Hoyt & Howell, 2012).

Branch campuses are not without challenges. Due to their distance from the main campus, essential student services (e.g., financial aid, health services, identity centers, and library resources, etc.) often are unavailable on site, or are available only during traditional office hours. The quality of instruction, as well as student performance levels has been questioned by main campus faculty (Howell, 2001; Stahley, 2002). Some branch campus students have indicated a feeling of disconnect from the main campus (Bryant, 1993). Administrative staff often have been required to serve as generalists, providing a wide range of student needs that were usually provided on the main campus by specialized offices. As a result of their external commitments, branch campus students may be unable to easily access opportunities that enhance the learning experience, such as mentoring programs, tutoring services, writing centers, and student success seminars.

Although much has been written about meeting the needs of commuters, nontraditional students, and those seeking non-credit programming, no centralized resource compiles data on the impact of branch campuses on these and other targeted populations. In addition, a lack of research exists on specific strategies implemented by branch
campuses that led to an increase in the persistence and success rates of their primary constituency – the nontraditional student. As state-funded support continues to decline and institutions become more tuition dependent, strategies that target efforts at addressing retention issues at the branch campuses are critical.

The purpose of the current study was to provide administrators in postsecondary institutions with information regarding the contribution made by the branch campus to the mission of the main campus. The U.S. Census Bureau, in 2009 noted a change in college attainment rates (associate degrees and higher) from 24.5% to 30.5%, moving Kentucky from 47th to 45th place in the nation. As they were created to increase educational access, Kentucky’s branch campuses most likely will continue to enroll increasing numbers of nontraditional students; therefore, it is important to identify practices implemented by these campuses that support and enhance student persistence and success and, as a result, contribute to the university mission of educating students. Equally important was the gathering of descriptive institutional data, which resulted in the development of a profile of branch campuses in Kentucky, which is information that was found to be nonexistent in current literature.

**Statement of the Problem**

Changing demographics in postsecondary education are related to numerous factors – slow recovery from economic recessions, widespread unemployment, a desire by employed workers for increased career mobility, welfare reform requirements, the desire by employers for staff who can function effectively in a knowledge and technology driven economy, and the aging of the Baby Boomer population. These factors have
forced adults to pursue new or additional degrees and certifications (Coseman-Ross & Hiatt-Michael, 2005; Fairchild, 2003; Horn & Carroll, 1996; Osgood-Treston, 2001).

The needs of nontraditional students and the strategies for maintaining their engagement are different from those of traditional students (Coseman-Ross & Hiatt-Michael, 2005; Fairchild, 2003; Hardin, 2008). Due to an absence or a lack of recent postsecondary experience, this population may not be cognizant of the supports available to help achieve success specific to their individual circumstances. As universities continue to adapt their instructional strategies to increase student outcomes, branch campuses also must evolve to meet the challenges of providing higher education to this growing audience – the nontraditional student. According to Norby (2005), branch campus effectiveness is tied to its ability to offer the services that respond to the distinct needs of the surrounding community. They cannot function effectively as replicas of the main campus due to the different needs of the nonresidential students (Holland, 2001).

While all nontraditional students are unique, they possess similar in-group characteristics (Fairchild, 2003; Wyatt, 2011). Nontraditional students spend their time on campus for academic, rather than social purposes, and their participation in student activities differs from that of the traditional residential student (Fairchild, 2003). Their social circle generally is external to campus life as a result of work and personal obligations. They are independent of financial or emotional assistance and support from parental figures. Nontraditional students typically are required to explore the postsecondary system on their own. While this is not an exhaustive list of barriers, these and other common characteristics often inhibit the persistence and success of these students as they attempt to balance school with personal and professional responsibilities.
With this information at their disposal, postsecondary administrators can formulate and implement steps to minimize barriers that impede the progress of nontraditional students toward meeting their educational goals.

*Educational* and *psychological* obstacles have been identified that affect the success of nontraditional students (Hardin, 2008). Nontraditional students may not be prepared academically, and these educational deficiencies can interrupt or halt their educational attainment. Tinto (1975, 1993) referred to these barriers as impediments to academic integration. Psychological obstacles include poor coping skills, low self-confidence, concerns about coursework, fear of acceptance by peers, and negative perceptions in general about postsecondary education. These barriers may be exacerbated by stress at home or in the workplace.

The branch campus can play a considerable role in supporting students beyond the provision of physical space for classes in its geographic locale. Nontraditional students can transcend obstacles if relevant supports are provided to mitigate the impact of barriers (Tinto, 1975, 1993). While nontraditional students encounter barriers that can limit their success and persistence, they also may possess strong motivators for obtaining a degree upon which a responsive branch campus environment can build (Scanlan, 1986; Tinto, 1982; Wyatt, 2011). Trends have indicated that nontraditional student enrollments are likely to continue to increase in the future, and identifying and investing in strategies at the branch campus to address these barriers may result in increased levels of degree attainment in Kentucky.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to address the way in which branch campuses in Kentucky contribute to the mission of their main campuses. The first objective was to collect descriptive data detailing physical characteristics (e.g., campus property type, property ownership, distance from the main campus, and staffing patterns of administrative staff and faculty). The second objective was to document those strategies currently in place that are designed to minimize the impact of barriers to success and persistence, particularly for special populations such as place bound and nontraditional students. Ultimately, as a result of the data extracted from this descriptive study, postsecondary institutions in Kentucky have access to information designed to promote continuous quality improvement of their educational delivery system to better serve and engage the consumers who choose to further their education by attending branch campuses.

Significance of the Study

Newsom and Hayes (1991) stated that a university mission statement determines the specific role of the institution in the region and provides a foundation for institutional activities such as recruitment, student engagement, planning, assessment, pedagogy, and outreach. Refining mission and vision statements often is a never-ending process for higher education leaders, as changes both external and internal to the university create the need for improvement (Baker, Dudziak, & Tyler, 1994; Kiley, 2011; Newsom & Hayes, 1991). Stahley (2002) proposed that organizational effectiveness is necessary for the successful achievement of an institution’s mission. As the emissary of the main campus, the effectiveness of the branch campus reflects upon the credibility of the main campus.
and impacts the overall mission of the university. As that representative, the branch
campus is obligated to take the necessary steps to enhance its reputation among its
constituents and within the surrounding community (Norby, 2004).

A review of the literature through university library resources, peer reviewed
journals, ERIC, and ProQuest resulted in an identification of some research specific to,
among other topics, extending institutional outreach by establishing branch campuses in
overseas locations, as well as the use of adjunct versus full-time faculty on branch
campuses. A lack of information was found that specifically addressed the contribution of
branch campuses to the mission of main institutions. Cavanaugh (2007) conducted a
comparison of the differences between branch campuses and main campuses in Ohio.
The narrow focus on cross-campus faculty compensation, tuition rates, and student
demographics limited its application to other branch campuses, particularly those in
Kentucky. No research has been identified that specifically addressed the contribution of
branch campuses to the mission of the entire campus. In fact, no research currently exists
in this state that reports data related to programming and services of Kentucky's branch
campuses.

Although specifics vary greatly based on the institution type, size, and degree
programming, the common denominator of postsecondary institutions in the state was a
focus on providing opportunities for learning, discovery, and engagement to a diverse
population of students. Branch campus administrators have the responsibility for
successfully implementing their main campus mission, either in full or in part (Fonseca &
Bird, 2007). Regardless of the organizational structure of the institution, branch campuses
are charged with managing the needs of their students while ensuring the university
mission is carried out. Attention to the barriers faced by nontraditional students that impact their integration while attending branch campuses will support goal achievement. The current study provided an avenue to document precise strategies that assist branch campus administrators and main campus officials in supporting engagement and reducing institutional attrition for this at-risk population.

**Theoretical Framework**

While nontraditional students are a growing proportion of newly admitted college students, they are less likely to persist and to complete degree programs than full-time traditional students (Choy, 2002; Cleveland-Innes, 1994; Horn & Carroll, 1996; Retention Study Group, 2004). It is no surprise that this population experiences obstacles and struggles with persistence and degree attainment. Summers (2003) found a greater rate of institutional departure in nontraditional students. Almost three quarters of the undergraduate students at public two-year postsecondary institutions, and one third of their peers in public four-year institutions, were found to be nontraditional (Choy, 2002). Using data from the USED NCES (2002-2003), Choy (2002) found undergraduate degree attainment rates among moderately nontraditional students (31%) trailed that of traditional students (54%). The bachelor’s degree attainment rate for students classified as highly nontraditional was 11%. The Education Trust (www.edtrust.org), a Washington-based nonprofit organization, reported that 35% of students who enter college will drop out during the first year.

Cross’s (1981) barriers to adult learning were adopted as the theoretical framework for this research. Specifically, attention was directed to the way these barriers impede the academic and social integration (Tinto, 1975, 1993) of nontraditional students.
on the branch campuses. Central to this framework were the concepts of situational, dispositional, and institutional barriers. *Situational barriers* are related to life conditions, such as family responsibilities and work schedules. Situational barriers may hinder study time, class preparation, and even the ability to arrange classes around one’s work schedule. Ultimately, these barriers may affect the degree of involvement in the campus environment, which Tinto (1982) identified as one of the key factors related to student persistence and success.

The second category of impediments is known as *dispositional* barriers (Cross, 1981). Dispositional barriers originate internally and include psychological elements such as low motivation and low self-confidence. Without intentional efforts to boost perceived inadequacies, these barriers may lead to student stopout or dropout (Tinto, 1975, 1993).

The final category of barriers, *institutional*, are procedures that unintentionally discourage students from participating in learning activities (Cross, 1981). These barriers include institutional bureaucracies that may add undue stress to nontraditional students, e.g., faculty office hours for advising students might not coincide with the hours a nontraditional student is free from work. The nontraditional student might be required to drive to the main campus to complete financial aid paperwork, only to find the office closed at 4:30 p.m. due to payroll overtime restrictions.

When institutions have a thorough understanding of the barriers faced by adult learners, they are able to meet their needs through appropriate support services that increase student integration (Tinto, 1993; Fairchild, 2003). Integration “refers to the extent to which the individual shares the normative attitudes and values of peers and faculty in the institution and abides by the formal and informal structural requirements
for membership in the university community” (Tinto & Pusser, 2006, p. 50). Integration related variables include family background; academic preparedness; educational intentions and goals; academic performance; interactions with faculty; staff and peers; involvement in extracurricular activities; commitment to the university; and external responsibilities.

Tinto and Pusser (2006) further hypothesized that several of these variables are within the control of the institution and that supports could be implemented or programs and services adjusted to increase outcomes for students. Five conditions were identified that impact student success, yet they are within the ability of the institution to control: institutional commitment, institutional expectations, support, feedback, and involvement or engagement activities.

Other theories of student persistence and success work in tandem with Cross’s (1981) barriers to adult learning. Several researchers have explored the impact of finances on student attrition. Dhanidina and Griffith (1975) applied a cost-benefit framework to education and training. Their research found that students viewed education as an investment in their own human capital. The researchers compared the decision to attend school to the decision-making process used by investors. Adult students contemplated degree seeking by analyzing the costs and benefits. If the benefits outweighed the costs, students chose to pursue an education. Benefits that were identified include both monetary (future income potential) and nonmonetary (increased knowledge). Costs include both tangible and intangible variables such as tuition, books, and time missed participating in family events and activities.
If branch campuses demonstrate that they are indeed able to provide the necessary academic and social supports to minimize the impact of institutional, dispositional, and situational barriers, nontraditional students will be able to recognize and act upon the value of an educational investment. The current research effort sought to establish the actions that were occurring at the branch campuses in Kentucky that created proactive environments and, in turn, promoted student persistence and success.

**Research Questions**

This study sought to address the following general research question: How do branch campuses in Kentucky contribute to the mission of their main campuses? To address this overall question, the following specific research questions will be explored.

1. What are the unique features and characteristics of the branch campuses in Kentucky?
   a. What are the demographics of branch campus administrators (e.g., years in position, position title, and highest degree held)?
   b. What are the asset details of the branch campus (e.g., property ownership, property type, square footage, and distance from the main campus)?
   c. What are the staffing patterns of branch campus administrative staff (e.g., full-time, part-time, and administrative role)?
   d. What are the demographics of the student population at the branch campus (e.g., age, student headcount, graduate level, undergraduate level, and non-degree seeking)?

2. How do branch campus administrators describe their contribution to the educational mission of its main campus through:
a. Core function of teaching (e.g., academic programming and delivery methods)?

b. Certification/credit-hour production?

3. What strategies or practices do the branch campuses implement to promote:
   a. Student persistence and success (to minimize dispositional, institutional, and situational barriers)?
   b. Community partnerships?

4. What unexplored opportunities do branch campus administrators identify that could increase the ability of the branch campus to promote the educational mission of the main campus?

5. What prevents or limits the ability of the branch campus to carry out the educational mission of the main campus?

General Methodology

The Commonwealth of Kentucky includes numerous educational institutions – public, four-year institutions, private institutions, and community and technical colleges. Many of these have branch or extended campuses attached to them. The current research focused on the regional branch campuses of the eight four-year institutions: Eastern Kentucky University, Western Kentucky University, Northern Kentucky University, Murray State University, and Morehead State University. No branch campuses were associated with Kentucky State University. The University of Louisville and the University of Kentucky had sites in addition to the main campus, but they do not function as branch campuses. The University of Kentucky’s site in Paducah is co-located with West Kentucky Community and Technical College but provides only academic
programming for engineering students. The main campus at the University of Louisville is its Belknap Campus. The Health Sciences Center campus houses the medical center with the School of Medicine, School of Nursing, School of Public Health & Information Sciences, and the School of Dentistry, among other medical and research related services. The ShelbyHurst Center houses offices, technology, and an event planning center. As those sites are specialized in nature and do not provide regular academic programming, they were excluded from this study.

No existing data collection instrument was located; therefore, the researcher designed a survey instrument to gather relevant information about these campuses. This study employed a qualitative research design relying on descriptive information collected from the survey instrument and database mining from institutional research offices, as well as thematic analysis from semi-structured interviews with key informants. The survey instrument was constructed in three sections: demographic information on administrators (RQ1); asset information on the campus properties (RQ2); and details on academic disciplines, non-credit offerings, and other services provided (RQ2). Research Questions 3, 4, and 5 were addressed during the semi-structured interviews. Demographic data on the student population on both the main and the branch campuses were gathered from institutional research offices or mined from institutional fact books. The research committee of the National Association of Branch Campus Administrators (NABCA) agreed to review the survey instrument and interview protocol, which were refined based on their comments prior to implementation in Kentucky for the current study.
Phone calls to the branch campus administrators were initiated in March 2015 following approval from the Institutional Review Board at Western Kentucky University (Appendix A). The purpose of these calls was to provide pre-survey awareness and to verify email addresses. The survey invitation, sent immediately after the phone call, included a link for online completion of the Qualtrics-based survey (Appendix D). Non-respondents were contacted by telephone and email two weeks after the initial email distribution and encouraged to complete the survey.

Concurrent with the collection of survey data from branch campus administrators, data was also collected from university institutional research staff. Institutional research offices provide comprehensive external and internal reporting of information for planning, decision-making, and evaluation of institutional effectiveness. These data detailed the percentage of credit-hour production for each branch campus (RQ2) for fall 2013, along with other information that could not be readily obtained from branch campus administrators. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants at three sites (RQ 3-5). A semi-structured interview approach is especially relevant to outline topics generated from the research questions, while allowing participants the flexibility to expand their responses based on personal experience and knowledge (Patton, 2002). The interviews were coded (Creswell, 1994; Saldaña, 2009), and a thematic analysis was conducted to identify differences and similarities between the campuses based on the strategies being implemented to increase student persistence and success. Actions identified by each campus administrator were categorized by dispositional, institutional, or situational barriers (Cross, 1981).
A variety of approaches to selecting a sample are available for qualitative studies (Creswell, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994). For this research, purposeful sampling (also referred to as purposive or judgment sampling) was selected. Purposeful sampling is the most common non-probability sampling technique in qualitative research. It may be used as both a qualitative and quantitative technique. The researcher selects the sample that is presumed to be the most prolific in answering the proposed research question. The researcher's practical knowledge of the research topic, along with a thorough literature review, aid in developing variables in choosing a purposeful sample.

Purposive sampling is particularly relevant to key informant interviews, in which individuals are necessary to serve as resources to a phenomenon (Bernard, 2000). Key informants are members of a community of interest who possess the experiences relevant to the current research and are willing to share their unique knowledge. For the purposes of the current study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants chosen by purposive sampling methods. It was not feasible to interview the entire population of branch campus administrators in Kentucky due to the geographic breadth of the state. The sample was chosen based on those who responded to the online survey. Attempts were made to choose informants at the campuses that generated the highest percentage of credit-hour production. Murray State University was omitted from the interview process due to the unique relationship of the researcher with the branch campus administrators at that institution. The researcher is employed in the academic department that houses branch campuses and also teaches at those campuses.
Definition of Terms

The following definitions provide clarification for the terms used throughout this research study:

- The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) (http://www.sacscoc.org) defines a branch campus as:
  A location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location is (a) permanent in nature; (b) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; (c) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and (d) has its own budgetary and hiring authority. (Institutional Summary Form Prepared for Commission Reviews, p. 4, January 2014)

  Literature cited in the current study used these terms as synonymous with branch campuses, including extended campus, off-campus center, satellite campus, or regional campus. SACSCOC accredits an institution as a totality unless the extended unit is autonomous.

- Branch campus administrators serve as the leaders responsible for the daily operations of the branch campuses and report to a supervisor at the next administrative level on the main campus (Bailey, 2002; Burke, 2007).

- Nontraditional students are those students who (a) delayed college enrollment, (b) are enrolled at least part-time, (c) work 35 hours or more per week, (d) are financially independent, (e) have either child or adult
dependents, (f) are single parents, and/or (g) have not completed a high school degree (Choy, 2002). Choy (2002) and Horn and Carroll (1996) stated that nontraditional students may have one or more of these characteristics and can be classified as minimally, moderately, or highly nontraditional.

- **Student success** is defined as “the completion of a college degree” (Tinto & Pusser, 2006, p. 1).

- **Persistence** is the “enrollment of individuals over time that may or may not be continuous and may or may not result in degree completion” (Tinto & Pusser, 2006, p. 1). Tinto and Pusser (2006) identified five conditions that are recognized as contributing to student persistence: commitment, expectations, support, feedback, and involvement.

- A **university mission statement** is a statement that “articulates the institution’s desire to meet the needs of various stakeholders and answers the question ‘Why do we exist?’” (Kiley, 2011, para.9).

- The **main or parent campus** is the central location of the postsecondary institution.

**Assumptions**

The researcher assumed that the branch campus administrators who participated in the survey and key informant interviews would be receptive to the research topic and would reply in an open and candid manner. The branch campuses of the seven four-year institutions were assumed to be dependent upon the main campus, and therefore,
communicated and collaborated with an administrative supervisor located on the main campus.

Limitations

As with any study, the current research offered only a small glimpse into the larger picture of the contribution of branch campuses to the traditional university mission of improving lives through teaching, research, and service. As this research was conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree, rather than as a subset of a multi-researcher effort, the potential for single researcher bias may have existed. Chapter III explains the way in which this potential was minimized.

The small population of branch campuses (17) attached to the public four-year institutions in Kentucky may have limited anonymity. Some branch campus administrators may have been reluctant to share resource deficits of their campuses. They may have feared that revealing trade secrets would have impacted their recruitment efforts if their catchment area was geographically close to another postsecondary institution, or if they were evaluated primarily on headcounts. The nature of self-reporting provided an additional limitation concern. The tendency for individuals to respond in socially desirable ways may have impacted results and minimized the ability of the researcher to independently verify reported data (Moorman & Podsakoff, 1992). The participants were advised, to the extent possible, of the anonymity and confidentiality of qualitative data.

Delimitations

This research was limited to the branch campuses of five of the eight public four-year institutions in Kentucky and did not include the 70 branch campuses of the
Kentucky community college system or branch campuses associated with private institutions. The data that were gathered did not allow for an estimation of the branch campus impact on public perceptions of higher education in the local community. The degree to which branch campuses contributed to local and regional economic development could not be determined based on data gathered during the current study. The effectiveness of using full-time versus adjunct faculty at the branch campus was not explored. As these data were limited to Kentucky public not-for-profit institutions, information gleaned during the research process cannot be generalized to other states or to other types of institutions (e.g., private or for-profit). Finally, data related to the financial operations of branch campuses was not included in the scope of this study.

**Summary**

Branch campuses were created to increase educational access and to serve place-bound students, defined as those who are thought to be more likely to work full-time, have children or serve in a caretaker role, or face other challenges that make it difficult or even impossible to attend classes at the main campus. Nontraditional students are a growing population (NCES, 2013; Wyatt, 2011). As the population continues to increase, postsecondary institutions will be faced with a growing need to help these adult learners overcome barriers to achieving their academic goals. While nontraditional students face many barriers to degree attainment (Fairchild, 2003; Hardin, 2008), nontraditional students can thrive and be successful with the right academic, social, and institutional supports. By serving nontraditional students effectively, branch campuses can assist in their academic persistence (Tinto, 1975), and can aid the achievement of both mission and goals of the main campus.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The number of nontraditional students in postsecondary education has been trending upward in recent years (Baptista, 2013; Brown, 2002; Chao & Good, 2004; Choy, 2002; NCES, 2013). Numerous factors have led adults to seek additional education, including economic crises, the re-education of displaced workers, and even university efforts to encourage continuing education and lifelong learning. As public funding of postsecondary education continues to decrease, institutions are becoming more reliant on tuition as a means of meeting financial deficiencies. Branch campuses serve a consistently higher percentage of students who are defined as nontraditional (Hoyt & Howell, 2012). Efforts that target the nontraditional student population who typically frequent branch campuses are crucial, not only tuition dollars, but also due to their contribution to institutional growth.

The purpose of the current study was to provide administrators with information regarding the contributions made by the branch campuses to the mission of their main campuses in Kentucky. Generally, postsecondary institutions exist to create, advance, and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, and service, and branch campuses should support those goals. Branch campuses most likely will continue to enroll increasing numbers of nontraditional students; therefore, capturing data relevant to these campuses and identifying practices implemented in the support and enhancement of nontraditional student persistence and success is important. These combined efforts make a direct contribution to the mission of the university.
Higher Education in the United States

Factors Contributing to the Evolution of Branch Campuses

Among the reasons for the existence of branch campuses is their ability to aid the main campus in accomplishing its mission through their extended educational outreach to the broader public (McGuinnes, 1991; Wolfe & Strange, 2003). Advocates of extended campuses have cited the following benefits to the main campus and students (Bird, 2014; Cage, 1989; Hoyt & Howell, 2012; Huitt, 1972; McGuinnes, 1991). Branch campuses utilize limited financial resources by using adjunct instructors or interactive television services transmitted from classrooms on the main campus. The lack of research laboratories, writing centers, food services, libraries, and identity centers (e.g., multicultural and women’s centers, LGBTQ programming), combined with targeted academic programming, helps to hold course delivery and staff costs to a minimum. In addition, branch campuses ease overcrowding in classrooms on the main campus and accommodate the educational needs of local communities by allowing students who are geographically bound to attend to educational and personal needs in their home community.

To fully appreciate the role of the branch campus in Kentucky’s postsecondary delivery structure, it is necessary to first understand the growth of higher education in the United States. Harvard University, founded in 1636, is the longest continuously operating educational institution in the country (Brickman, 1972; Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Thelin, 2004). By the beginning of the Revolutionary War, nine degree-granting institutions had formed in the colonies: Harvard, William and Mary, Collegiate School (Yale), Academy of Philadelphia (University of Philadelphia), College of New Jersey (Princeton), King’s
College (Columbia), College of Rhode Island (Brown), Queen’s College (Rutgers), and Dartmouth. As most of these institutions were affiliated with religious organizations, their initial mission was directed toward spiritual studies and catered to wealthy white males whose families were landowners (Brickman, 1972).

Subsequent to the Civil War, Thomas Jefferson championed his plan of a state system of higher education, that advanced a mission centered on teaching civic responsibility to citizens and future leaders of the country (Addis, 2003; Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Thelin, 2004). The realization of Jefferson’s educational goals did not gain significant progress until the Morrill Act was passed in 1862, which provided states with land to establish educational institutions that focused on agriculture, engineering, and military tactics. A total of 70 state institutions were created as a result of the Morrill Act, including the University of Kentucky. In addition, several historically black colleges and universities were created, including Kentucky State (Archibald, 2002; Thelin, 2004). At the end of World War I, a desire by employers for college educated employees resulted in an upward trend in enrollments and degrees earned (Archibald, 2002; Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013). A similar increase occurred when soldiers returned home from World War II.

The first community college was said to have been launched in 1901 in Central High School in Joliet, Illinois, with a mission of providing education and training to the local community (Brickman, 1972; Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Thelin, 2004). Community colleges initially focused on educating future teachers. The number of community colleges continued to increase as a result of the recommendations of The President’s Commission on Higher Education in 1947. One recommendation particularly relevant to
branch campuses and nontraditional students addressed expanded access by eliminating barriers, including those related to financial needs. The GI Bill of 1944 provided financial support to soldiers for educational purposes. Other actions contributed to the increased commitment to postsecondary education, including community needs, professional requirements by employers, and workplace certifications and licenses (Lazerson, 1998). As a result, the number of colleges and universities in the United States almost doubled from 1950 through 1990.

Although not included in the scope of the current research, the existence of international branch campuses is important to note. These campuses increased in number as a result of globalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Lane, 2011; Verbik & Merkley, 2006). Some universities established international campuses as early as the 1950s. The rationale for these international campuses has changed significantly since that time. International campuses were originally established to support study abroad opportunities and for military employees to continue their education. Currently they provide a way for a postsecondary institution to extend its educational outreach by expanding its presence abroad (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

While an abundance of historical information can be found on flagship institutions, community colleges, and even international branch campuses, an absence of historical background exists on the evolution of branch campuses. Fonseca and Bird (2007) lamented the lack of meticulous documentation related to their development, and suggested this deficiency has contributed to a current misunderstanding of their relevance. Perhaps the earliest references to the branch campus approach to postsecondary education occurred when land grant colleges extended their programs to
rural areas (Rasmussen, 1989; Thelin, 2004). The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established partnerships that provided education to rural Americans on agricultural practices and technologies. Modern day extension services include a variety of services, such as 4-H youth development, agricultural research and education, and community and economic development (Carlson, 2012; Rasmussen, 1989).

Some universities have attempted to document their foray into the multi-site system. The University of California launched its southern branch in Los Angeles (www.berkeley.edu) in 1914. That system currently includes 10 campuses across the state. Ohio University, founded in 1808, established branches in high schools throughout the state (the earliest in Chillicothe in 1946), with the goal of serving World War II veterans (Bird, 2014). These makeshift campuses were scheduled to be closed after the educational needs of the servicemen had been met, but the closures never occurred. The University of Alabama, founded in 1831, focused on extending its mission of advancing the education of its citizens by opening two extended campuses in 1966 (www.ua.edu). The Indiana postsecondary system began its journey into the branch campus system in 1916, when its extension division began providing courses in local communities (Wells, 1966). The president of the University of Oklahoma was said to have lectured to rural students in 1892 while on horseback (Wells, 1966). Some institutions established branches designed to provide only the first two years of postsecondary education, while others were established to complement the coursework provided by the community colleges through the provision of upper level classes (Bird, 2014).

The passage of postsecondary education reform legislation in 1990, with national degree attainment goals, an increase in for-profit institutions, and technological advances
in course delivery, has changed the student population on many campuses in Kentucky and elsewhere (Alston, 1994; National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2014). Today’s purpose of higher education fluctuates based on individual perceptions. Currently, students are said to pursue higher education to become gainfully employed or to increase earning potential, rather than the early goal of a religious education to further the social standing of the children of wealthy landowners or the Jeffersonian goal of teaching citizenship and leadership to the masses. Organizations seek employees who are well trained and able to interact effectively with diverse groups of people in the workplace. Society seeks to gain by the increase in educated, civic-minded individuals. Academicians agree that the purpose of higher education is to develop critical thinking skills, to promote lifelong learning, to nurture intellect, and to support student development diverse points of view (Kahlenberg, 2011; McArthur, 2011; Tilak, 2009; Watty, 2006).

Postsecondary institutions must effectively use their facilities to reach these changing populations (Bird, 2014; Huitt, 1972). A branch campus that is effectively supporting the mission of the main campus is a valuable resource for both the main campus and for the community surrounding its campus.

**Defining Branch Campuses**

What is a branch campus? No universally accepted definition exists, and definitions of that which constitutes a branch campus form a broad continuum based on educational delivery methods and location (Caldwell & Cote, 1993). The lack of definition is further complicated by the absence of a comprehensive listing of existing branch campuses in the United States. The failure to track branch campus activities has
contributed to a generalized misunderstanding of their contribution to the mission of the main campus. At the end of the 1986 academic year, the USED NCES (2004) ceased to collect statistics specific to branch campuses. This deficiency highlights the relevance and importance of the current study. In general, the term *branch campus* has been used to refer to a site in which learning occurs that is not on the main or parent campus (Bird, 2014).

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, located at Indiana University Bloomington's Center for Postsecondary Research (cpr.iub.edu/), began in 1970 with the goal of developing a centralized repository for the numerous postsecondary institutions in the United States. Seventy-seven Kentucky institutions are listed in their database, but no branch campuses are recognized. The glaring absence of documentation of the existence of branch campuses further confirms the need for the current study.

Some organizations have formally attempted over time to operationalize the term of branch campus. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is an accrediting body for degree-granting institutions (www.sacscoc.org). It is responsible for ensuring consistency in educational quality and effectiveness for institutions in the following southern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. In its Institutional Summary Form Prepared for Commission Reviews, the Commission (SACSCOC, 2014) defined a branch campus as:

A branch campus is defined as a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is
independent of the main campus if the location is (a) permanent in nature; (b) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; (c) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and (d) has its own budgetary and hiring authority. (p. 4)

The U.S. Department of Education has defined a branch campus similar to SACSCOC. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (www.nces.ed.gov) referenced branch campuses when describing institutional reporting structures:

This type of reporting is referred to as "parent/child" reporting. When combined reporting for any component occurs, the parent institution (normally the main campus) submits a combined report, which includes data for its own (main) campus plus data for one or more branch campuses (these branches, because they do not report data separately, are referred to as "children"… a branch campus is a campus or site of an educational institution that is not temporary, is located in a community beyond a reasonable commuting distance from its parent institution, and offers organized programs of study, not just courses. (USED NCES, 2002, para. 2).

Regardless of the definition a branch campus, the common elements in all definitions are that these campuses support the ability of the institution to accommodate growth and to provide educational access for place bound students. For the purposes of the current study, the SACSCOC definition of a branch campus was used, as Kentucky postsecondary institutions fall under this accrediting body. Literature cited in the current study also may use other terms that should be considered as synonymous with the phrase
branch campus, including extended campus, off-campus center, satellite campus, or regional campus. Fonseca and Bird (2007) also made reference to twigs, which are branches of branch campuses.

Types of Branch Campuses

An assortment of settings attached to universities has been used to provide a presence in communities, including but not limited to classes in makeshift trailers, rented facilities, churches, hospitals, community centers, co-locations with other educational institutions, or stand-alone buildings (Bird, 2014; Cage, 1989). The distinction among the types of branch campuses has been often subjective and as varied as the postsecondary institutions with which they are associated.

A NABCA research committee sanctioned survey was conducted in 2009 with the intent of developing a profile of its membership (Bebko & Huffman, 2011). The NABCA distinguished between branch campuses and off-campus centers:

(A) Branch campus is a location that is geographically apart from the main campus, offers a wide range of educational programs, leading to academic degrees or certificates, and has its own budget, resident faculty, on-site administration, and a broad range of student support services. ...(An) off campus center is a location that is geographically separate from the home or main campus, has on-site administration, offers a single or limited range of education programs leading toward academic degrees or certificates, houses fewer or no resident faculty, has less budget autonomy, and offers fewer student support services than a branch campus. (p. 48)
The research by Bebko and Huffman (2011) (sample size of 138 respondents) found that private postsecondary institutions were more likely to operate branch campuses and off-campus centers than public institutions. The size of enrollment was the most significant factor in determining ownership for the 49.6% of institutions in the study that actually owned the branch or center. Bebko and Huffman found the following models of management within their respondents: two-year public centers, four-year private centers, four-year public branches, and branches with high enrollment. Two- and four-year centers typically enrolled less than 1,000 students, primarily utilized adjunct instructors, frequently used leased space, and functioned with few student support services. Four-year public branches and large enrollment branches were found to have large student enrollment, less reliance on adjunct instructors, and an array of student support services. The state of Florida is an example of a postsecondary system that classifies its branch campuses based on enrollment numbers and programming offered (Bird, 2014).

Bebko and Huffman (2011) further differentiated these sites by mission, operationalizing six types of campuses. The cash cow campus was most frequently observed, with a small staff and adjunct instructors who provided the bulk of instruction. Staff on this campus were generalists in nature and able to meet an assortment of student needs ranging from admissions assistance and academic advising to technology support. Cash cow campuses offered minimal, but high demand academic programming, and often utilized a cohort approach. Bird (2014) defined a similar administrative structure as an outreach center. The increasing access campus was characterized by smaller enrollments, reliance on adjuncts supplemented by faculty from the main campus, and generalist staff.
This model provided a few additional student support services. The most common type was the *grow the brand campus*, which featured higher student enrollments, extensive programming both during the day and evening, and utilized full-time faculty in addition to academic leadership. Extensive student support services were offered on grow the brand campuses. The *mini main campus* offered a full-service campus experience and had a large student enrollment. These campuses provided many services similar to those on the main campus. Comprehensive programming allowed students to complete an entire degree program at a mini main campus. A *university system campus* was one that has been approved by the appropriate accrediting body and operates as a full-service branch campus. Although enrollments may be low, a university system campus may even provide a residential component. Finally, the *multi-university center* was typically co-located with a two-year institution. These centers provided student services, such as computer labs and office space for faculty, and often offered coursework that was distinct from the main campus. Although programming was different, agreements were in place to minimize the loss of credits associated with student transfer.

In their research focused on the characteristics of branch campus faculty, Nickerson and Schaefer (2001) also established a classification system for branch campuses that utilized data gleaned from numerous sources, including professional organizations and national directories. They identified seven varieties of campuses based on these sources and surveyed approximately 1,000 branch campus administrators.

The *extension center* model represented the smallest percentage of campuses and provided non-degree programming. These campuses most often were found in community college settings (co-located). The comprehensive *two-year branch campus*
provided course transfer along with a vocational and technical curriculum. The *community college branch campus* offered both coursework and/or vocational and technical curriculum. *Upper division branch campuses* offered upper level curriculum, limited graduate coursework, and certification programming. The *graduate center* offered only graduate level or professional certifications. The final branch campus type, a *distributed university campus*, provided “decentralized programming from several postsecondary institutions co-located to meet student needs” (Nickerson & Schaefer, 2001, p. 50). These classifications were not comparable to the typology developed by Bebko and Huffman (2011).

McGuinnes (1991) emphasized that multi-campus systems could be further distinguished by the form of leadership and centralization/decentralization of decision making. The *multi-site system* was typically led by one central administrator who did not lead the individual campuses. This system had common programs and administrative systems, and the branch campus simply served as an extension of the main campus. The *university system* operated with a central administrator, while the campuses within the system had different missions. They may have developed as a result of consolidation of other institutions, rather than the identified community-based need. *The multi-campus system* was controlled by a strong onsite leadership, with academic programming originating from the main institution. The multi-campus system functioned as a mini-version of the main campus, with strong programming and interaction between the main campus and its departments.

Bird (2014) added twigs to the branch campus typology. Twigs were extensions of branch campuses that were able to operate with low overhead costs. Twigs were
dependent on technology for course delivery. Examples can be found in the Ohio University system. They are operated by limited administrative staff, and the property is owned by the parent institution.

**Organizational Structure of Branch Campuses**

**Governance.** Some branch campuses were begun as partnerships between local governments or communities and the nearest regional or state university (Wells, 1966). To ensure a local emphasis, these campuses often used citizen advisory boards that advocated for funding and academic programming in support of local needs (Bird, 2014; Wells, 1966). The branch campus administrator served in a liaison role between the local community and the parent campus. In their review of state funded multi-campus systems, Womack and Podemski (1985) stressed the importance of involvement from the branch campus leadership in the program planning process to ensure a greater responsiveness and relevance to community needs.

Bird (2014) suggested that advisory boards were different than governing authorities, such as a board of regents. Advisory boards were found to be most effective when they were comprised of influential members of the local community with knowledge of the needs related to business, industry, and the workforce. Advisory boards can facilitate community engagement and partnerships. Bird (2014) identified another important role of the advisory board – fundraising and capital campaigns. The boards and the branch campuses that they represent may promote donations in support of local educational initiatives, rather than donations to the main campus. Dengerink (2009) suggested that donors are more likely to provide gifts to individual campuses where familiarity exists. These boards advocate with leadership on the main campus to aid the
branch campus administrator in advocating for local needs. This is an especially important function, as community requests differ significantly, and campuses must have the freedom to meet local needs while implementing different strategies to achieve the university mission (Dengerink, 2009). Advisory boards also promote the campus and strengthen community investment in the campus. Community relationships are important for more than the recruitment of new students. These relationships also support increased opportunities for internships, cooperative experiences, practicums, and programs such as Town and Gown (Manahan, 1980).

**Administrative staff.** In addition to the importance of being located within communities, effective branch campus leadership is necessary to meet the needs of the student population (gillie gossom & Pelton, 2011). Branch campuses and their administrative staff frequently serve as academic advisors, student life coordinators, marketing experts, recruiters, counselors, and strategic/outreach planners within the community (Catell, 1971; gillie gossom & Pelton, 2011). Due to their campus and community-based responsibilities, Dengerink (2009) recommended that branch campus administrators be appointed with input from both internal and external campus stakeholders.

In their effort to identify the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for branch campus administrators, gillie-gossom and Pelton (2011) failed to uncover an abundance of related literature. Best practices appeared to be developed based on the needs of each campus locale, as was evidenced in their survey of administrators in attendance at the 2010 NABCA annual conference. The survey attempted to ascertain tasks associated with effective campus administration along four dimensions of leadership. The DIVE
dimensions sorted tasks into the categories of diagnosing, implementing, visioning, and entrepreneurial.

Thirteen of the 50 NABCA conference attendees completed the survey and identified 93 activities performed in their leadership roles (gillie gossom & Pelton, 2011). Twenty of those identified activities were completed frequently. The activities with the highest mean scores were influencing others (visioning); recognizing community needs (visioning); internal communications (entrepreneurial); responding to changing needs (entrepreneurial); and balancing academic, student, and operations (implementing). Additional frequently conducted activities included addressing personnel needs, strategic planning, executing strategies, and securing commitment and support. Overall, those surveyed recommended the creation of partnerships that target gaps in services for students, local constituents, and colleagues at the main campus and are essential to branch campus leadership effectiveness.

**Faculty.** In their survey of 138 branch campus administrators, Bebko and Huffman (2011) found that courses were taught by full-time faculty when the enrollment at the campus was large. Those campuses with a student body of less than 200 were more likely to use adjunct instructors. Their research also found that branch campuses of private institutions used adjunct instructors more often for course delivery. The findings were similar with branches of community colleges – “51% reported that part-time faculty taught 80% or more of the course sections” (p. 53). Distance from the main campus was also found to be an indicator of the use of full- versus part-time instructors. As distance increased, the use of adjunct instructors increased as well. However, when offering
specialized programming, the branch campus used either resident faculty or faculty who travelled from the main campus in an effort to maintain academic quality.

A 1988 national study (Nickerson & Schaefer, 2001) of 269 branch campuses indicated that 75% employed resident faculty, and the type of branch campus contributed to the choice of instruction; e.g., 66% of the faculty at branch campuses that offered upper division coursework were resident faculty. Of the 269 respondents, those from comprehensive branch campuses made full use of resident faculty to maintain academic quality. Regardless of the use of resident versus adjunct faculty, the ratio of part-time faculty was higher on branch campuses than on the parent institution.

**Challenges for Branch Campuses**

Although they are smaller than their main institution, branch campuses also experience problems and challenges. Kalikow (2009) indicated that competition often occurs between the main and the branch campus. These struggles may develop when resources are limited for sharing between the main campus and the branch campus. Competition for resources between branch campuses in a multi-campus system also created challenges. Finally, conflicts in goals of the parent institution versus needs of the local community in which the branch campus is housed could be a source of conflict. If a community college is located in that community, or if an additional postsecondary institution sought to serve that area, a competitive climate might arise.

Other challenges on branch campuses included fragmented, inconsistent, or services that were duplicated (Winchester & Sterk, 2006). The quality of instruction and student performance at times were questioned by main campus faculty (Howell, 2001; Stahley, 2002). Bryant (1993) found that some branch campus students perceived a
disconnect from the main campus. Other researchers corroborated this feeling, not only in students, but with faculty and staff as well (Dengerink, 2001b; Padilla, 2009; Wolfe & Strange, 2003; Wrench, Brogan, Brown, & Pennington, 2010). A variety of factors contributed to the feelings of disconnect including a perceived lack of interest from main campus administrators as a result of their sporadic visits to the branch campus (Stahley, 2002). Discontent also resulted from the lack of events and activities that tie together the two campuses (Bryant, 1993; Wrench et al., 2010). Some campuses made an effort to resolve the feelings of disconnect by providing transportation to main campus events and frequent rotations of visits from administrative personnel from the main campus (Sodano, 1998).

Centralized and decentralized procedures and decision making also offered challenges for branch campuses (Hanover Research Council, 2014). The decentralized approach allowed for more response to local needs, while a centralized approach enhanced the efficient use of resources between both campuses. However, as branch campuses varied widely in size, location, and student populations, it was difficult to determine the decision-making process that was the best approach. Benefits of centralization in multi-campus systems (Timberlake, 2004) included improved efficiencies and minimal duplication of services. On the other hand, Timberlake (2004) found that centralization decreased speed in decision making and problem solving, as well as created increased bureaucracy. In interviews with administrators in multi-campus institutions, Timberlake found both approaches presented risks and opportunities that successful leaders must learn to balance. Norby (2005) recommended that due to their unique structure, branch campuses were most effective when they were allowed to be
flexible in adapting services to meet community needs. Dengerink (2009) supported a blended approach to governance, in which the benefits of centralization and decentralization were mixed based on the needs of the location.

Timberlake (2004) advised that faculty approval should involve a participatory process between regional campus administrators and main campus faculty. In addition, course offerings are most successful in meeting the needs of the local community, if the process began with a request from the regional administrator to the appropriate department on the main campus, rather than decisions being determined solely at the parent campus. In their review of state funded multi-campus systems, Womack and Podemski (1985) concurred that branch campus administrative staff involvement in program planning was essential to ensure a greater responsiveness to community needs. Eisenhardt (1999) supported this premise by proposing that decision making should not be a top-down process.

Barriers to Adult Learning and Institutional Departure Frameworks

Defining Student Attrition and Retention

Student retention is essential to the ability of colleges and universities to carry out their mission. A high rate of attrition may be seen as a failure to meet the purpose of the institution (Bean, 1986; Tinto, 1975). A student was determined to be retained if that student re-enrolled in consecutive semesters. Attrition occurred when a student left the institution; however, this may not have been due to institutional shortcomings. Students have been considered a dropout if they entered college but left prior to graduation (DuBrock & Fenske, 2000; Tinto, 1975). Researchers cautioned that institutions must use care to analyze retention in a more meaningful way, rather than as an institution-wide
retention rate (Spady, 1970, 1971; Tinto, 1975). When students attend the institution to enroll in a class for self-improvement or to upgrade an employment skill, those students should be considered non-degree seeking and not included in retention data. Retention rates scrutinized by discernible groups, such as minorities and women, also are more useful for targeted retention strategies.

According to American College Test (2014), retention rates from freshman to sophomore years for the period of 1983-2014 at public four-year institutions ranged from a high of 70% in 2004 to a low of 64.2% in 2014. Across the board for all institution types during this same timeframe, the current retention rate was 67.6%. Students were more likely to be retained if they had advantages that supported their enrollment (Tinto, 1975). These advantages may have been external to the university or institution related (Retention Study Group, 2004). External advantages included outside resources such as parents or guardians providing emotional and financial support, as well as an intrinsic desire to excel. Higher rates of retention often were seen at private and elite schools; whereas, community colleges often had the lowest rates. Upperclassmen (4% attrition for seniors) were less likely to drop out than freshmen (25% attrition) (Braxton, 2003; Retention Study Group, 2004). In general, those who sought graduate level degrees had higher retention rates than undergraduates. Institutions with more traditional students had higher retention rates than those with a large number of nontraditional students (Choy, 2002; Cleveland-Innes, 1994; Retention Study Group, 2004). Institutions with more ethnic diversity often had lower retention rates (Retention Study Group, 2004; Torres, 2003; Turner, 1994).
Moreover, individual characteristics of students also were strong predictors of their likelihood to graduate (Tinto, 1975, 1993). Students who enrolled immediately post high school were full-time residential students, and those who were not first generation low income were more likely to graduate. Participation in high school college preparatory coursework, high grade point average, and high scores on college entrance exams also predicted success. Students who had strong intentions to graduate, who participated in campus social and educationally purposeful activities, and who were committed to the institution were more likely to be retained (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Tinto, 1975). Ultimately, institutional awareness of retention rates by specific groups is crucial in the implementation of policies and services that support student retention and completion.

**Overview of Persistence Models**

Numerous theoretical models have been developed that attempt to explain the reason some students leave and others persist in their pursuit of postsecondary education. The construct of *success* has been used to assist in this exploration. Traditional measures, such as scores on standardized entrance exams, credit hours earned, and grades to more commonly used measures, such as persistence for consecutive semesters, length of time to degree completion, and graduation were used to define success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Venezia & Kirst, 2005). Regardless of the measures used to quantify student success, institutions must be inclusive in supporting all student populations – particularly the nontraditional students who frequent the branch campuses. While the majority of studies related to student success and persistence focused on undergraduate students of traditional age, others sought to identify and address the needs of the nontraditional student – those ages 25 and up (Carpenter & Andres, 1997).
Why is student persistence central to the university mission? The retention of students is vital to the ability of the institution to carry out its mission of increasing access to educational opportunities, promoting lifelong learning, and fostering engaged citizenship (Arnold, 2000; Newsom & Hayes, 1991; Zusman, 2005). Rating systems such as *U.S. News and World Report* and *America’s Best Colleges* include persistence and graduation rates in their ranking formulas. Not only does the institution lose tuition revenue when a student drops out, but other losses are associated with attrition. These include staff time spent on recruitment, classroom preparation and instruction, student support services, and a reduction in departmental majors that could impact the need for faculty. Students also incur personal costs as a result of attrition. In addition to the negative impact on lifetime earnings, the decision to drop out also may carry negative emotional consequences, such as waning self-esteem or self-confidence for not completing personal goals (Osgood-Treston, 2001).

The long-term outcomes of postsecondary education, such as preparing students to live self-sustaining lives, have been well documented in educational literature (Baum et al., 2013; Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010; Carroll & Erkut, 2009; Dhanidina & Griffith, 1975; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Williams & Swail, 2005). In light of these outcomes, it is essential that branch campus administrators and institutional leaders utilize research to guide their retention practices. While no single theory can thoroughly account for all the nuances that impact student persistence, attrition, and engagement, Cross’s (1981) theory of barriers to adult learning identified those factors that affect student retention and are relevant to students who frequent branch campus environments. Coupled with Tinto’s (1975, 1993) model of institutional departure with its focus on
social and academic integration, these two models thoroughly explain factors that impact student persistence.

Beginning in the 1970s retention theories centered on sociological reasons that led to student withdrawal (Braxton, 2000). Psychological theories were explored in the 1980’s, as students focused on self-assessment in their educational success. The 1990s brought attention to the impact of cultural factors on retention (Kuh & Love, 2000). More recently, motivational theories have guided the study of retention (Braxton, 2000). Other theories to explain retention include goal-setting theory, attribution theory, self-concept, and strengths-based approaches. To develop an understanding of the reason for choosing Cross’ (1981) barriers to adult learning for the current study, a brief summary of theoretical perspectives is provided. These include sociological, cultural, economic, organizational, and psychological perspectives or theories.

Sociological models of student attrition have explained persistence as the socialization of the student into the campus environment (Braxton, 2000). Tinto’s (1975) model explained attrition as a function of academic and social integration into the institution. Social integration occurs when the student adapts to the social aspects of college life, while academic integration occurs when the student experiences satisfactory interactions with the scholarly aspect of college. Although Tinto’s theory is the most widely acknowledged sociological perspective, other researchers have studied sociological frameworks and their strengths and weaknesses (Berger, 2000; Braxton & Lien, 2000; Kuh & Love, 2000). In their research on commuter students, O’Malley and Marsden (2008) hypothesized that social networks developed with peers and faculty were key in the ability to persist. Social networks were found to increase integration by
providing support when problems occurred that could lead to attrition. Student involvement levels were found to be an indicator of persistence (Astin, 1977). As students interacted with one another both in and outside of the classroom in educationally purposeful activities, that involvement increased their resolve to remain in school.

Cultural perspectives focused on the challenges experienced by at-risk populations that impacted their willingness to access resources to support their engagement (Gonzalez, 2000; Kuh & Love, 2000; Torres, 2003; Turner, 1994). As their cultural belief systems differed from those of the dominant group on campus, some students failed to develop a sense of engagement. Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* stressed that external limitations that had become culturally ingrained could impact a student’s goals (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). These limitations could lead to decreased academic engagement and ultimately to decreased retention.

Economic perspectives endeavored to explain attrition as a result of weighing costs and benefits (Braxton, 2003; St. John, Cabrera, Nora, & Asker, 2000). College attendance may be seen as a short- or long-term investment in which the student considers the return on investment. Short-term costs, such as tuition and books, are compared to short-term losses, such as income. Long-term costs, such as student debt, may be compared to long-term benefits, such as increased future income. Other intangible costs (e.g., family time, stress, and free time) also were included in the decision-making process when a student contemplated whether to stay in school or to drop out.

Organizational models of student persistence (originally based on workplace studies) focused on internal processes that impact attrition. Bean (1983) proposed that
beliefs related to institutional equity, self-efficacy, and coping behaviors served as motivating factors in persistence. Negative perceptions of the campus environment (e.g., institutional reputation, resource availability, and classroom size) influenced student engagement and attrition. In later research, Bean and Metzner (1985) stressed the importance of the environment external to campus on nontraditional student attrition. Their model clarified external variables to include age, race, gender, high school performance, finances, full- versus part-time employment, external supports, and family obligations. They further recommended that, when marketing and recruiting students, the postsecondary institution is responsible for accurately representing the available services that support student success.

Psychological models of student attrition explained dropout behaviors through internal psychological processes. Bean and Eaton (2000) proposed that personality traits of students impacted their ability to persist. Students with strong self-efficacy and confidence were more likely to persist than those with low self-efficacy and confidence who were more likely to struggle. Dweck (2000) expanded on this model and suggested that student self-efficacy could be increased by exposing students to successful learning experiences early in their academic career. Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1975) theory focused on attrition as a result of weakened student intentions. Students who intended to complete a behavior (e.g., earn a degree) were more likely to persist.

**Cross’s Barriers to Adult Learning**

Cross (1981) identified differences that distinguished adult learners from younger learners – personal and situational characteristics. Those related to the physical, psychological, social, and cultural aspects of the individual were classified as personal
characteristics. Situational characteristics involved enrollment level (full-or part-time) and voluntary versus required involvement in education. Cross referred to this model as Characteristics of Adult Learners (CAL). The CAL model emphasized that adult learning programs should benefit from the unique experiences of adult learners. This model also underscored that adult learning programs should practice flexibility to support the age related limitations of adult learners (e.g., eyesight, hearing, and reaction time), while bearing in mind that other abilities often improve with aging (e.g., decision-making skills, reasoning, and vocabulary). Cross supported challenging adult students and providing them with choices in course availability and delivery.

In her seminal work, Cross (1981) identified three classifications of barriers that impacted persistence for nontraditional students – situational, institutional, and dispositional. Andragogy, or teaching strategies for adult learners, and experiential learning, learning by doing, were theoretical frameworks that influenced the work of Cross. Situational barriers were the result of conflict between the numerous roles held in addition to the role of the student (Cross, 1981; Fairchild, 2003; Hardin, 2008). Struggles related to the cost of attendance, childcare, and employment were included in this category. Situational barriers may decrease the amount of time needed by the nontraditional student for educationally purposeful activities, which could negatively impact their academic success. Institutional barriers were those policies and procedures that unintentionally halt students from reaching their goals. Examples of institutional barriers included the lack of quality academic advising, course scheduling that conflicts with work schedules, and institutional hours that conflict with student availability. Cross even suggested that the perception of an institutional barrier may hinder the student more
than the actual barrier. If a student perceived that institutional barriers created unnecessary stress, they may have dropped out rather than continue. Dispositional barriers were attitudes and self-perception beliefs related to ability to successfully complete assignments or pass coursework. Dispositional barriers also included role conflict or role competition (Fairchild, 2003). Dispositional barriers were not within the institution’s locus of control, but resources related to stress and time management may increase student self-efficacy, resulting in balance between their numerous roles.

**Tinto’s Theory of Institutional Departure**

The most well-known and frequently cited of these models is Tinto’s theory of institutional departure (1975, 1987, 1993). The theory asserted that as the student became more integrated into the academic and social aspects of the institution, the student would be more likely to be committed to the institution and, as a result, to persist. Tinto did not differentiate between main and extended campuses. Some studies sought to discredit the relevance of Tinto’s emphasis on academic and social integration to nontraditional student populations; numerous others have found that its principles hold value for intervening in the high attrition rates of nontraditional students. Tinto’s supporters have found varying degrees of the levels of importance of social and academic integration based on individual students and their past experiences (Andres, Andruske, & Hawkey, 1996; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Stahl & Pavel, 1992). Consistent with Tinto’s findings, Pascarella (1989) determined that GPA, intellectual development, and the quality of faculty interactions were strong indicators of persistence for this population. Cleveland-Innes (1994) concurred with Tinto’s emphasis on the relevance of academic integration, but disagreed on the importance of social integration. Cleveland-Innes discounted the
importance of social integration on campus over the nontraditional students’ external social network. Ely (1997) suggested that social integration was key to the persistence of nontraditional students and strongly encouraged faculty and student interactions.

Tinto’s 1993 revisions acknowledged the impact of links with external communities (e.g., work, family, or community obligations) on a student’s departure decisions. Tinto (1993) made it clear that if students were able to successfully detach from those external communities, subsequent integration into campus life increased retention. In research on nontraditional community college transfer students, Monroe (2006) reported mixed findings. Personal issues, past and current experiences, and academic integration were found to be factors that impacted attrition rates of nontraditional students. Social integration was not a factor in the retention of this population. Monroe also emphasized the importance of effective institutional communication – from recruitment through graduation – as a highly important component of decreasing attrition.

Tinto (1993) further divided academic and social integration into formal and informal interactions, encouraging extracurricular activities and peer group interactions. While studies of institutional departure continued to thrive in the literature, Tinto’s original 1975 theory, revised in 1993 to incorporate environmental variables and student intentions, is the most frequently referenced model of attrition currently used by institutions.

**Social integration.** Tinto (1975) surmised that social factors also played a role in the retention process. These factors included having friends on campus; peer interactions; social involvement (e.g., service learning, program clubs, identity centers, and Greek
organizations); and contact with faculty and staff. When these social factors occurred, a student was considered to be socially integrated. In a multilinear study, Lundberg (2003) sought to determine the impact of time limitations on the ability of the nontraditional student to integrate into the institution. Learning by nontraditional students was found to be enhanced by peer interactions, as well as the development of quality relationships with peers and faculty. Lundberg’s research validated Tinto’s contention that social relationships increased integration. Although Tinto’s (1975) original research did not address minority populations, he posited in revised literature that minority populations benefited from an encouraging cultural environment and the enrollment of minority students.

Academic integration. Tinto (1975) maintained that academic factors also impacted the retention of students. These factors included course programming, positive interactions with faculty in and outside the classroom, academic advising and other campus resources (e.g., library and computer labs), as well as programming designed to increase college going abilities (e.g. study skills and tutoring centers). The use of faculty mentors, the provision of a welcoming classroom environment, and individual faculty attention increased the academic integration of both nontraditional and minority students.

Environmental factors. In his revised text, Tinto (1993) acknowledged the impact of external factors that impact attrition, which are beyond the control of the institution. Financial resources, the support of significant others, and family and work obligations were found to be important to the attrition process, particularly for minorities and nontraditional students. The lack of external support was found to have a negative
impact for those cultures that do not place as much worth on the benefits of education (Bean, 1983; Bean & Metzner, 1985).

**Student intentions.** Student intentions and goal-institutional commitment also were included in Tinto’s 1993 revisions. Intrinsic motivation, self-gratification, the ability to overcome stressors, and the student’s intent to remain enrolled impacted attrition. Additional factors related to intent were self-efficacy, self-confidence, desire to succeed with coursework, value placed on education, and a sense of belonging. Accordingly, the stronger the goal-institutional commitment, the greater the probability that a student would complete college.

Tinto (1993) further specified that students applied a student-institution fit perspective to the decision-making process that led to attrition or retention. If academic and social integration resulted in a sense of belonging or fitting in, the student would choose to remain in college. If other priorities were perceived to have higher rewards and less cost, the student would choose to drop out. Additionally, Tinto (1987, 1993) clarified that infrequent, or absent, social interactions were linked to weakened social integration. An awareness of the dynamics that impact student-institution fit is important when considering the needs of nontraditional students. This awareness was clearly relevant, as several researchers of persistence have found institutional fit to be a predictor of persistence (Nora, 1987; Nora & Rendon, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). Other variables found to contribute to attrition included personal characteristics such as race, gender, college readiness, and socioeconomic status.

**Stopouts and dropouts.** Attrition is not always a permanent status; therefore, it is important to distinguish between stopouts and dropouts when examining persistence.
Failure to make this distinction could result in inflated attrition data (Tinto, 1975, 1993). Students who were found to stop out left the institution with the intent of returning later to complete a degree, while those who drop out left with no intention of returning. Persistence was further complicated by transfer students – those who move from one institution to another. Among first-time, full-time students who enrolled at public four-year institutions in 2011, approximately 79% returned the following fall (NCES, 2013). At public four-year institutions, the retention rate ranged from 61% at those with less stringent admissions policies, to 95% at the more selective institutions.

Dropouts differed by the type of student, the stage of academic career, and the long-term goals of the student (Dirkx & Jha, 1994). Therefore, nontraditional students experienced various levels of persistence related outcomes from postsecondary education than their younger counterparts. Dropout levels were highest in the first year of college and often involved students who had unrealistic expectations about college (Braxton, 2003). Although their outside obligations played a significant role in institutional departure, college readiness also was found to be an important factor (Tinto, 2004).

In a study of retention and attrition rates at a Midwestern commuter college, White and Mosely (1995) found both stopouts and dropouts occurred in the nontraditional student population due to a number of factors, both internal and external to the college. Ashar and Skenes (1993) found that, although the interest in increasing or developing new skills for career mobility might initially have been enough to retain the nontraditional student, once they experienced situational, institutional, or dispositional barriers, the effects of that commitment weakened. Thus, with these challenges,
nontraditional students may view college as yet another obstacle, rather than a catalyst to further career progression or enhancement.

Continued examination of the retention and attrition data at postsecondary institutions is critical for at-risk populations to ensure that success occurs. Attention to these data will allow the institution to continually reassess efforts to meet the needs of nontraditional and other special populations.

**Limitations of Tinto’s Model**

Tinto’s original 1975 model was limited to student departure from the institution in which the student was first enrolled (Ashar & Skenes, 1993). The model did not account for student transfers from other institutions or stopout behavior. Transfer behavior, which varies to and from two- and four-year institutions, is noteworthy, as it indicates continued commitment (Goldrick-Rab & Pfeffer, 2009). In some locales, branch campuses were created to complement the lower level coursework offered by a nearby community college and, therefore, may enroll significant numbers of transfer students (Bebko & Huffman, 2011; Nickerson & Schaefer, 2001). Tinto’s original model only observed dropout behavior from the first year to the second year of college. Nora, Barlow, and Crisp (2005) asserted that student persistence must be examined from initial enrollment through the choice to dropout. Tinto’s model was further limited by its original focus on traditional white middle class students in a four-year residential college environment.

Tinto’s 1975 model has also led to contradictory conclusions with some populations. Neumann and Finaly-Neumann (1989) identified quality of learning to be more significant than academic and social integration for upper classmen. Voorhees
(1987) failed to find a connection between social integration and nontraditional community college students. In a study involving residential students, Pascarella and Chapman (1983) determined that social integration played a factor in attrition, but academic integration did not. Other researchers found institutions with a residential component that offered numerous opportunities to participate in social and academic learning communities were more likely to have a stronger impact on student attrition than nonresidential sites such as community colleges (Choy, 2002).

As research related to attrition has not specifically addressed branch campuses, questions remain regarding the applicability of existing models to this population that frequents the branch campus environment. The models described earlier in this chapter can provide some understanding of retention that can be applied to the nontraditional student population. Cross’s (1981) barriers to adult learning, when combined with Tinto’s framework (1975, 1987, 2004), thoroughly explained student attrition and are applicable to both traditional and nontraditional student populations at branch campus environments. Tinto stressed that programs which effectively minimize dropouts must integrate students into both the academic and social life of the institution. Integration is viewed as essential to institutional persistence strategies. Students facing significant institutional, dispositional, and situational barriers may have difficulty successfully integrating academically and socially, which can impact their participation in educationally purposeful activities and can inhibit their persistence.

**The Role of Finances in Student Attrition**

While a growing body of literature has examined the impact of financial aid on student persistence, specifically comparing the differences between federal and state aid
(Dowd & Coury, 2006; DuBrock & Fenske, 2000; St. John, Cabrera, Nora, & Asker, 2000; Singell & Stater, 2006), the most comprehensive of studies on the influence of economics on retention were carried out by St. John, Cabrera, et al., (2000). These researchers found that traditional age students attending four-year institutions were less likely to persist when they borrowed money for college. Research by Dowd and Coury (2006) on community college students concluded that increases in student loans resulted in decreased persistence. Other researchers found that the impact of loans varied by income and race; underprivileged students who were more reliant on loans were less likely to persist (St. John, Hu, & Weber, 2000). Loans were found to have neutral effects on students whose parents were middle to high income (St. John & Paulsen, 2002). In an attempt to determine the impact of higher tuition-higher aid policy changes related to the persistence of racial/ethnic student populations, Shouping and St. John (2001) mined enrollment and financial aid data at four-year public institutions in Indiana. The researchers compared the effects of financial aid packages on student persistence for White, African-American, and Hispanic students. The persistence rates for all three groups declined slightly, although state supported aid remained constant in comparison to decreasing federal aid. The researchers surmised that high tuition, when combined with high levels of financial aid, could lead to a decrease in persistence. In a study conducted at a public flagship institution, DesJardins, Ahlburg, and McCall (2002) found that replacing student loans with scholarships of equal value created a positive impact on retention. Other researchers concurred with these findings as a result of their meta-analysis of persistence studies (Hossler, Ziskin, Gross, Kim & Cekic, 2009). Hossler et
Tinto’s 1993 revised model of institutional departure indicated that finances were important in goal and institutional commitment prior to matriculation. However, the model did not address the role of finances when students were well into their college experience. Tinto discussed the way changes in resources could affect student patterns of persistence. He identified the change from full- to part-time student status as significant, and possibly the result of financial difficulties. While Tinto agreed that financial aid played a role in persistence for low-income students, he failed to identify the impact of finances on other at-risk student populations.

Students also are more likely to be influenced by financial constraints early in their educational experiences when the goal of graduation is in the future, making dropping out an easier decision (Radner & Miller, 1975). When faced with limited resources, efforts to impact persistence based on financial considerations should be implemented early in the student’s educational journey. Unfortunately, for many non-traditional students, their part-time status often means they do not qualify for financial aid and pressing external obligations may lead to withdrawal from the institution (Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2005). Students who were most likely to persist were those who perceived that the outcome of degree attainment represented a fair return on investment.

Situational barriers, such as financial concerns, have been recognized throughout the literature as impediments to persistence (Fairchild, 2003; Hardin, 2008). Consistent with the findings of Bean and Metzner (1985), other researchers have named financial constraints as disruptive to the educational attainment of nontraditional students (Cross,
found that students in financial stress struggled to develop a commitment to the institution and had difficulty succeeding in coursework. Financial constraints for nontraditional students included more than the cost of tuition and books. Other expenses that may be associated with the commute to campus are childcare, vehicle maintenance and gas, parking permits, and meals while away from home.

While increasing numbers of the population participate in some form of postsecondary education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010c), college access and completion remain tenuous for at-risk populations, including older students (St. John, Hu, & Weber, 2000). The need to shoulder an increasing share of college related costs, along with the lack of increases in financial aid opportunities, serve to exacerbate the problem of affordability. While student loans are readily accessible from numerous sources, students may be reluctant to pursue debt. Assuming increasing debt while managing other familial and personal responsibilities can be a deterrent for nontraditional students.

Sufficient student aid can help to equalize opportunities to persist for at-risk student populations (Shouping & St. John, 2001). While it is clear from research described earlier that numerous factors contribute to student persistence (e.g., grades, intention, college readiness, social integration, and academic integration), adequate financial aid also is an important element of the attrition process. Therefore, institutional practices that seek to enhance nontraditional students’ academic experiences help achieve equal opportunity to persist if attention is also paid to student finances. It is important for institutions to assess the extent to which they support the financial needs of nontraditional students and to use this information to develop effective strategies for their success. Some
researchers have argued that the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and current system of financial aid determination was designed to support the traditional student and advocated for a system that meets the needs of nontraditional students as well. Hart (2003) endorsed financial aid award packages that supported part-time enrollment, reduced tuition for distance education courses, and extended to summer enrollment.

In a study to review the institutional factors affecting student retention, Lau (2003) made several recommendations in support of retention. Developing a campus-wide understanding of financial aid and scholarship programs created a network of knowledgeable advocates to increase student awareness. This well-informed network decreased the burden placed on financial aid offices and provided more timely information for students seeking information about funding options.

Ultimately, without the ability to afford tuition, no amount of academic and social integration, student-institution fit, or student intent can retain a student. With more research linking financial aid and persistence (e.g., St. John, Cabrera, et al., 2000), postsecondary institutions must be responsive to students’ financial needs, particularly those of the nontraditional student.

**Higher Education and the Nontraditional Student**

**Demographics in America**

The purpose of branch campuses is to extend access to educational opportunities, therefore improving the ability of students to enroll and complete degrees (Bird, 2014; Donhardt, 1996; Dengerink, 2001a; Gaither, 1999; Schuman, 2009). President Obama’s focus on increasing the educational attainment of adults age 25 to 34 has resulted in a number of K-12 and postsecondary completion initiatives that include, but are not limited
to the following: Race to the Top, Achieving the Dream, College Completion Initiative, Complete to Compete, Fifteen to Finish, and Project Win-Win (www.aacc.nche.edu; cpe.ky.gov; www.edu.gov). The United States, once ranked first in the world in four-year degree attainment among Americans ages 25-34, has since slipped to 12th (thewhitehouse.gov). Only 17.1% of Kentuckians had a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to the national average of 24.4% (www.cpe.ky.gov). To meet its goal of increasing the number of adults with college degrees, Kentucky must focus efforts on recruiting, retaining, and graduating more nontraditional students (www.luminafoundation.org). Graduating more nontraditional students also requires identifying and removing barriers that restrict adult learners from pursuing or persisting in postsecondary education.

According to the most recent census, the median age of the average American is 37 years old (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). While the 2010 census predicted that educational attainment would remain stagnant among younger cohorts, attainment for the population over the age of 25 is anticipated to increase well into the future. The census also estimated that, between 2012 and 2050, the United States would experience significant growth in the older population due to the longevity of baby boomers. The U.S. Census Bureau (2010a) estimated that the United States would become a majority-minority country prior to 2050. The aging of the population, along with the changing ethnic composition of the country, was predicted to impact families, business and industry, and educational institutions.
Demographics in Kentucky

According to the Kentucky State Data Center (ksdc.louisville.edu/), the population has continued to change, although not as quickly as the nation overall. Kentucky experienced dissimilar patterns of population growth over the last decade (US Census Bureau, 2010a). At opposite ends of the state, population growth was slow, or even negative in some areas, as young adults moved away and left an older population behind. The northern and central areas of the state grew faster than the population of the country as a result of domestic and international migration. Minorities represented 36.3% of the U.S. population in 2010 and 13.7% of the state’s population. Birth rates rose and death rates remained low. The median age in Kentucky rose from 35.9 to 38.1 years, slightly higher than the national average. The Kentucky Data Center (ksdc.louisville.edu/) reported that 1,961,397 Kentuckians age 25 and older possessed a high school diploma or GED. This figure represented an 8.3% increase from the previous census. For this same population, 453,469 Kentuckians reported holding a bachelor’s degree in 2000, as opposed to 608,927 in the 2010 census. Although this represented a 3.8% increase, these figures are alarmingly low. Even for those Kentuckians who held degrees, completion took some time. According to the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (2014), approximately 50% of students who pursued bachelor’s degrees completed that degree within six years. The percentages were even lower for Kentuckians who were low income, underprepared, and minority students.

The Changing College Campus

Over the last three decades, college campuses have changed as a result of increased enrollments of nontraditional students (Choy, 2002; Stubblefield & Keane,
According to the U. S. Census Bureau (2010a), the population of traditional age young adults was projected to drop by 4%, while the number of high school graduates was expected to decline by 2% after a peak in 2009 and 2010 (U. S. Department of Education, 2005).

Nontraditional students represented the fastest growing demographic in the U. S. (Brown, 2002; Chao & Good, 2004; Lundberg, 2003; NCES, 2012). Approximately 25% of college students in 1970 were considered nontraditional (NCES, 2004). Current percentages were estimated at 30% or higher, with an additional increase of up to 23% expected by 2019 (NCES, 2004). The U. S. Census Bureau (2010c) reported that more than 60% of the population age 25+ possessed no postsecondary education credentials. Using these figures as a guide, potentially millions of Americans could benefit from some form of postsecondary education.

In their National Household Education Survey, the U. S. Census Bureau (2010c) reported increased participation in postsecondary education by adults. In 2003, 33% of adults reported some form of education and training for workforce development purposes (NCES, 2002-2003). Although not included in the scope of the current research, these workplace learning experiences educated an estimated 22 million Americans (Carnevale et al., 2010).

In research relative to institutions focused on the education of teachers, Ogren (2003) reported an increase in at-risk groups that included women, minorities, adults, first-generation, and low-income students. References to nontraditional students can be found as early as 1918, as the GI Bill encouraged education for veterans returning after the war (Bean & Metzner, 1985). The number of women in the workforce has increased
as a result of changing societal standards and family economic needs, contributing to an increase of women pursuing higher education. The USED NCES (2013) reported that more than 2 million women were enrolled in undergraduate programming in 2011. According to USED NCES, women are projected to represent 59% of the postsecondary population by the year 2021.

Other factors have contributed to the rise of nontraditional students on college campuses. Kantrowitz (2010) found a significant relationship between enrollment of nontraditional students and financial circumstances. Nontraditional students who sought to remain competitive in the labor market as a result of unemployment, a desire for career enhancement, or career advancement were more likely to view educational attainment as a means of achieving these plans (Adams & Corbett, 2010; Kimmel, Gaylor, Grubbs, & Hayes, 2012).

The USED NCES (2010) indicated that approximately 17.6 million undergraduates sought degrees in the United States in 2009. Of this number, approximately 15% were estimated to be traditional students (NCES, 2010). Nontraditional students represented almost 60% of all community college students, and those pursuing undergraduate degrees represented up to 30% of students over the age of 24 at four-year institutions. Twenty percent of all undergraduate students were parents. More than 33% of undergraduate students were employed full time, and 44% were employed part time (www.collegeboard.com). The diversification of the overall student body has increased, despite declining enrollments of traditional age students.
Barriers for Nontraditional Students

While the numbers of nontraditional students is increasing, they continue to be an often overlooked population in higher education (Horn, 1996; Snyder, 2009; Williams, 2009). Nontraditional students are especially vulnerable to lower completion rates; thus, researchers have advocated for services to address their unique educational needs (Arnold, 1999; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Choy, 2002; Horn, 1996). Personal obligations and the role of students often conflict, resulting in stopout or dropout (Dill & Henley, 1988; Horn, 1996). In research on student involvement, Astin (1998) found that off-campus distractions, such as employment and caring for family members, impeded learning.

Nontraditional students also require additional time to complete degrees, when compared to their traditional counterparts (Newbold, Mehta, & Forbus, 2010). In a six-year study of undergraduate students in four-year institutions, nontraditional students reached degree attainment at a rate of less than 15%, as compared with 57% of their traditional age peers. In his research of nontraditional students, Choy (2002) also found that graduation rates of this population are lower than their traditional age peers. Other researchers have concurred with Choy’s findings of the lower graduation rates for adult students (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Horn, 1996; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2005). A study by Taniguchi and Kaufman (2005) observed that nontraditional students who enrolled in part-time instruction often did not benefit equally with full-time residential students as a result of limited opportunities to interact with their peers and faculty. In a 2003 study commissioned by the Department of Education (Berker, Horn, & Carroll, 2003), the researchers distinguished between employees who study (work was their first priority,
while education supported career enhancement) and students who work (education was their top priority, while work supported education related expenses). Employees who study often fit the definition of a nontraditional student, and their external commitments/responsibilities were viewed as risk factors. The majority of these nontraditional students (62%) failed to complete a degree six years after initial enrollment, as compared to 39% of students who worked.

**Best Practices for Engaging the Nontraditional Student**

Despite their increasing numbers, nontraditional students are required to participate in a campus environment designed for the traditional residential student. Regardless of the type of student, providing support from enrollment to degree completion is difficult. Application of the Tinto (1998) and other models of student attrition must be structured in a way that is more meaningful to the needs of nontraditional students. Monroe (2006) contended that recruitment and marketing efforts are key components in minimizing future attrition. Student expectations of supports must be congruent with supports actually available to ensure this population is not ignored once enrolled. If students incorrectly perceive that services are available, dissatisfaction with the postsecondary experience may lead to dropout. Monroe also maintained the importance of faculty and staff awareness and clarity of campus resources in order to reduce the dissemination of misinformation and to direct students to the correct services. Conclusions reported by Ethington (1990) suggested similar links between student expectations and institutional communication.

Horn (1996) categorized nontraditional students on a continuum of seven attributes that make their persistence in college even more tenuous. Students who
exhibited only one attribute were considered minimally nontraditional. Students who exhibited two to three attributes were moderately nontraditional, while highly nontraditional students exhibited four or more. While all student groups have some similarities in their strengths and challenges, avoiding across-the-board generalizations for this population is important (Munday, 1976). Nontraditional students share many of the same needs and characteristics, but within group they also are somewhat dissimilar as a result of their varied life experiences (Brown, 2002; Munday, 1976; Fairchild; 2003; Richardson & King, 1998; Wyatt, 2011). In order to address these within group differences, Monroe (2006) advocated for continual assessment of institutional performance by all populations as critical to identifying the frequently changing needs of these students.

In a study of student persistence from an institutional perspective, researchers explored retention rates of students at three institutions (Hossler, Ziskin, Moore, & Wakhungu, 2008). They found the strongest predictor of retention to be family encouragement. Students who received greater encouragement from their families were more likely to persist. The authors recommended the implementation of strategies that targeted the family members of students to ensure understanding of policies, resources, and activities that mirror the student experience. Although some schools provide an institutional primer for family at freshman open houses and orientation sessions, these programs were not likely to be extended to nontraditional students who attended branch campuses. Other researchers concurred with the positive impact of an inclusive, family oriented campus on nontraditional student success (Clark, 2006; Jacoby & Garfield, 2004; Wyatt, 2011). Many institutions provided freshmen first-year experience courses
that were typically directed to their academic major (Rozycki, 2004; Upcraft, 1995; White, Goetz, Hunter, & O’Barefoot, 1995); however, nontraditional and transfer students often are assumed to have already completed an orientation course elsewhere. This assumption limited nontraditional students from receiving potentially new information that was institution specific, successfully transitioning on their own.

Additional variables in the Hossler et al. (2008) study that were found to be important predictors of retention were satisfaction with transition support and student perception of bias on campus. At two of the three institutions, students who perceived quality transitional support were more likely to remain enrolled. Surprisingly, those students who reported witnessing incidences of racism, sexism, or homophobia on campus were more likely to persist. Remaining enrolled, despite observing or experiencing discriminatory actions, may be explained by the positive impact of institutional steps to proactively address such acts (Sedlacek, 2004).

The term *post-traditional learner* has been introduced into the literature, as this term encompasses a more cross-generational view of the nontraditional population (Soares, 2013). The term suggests a learner-centered approach that recognizes post-traditional students run the gamut: dual credit and middle college learners, students in remediation coursework, student transfers, adult and lifelong learners, and traditional students who favor the use of technology in a blended pedagogy. Bean and Metzner (1985) also emphasized the use of a broader definition of the nontraditional student and stressed that commuter students should be included in this population, regardless of age. In short, Soares (2013) recommended that services for the post-traditional population
should guide all policies and programming on campuses for the soon-to-be new majority student.

Specific efforts can be adopted using Tinto’s (1975) theory of institutional departure to support the nontraditional or post-traditional population that frequents branch campuses. Tinto’s model emphasized that in order to persist, students must be integrated into the institution academically and socially. Student intention, related to both commitment to completion and to the institution, is a key element of Tinto’s model. Services that promote successful integration, both academically and socially, result in institutional and degree commitment. Tinto (1993) further clarified his recommendations by addressing stages of retention that demand institutional action.

Recruitment and admission is the initial stage in the retention process (Tinto, 1993). This stage involves information sharing to set up realistic expectations of institutional policies and requirements that aid the student in making an informed decision regarding institutional fit. The second stage, orientation, is designed to support the transition between pre-college life and life as a student. Orientation provides much more detailed information to the student about institutional requirements, as well as the programs and supports in place to assist in reaching educational attainment. In the pre-entry assessment and placement stage, students are assisted in registering for courses and also are assessed for counseling and advising needs. Students are provided with social and academic support in the transition stage. Many institutions have found that a first-year experience course for transitioning freshmen is beneficial, but transfer and nontraditional students are routinely excluded from this course (Rozycki, 2004; Upcraft, 1995; White et al., 1995).
Tinto (1993) stressed consideration of additional actions for institutions to improve retention. Early and frequent contact, community building around identity and academic groups, routine academic monitoring (or the current equivalent – intrusive advising), academic warning systems, and counseling/advising services are actions within the ability of the institution. Tinto maintained that all students who arrive on campus should feel valued and full members of the academic community.

Soares (2013) recommended that policymakers and leaders of postsecondary institutions cease to view the post-traditional learner as “aberrations to the postsecondary education system” (p. 5). Rather than ignoring this expanding population, Soares advised educational leaders to embrace the millions of adults in the workforce who could benefit from initial or additional education. Soares recommended that education for the post-traditional learner must use a holistic approach that focuses on career education to meet the demands of a global and knowledge-based economy. Soares further advised that traditional approaches to education, such as semester scheduling, sole reliance on in-class learning environments, and a lack of attention to the impact of personal barriers on educational attainment, would thwart post-traditional learners’ goal attainment. Institutions that emphasize intrusive academic advising, student support services, and student life components would increase enrollment and retention numbers. Consistent with these recommendations, other researchers have found the use of learning communities and cohorts to be contributors to successful student retention (Gorton, Young, & Kalianov, 2001; Minkler, 2002; Tinto, 1998) as educationally purposeful activities also extend beyond the classroom (Tinto, Russo, & Kadel, 1994). Learning
communities and cohort systems offer structure and group support that can be built around a program of study, leading to increased engagement and integration.

In a study to determine whether commuter students were less engaged than residential students, Kuh, Gonyea, and Palmer (2001) analyzed the 2000-2001 National Survey of Student Engagement database (NSSE). Of the more than 100,000 students from four-year institutions, they found that residential students self-reported more engagement overall compared to commuter students. They also found that students who lived farther away from campus were less likely to utilize educational resources. These researchers suggested that, as proximity to campus impacts student participation in educationally purposeful activities, institutions must seek to create welcoming environments and services that will support the needs of this population. Research by Jacoby (2000) supported this claim by encouraging an institutional commitment to strengthen commuter student involvement in the learning process (Jacoby & Garfield, 2004).

Officials at Lakehead University in Ontario, Canada, developed an initiative designed to encourage the success of nontraditional students (Browne & Doyle, 2010). The service, referred to as the Gateway program, began in the 2007-2008 academic year. Gateway implemented a variety of initiatives targeted at students who did not meet traditional enrollment requirements and were seen as underprepared for postsecondary success. The primary goal of the program was to retain students by supporting their transition to the university environment.

Program improvement feedback was solicited from students, validating the importance of student-driven programming. Intrusive advising was seen by both students
and faculty as the most beneficial component of Gateway. Students commended the benefits of intrusive advising and admitted that quality relationships with advisors, along with accountability reinforcement, increased their levels of self-identified success. Other research related to first-year experience programming has reaffirmed the benefits of intrusive services for all student populations (Rozycki, 2004; Upcraft, 1995; White et al., 1995).

Browne and Doyle (2010) stressed that having a campus contact who cared about individual student success led to the increased involvement of students. Recommendations for nontraditional student success as a result of the Gateway program were numerous, including “a commuter services office, a mature and part-time student association, childcare on campus, seminars on being a single parent while attending university, time management seminars, and the provision of more student employment opportunities on campus” (p. 32).

Northeast Alabama Community College found strategic services to nontraditional students to be highly effective. Much of the catalyst to serving this population began with the increase in enrollments as a result of the loss or reduction of local factory employment. Although the services provided to this population were unique, officials stressed that services offered to traditional students also were of benefit to adult students. Emphasis was placed on specific programming that met the needs of students who managed school, work, and personal responsibilities (e.g., expanded class schedules, community/institution activities to bring family members and the community to campus, and partnerships with other institutions to bring noncredit certificate programs to campus).
Best practices recommended by Northeast Alabama Community College included the establishment of the following:

- The Center for College Success (CCS) offered counseling, advising, and tutoring support. This office was particularly helpful for returning students and those with developmental needs. Services provided by the CCS were offered at times convenient for students, rather than the typical daytime schedule.

- The College and Career Planning Center (CCPC) offered career assessment and planning for the displaced worker who was a college student. Resource referrals was an important component of the CCPC.

- The Student and Faculty Technology Learning Center was created with external funding and provided technology education support to both students and members of the surrounding community. Nontraditional students who were displaced from factories found this service relevant due to their limited computer skills.

Officials at Northeast Alabama Community College stressed that services to special populations were effective only when input was sought from the consumer to identify needs and strategies to accommodate those students. In addition, awareness of local business and industry requirements helped to ensure that educational programming was available for students to reach their career goals.

Researchers have found that degree utility which is the value or usefulness of a degree, impacts the persistence of nontraditional students (O’Shea & Harrington, 2003; Peterson & Delmas, 2001; Sandler, 1998; Wayman, 2002). These researchers believed
that postsecondary education would lead to increased career opportunities making nontraditional students more likely to persist in their studies. The ability to connect the gap between the degree being pursued and future career options supported retention. Brown (2002) suggested that strategies designed to help this population prosper on campus must focus on the academic integration of the student, recommending the following strategies:

- Support the development of a campus culture that normalizes nontraditional students. Officials should encourage nontraditional groups on campus that advocate for the special needs of this population.
- Establish one-stop services related to enrollment, advising, registration, financial aid, and career counseling. These services should use technology to communicate with students.
- Train student affairs staff on the special needs of adult students, including adult learning and developmental theories. Staff should avoid a cookie cutter approach to service provision and not assume that the nontraditional population is homogeneous. In addition, recruiters should possess strong advising skills to ensure that nontraditional students have clear expectations of their upcoming role as a student. Recruiters must be knowledgeable of the services available to support this population and must share that information during recruitment events.
- Conduct orientation activities that set the stage for an expectation of learning.
Train faculty and adjuncts to utilize a pedagogical style that recognizes and integrates the life and work experiences of the nontraditional student in the learning environment.

Nontraditional students no longer are the minority on campuses across the United States. It is imperative that institutional leaders recognize the differences between traditional and nontraditional students. These leaders, particularly those directing branch campuses, must be willing to implement and restructure current services to support the nontraditional student in overcoming barriers and meeting needs in order that they may maintain their social and academic integration. As a result, nontraditional students will persist to graduation and will embark on their desired career path, benefiting themselves, the state, and the nation.

**Summary**

The purpose of the current study was to explore the contributions of the branch campus to the mission of the main campus in Kentucky public four-year institutions. This chapter reviewed literature on the history of higher education and the development of branch campuses. It provided detail on the changing mission of higher education, which has evolved from religious education for the upper class land owners, to agricultural education for farmers, to the current mission of education as a means of enhancing employability.

The chapter was divided into three sections: higher education in the United States, barriers that impact institutional departure, and higher education and the growing population of nontraditional students. The literature review provided insight into the necessity of the branch campus approach, theoretical frameworks relevant to
nontraditional students with emphasis on Cross’s (1981) barriers to adult learning and Tinto’s (1975, 1998) theory of institutional departure and demographic data and trends on the nontraditional student population. Knowledge and application of frameworks that explain student attrition behavior should result in policies and program development that enhance success for the increasing number of nontraditional students who are served on branch campuses.

Nontraditional student enrollments are likely to continue an upward growth pattern in the future. Although their needs and integration levels differ from those of the student who transitions immediately following high school, this population seeks the same goal – to successfully complete a certification or degree program. While the creation of high cost services, such as nontraditional student identity centers, is unlikely given the current budget shortfalls in this state, actions with minimal financial impact can be implemented by branch campus administrators and staff to create a supportive campus environment for the nontraditional student. Attention to this population can result in enhancing the institutional mission. When utilized effectively, branch campuses have the ability to support individual and community goals, as well as helping the main campus meet its mission. Using Tinto’s (1973) theory of institutional departure, along with mindfulness of the role of situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers in the attrition process, practitioners at branch campuses can successfully support and retain nontraditional students.

This literature review highlighted the conceptual framework for the current study and was related to the research questions posed in Chapter I. The methodological
approach for conducting the study and answering the research questions is described in Chapter III.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodological approach and procedures for this qualitative study. It begins with a discussion of the research context and design, participant population, the role of the researcher, and concludes with a review of ethical considerations. Although the public four-year institutions in Kentucky do not adhere to a single mission statement, an examination of their published individual statements revealed a common theme of education or lifelong learning for students.

The purpose of the current study was to identify the contributions made by the branch campus to the educational mission of the main campus and to highlight strategies to minimize situational, dispositional, and institutional barriers in order to support student academic success and persistence on those campuses. In its role as an emissary of the main campus, the branch campus plays a significant role within the local community, which impacts its efforts to support the overall mission of the university. This study gathered descriptive information about the 17 branch campuses in Kentucky. This chapter provides a framework for the processes used to collect branch campus information and details strategies and supports that minimize the impact of situational, dispositional, and institution barriers to student persistence.

The following research questions were proposed:

1. What are the unique features and characteristics of the branch campuses in Kentucky?
   a. What are the demographics of branch campus administrators (e.g., years in position, position title, and highest degree held)?
b. What are the asset details of the branch campus (e.g., property ownership, property type, square footage, and distance from the main campus)?

c. What are the staffing patterns of branch campus administrative staff (e.g., full-time, part-time, and administrative role)?

d. What are the demographics of the student population at the branch campus (e.g., age, student headcount, graduate level, undergraduate level, and non-degree seeking)?

2. How do branch campus administrators describe their contribution to the educational mission of its main campus through:

   a. Core function of teaching (e.g., academic programming and delivery methods)?

   b. Certification/credit-hour production?

3. What strategies or practices do the branch campuses implement to promote:

   a. Student persistence and success (to minimize dispositional, institutional, and situational barriers)?

   b. Community partnerships?

4. What unexplored opportunities do branch campus administrators identify that could increase the ability of the branch campus to promote the educational mission of the main campus?

5. What prevents or limits the ability of the branch campus to carry out the educational mission of the main campus?
Research Perspective

An internet-based survey was employed to collect descriptive data on each branch campus (Research Question [RQ] 1). Each university institutional research office was contacted to request data on student demographics and credit-hour production for the entire campus and for individual branch campuses (RQ 2). Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected key informants to collect information to isolate the efforts of the branch campus in addressing the impact of barriers that impede student success (RQs 3-5). The study sought to identify and document activities promoted by branch campuses related to situational, dispositional, and institutional barriers (Cross, 1981).

Research Approach and Instrumentation

This study entailed a descriptive design and relied on data collected from a survey instrument (Appendix E), database mining from institutional research offices (Appendix G), and semi-structured interviews with key informants. This approach was necessitated to answer the research questions that required both descriptive data (survey instrument) specific to individual branch campuses and qualitative data (key informant interviews) about services provided and resource needs on those campuses.

A self-reporting survey instrument was developed specifically for this study. Creswell (2009) emphasized that electronic survey instruments are becoming more common as research tools. Likewise, the extensive use of email made distribution relatively simple (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). Online surveys have many advantages over pen-and-paper surveys. Participants often are difficult to reach by mail due to incorrect addresses. Postal-based surveys that result in return rates of less than 70% limit
the representativeness of the sample (Dillman, 2007). Dillman (2007) suggested that response rates can be increased by sending a pre-letter to respondents, providing a self-addressed stamped envelope, and sending reminder postcards. Computerized data collection reduces the time associated with mailing and returning the survey, which results in increased cost efficiency by eliminating printing and postage expenditures. Flexibility of question design is easier in online surveys than in paper-based surveys. Finally, valuable time is not lost in coding data and cross checking for errors when transferring data from a paper-based survey to analysis software.

Qualtrics was utilized as the data collection software, which is an online survey platform used by over 1,300 colleges and universities worldwide (www.qualtrics.com/about/). The software was chosen due to its ease of use, economical cost (no cost to university students), and the variety of available data download formats. Data can be downloaded into Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, SAS, and SPSS for producing tables and charts and for conducting statistical analyses.

The survey was constructed in three parts. The first section collected demographics on branch campus administrators. The second collected asset information on the campuses, and the final section addressed academic disciplines offered, non-credit offerings, and other services through a series of open-ended questions. To aid in establishing validity, the survey was reviewed by a panel of experts from the research committee of the NABCA. The committee members currently or previously had held positions as branch campus administrators. The purpose of this expert review was to determine whether the questionnaire was inclusive enough to collect the information necessary to address the research questions. The members of the expert panel were sent
draft copies of the survey and the semi-structured interview protocol and were asked to conduct a review for question clarity and appropriateness. Upon incorporating feedback from the experts, the instruments (both the survey and interview protocol) were revised and submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Western Kentucky University for final review and approval. Development of a valid and reliable questionnaire was essential to ensuring that the survey gathered the desired information and was free of measurement errors. Groves (1987) defined measurement error as the “discrepancy between respondents’ attributes and their survey responses” (p. 162).

Simultaneous to the distribution of the survey instrument to Kentucky branch campus administrators, contact was made with university institutional research (IR) offices to collect data on credit-hour production by institution and by specific branch campus, as well as student demographics. The researcher collaborated with the IR office at Murray State University to develop a suitable reporting format to send to IR staff for completion. Credit hours produced was defined as the total number of credit hours for which all students at the campus were enrolled for the Fall 2013 semester.

It was not feasible to conduct interviews with all branch campus administrators in Kentucky, upon gathering student demographic data and credit-hour production information, the researcher attempted to select up to six administrators who completed the initial survey instrument and whose branch campuses generated the highest percentage of credit-hour production at the parent institution to aid with the key informant interviews. Credit-hour production was used as a measure of productivity.

Qualitative interviews typically are categorized as unstructured, semi-structured, and structured (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggested including
a purposeful sample of individuals who can best answer questions about the topic to be studied, which should result in enhanced knowledge of the subject. Interviews with key informants allow researchers to probe deeper into issues that are essential to the purpose of the study (Patton, 1990). The purposive method of choosing key informants, combined with a semi-structured interview approach, is favored, as it enables the researcher to gather more detailed material on the experiences of the subject than would be gained by using only a survey instrument.

The primary benefit of the semi-structured interview is its flexibility, while the interview schedule maintains consistency from interview to interview (Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The interview schedule should move from general information to more specific topics. The semi-structured interview encourages two-way communication, confirming information gathered during the survey process, while providing the opportunity for sharing of additional information. Although the use of focus groups can save time and money, the synergy created during group discussions can result in increased knowledge. This approach was not feasible due to the large geographic distances between branch campuses in the state. It would have created a challenge to identify dates, times, and a locale for focus groups for this heterogeneous population.

One of the most common disadvantages in conducting interviews is the tendency for the researcher to ask leading questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Vetting of the interview schedule by the experienced administrators with the NABCA, as well as the use of only one researcher, minimized the use of leading questions. The key informant interview schedule is provided in Appendix F.
The Role of the Researcher

This research study was a requirement of the doctoral program at Western Kentucky University. The researcher possesses 19 years of experience working in a continuing education and academic outreach unit that houses the branch campus function. The researcher has taught on branch campuses, military bases, and correctional institutions for two universities in Kentucky and has taught traditional, nontraditional, and honors students via interactive television and face-to-face classroom settings utilizing traditional and hybrid teaching approaches.

The researcher collected and analyzed data from the survey instrument, worked with institutional research staff and branch campus administrators at each institution to retrieve information from their databases, and conducted interviews with the key informants. Traditional recording equipment was used to preserve interviews. The researcher personally transcribed the interviews to aid in minimizing coding errors and to increase the ability to quickly identify themes.

Research Context

The Kentucky postsecondary education system is comprised of public comprehensive institutions, the community college system, and an extensive system of private institutions. In 1997, the Kentucky General Assembly passed House Bill 1, the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act (General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, 1997). The law established several goals for postsecondary institutions and mandated the development of a strategic plan for improving postsecondary education. The initial plan was revised in 2005 and institutional progress structured around five key indicators of success. The revised themes were related to
college readiness, degree production, affordability, preparation for life after college, and the benefits of postsecondary education to society.

The University of Kentucky is largest public institution in the state, followed by the University of Louisville (www.cpe.edu). Six additional public universities are located throughout the state for the purpose of serving specific geographic areas: Eastern Kentucky University, Northern Kentucky University, Kentucky State University, Western Kentucky University, Morehead State University, and Murray State University. In addition to the public postsecondary institutions, the community and technical college system includes 16 main campuses, with 70 locations throughout the state. Kentucky also is home to over 30 private higher education institutions, some of which are faith-based. The current study focused on the branch campuses of the regional comprehensive universities due to their state directive to increase access to undergraduate and graduate level degrees as a result of the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act (General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, 1997). Branch campuses provide an additional means of increasing access within the regions; thus, their administrators hold valuable information that should be quantified and disseminated. Focusing the current study on one statewide system (e.g., public four-year comprehensive institutions) allowed for uniformity in comparisons.

The University of Kentucky was founded in 1865 by an attorney and farmer. It was later established as the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Kentucky under the Morrill Land Grant Act. Located in Lexington, the university serves students from all 120 counties in the state. The student population for Fall 2013 was 28,928; and programming consisted of 98 undergraduate, 99 graduate, 66 doctoral, and 4 professional certification
The university has an additional site, co-located on the community college campus in Paducah. The extended campus offers two undergraduate degrees and one graduate degree, all in chemical and mechanical engineering; no other academic programming is offered at this site. The university formerly operated the community college system, but that affiliation ended in 1997.

The University of Louisville is located in the state’s largest metropolitan area near the Ohio River. The university began as the Jefferson Seminary and changed names and purposes several times prior to the Kentucky Legislature creating the current institution in 1798. Total enrollment for the fall 2013 semester was 21,447. The university serves students on a statewide basis with 70 undergraduate, 78 graduate, and 22 doctoral degree programs. The main campus is referred to as the Belknap Campus, with two additional campuses located in Jefferson County: Shelby Campus and the Health Science Center. The University of Louisville also has an international campus in Panama City, Panama.

Eastern Kentucky University is located in Richmond, 30 miles south of Lexington. The university was founded in 1906 as Eastern Kentucky State Normal School. The total enrollment for Fall 2013 was 16,567 students. The university serves students in 22 counties, with 108 undergraduate, 30 graduate, and 3 doctoral degree programs. Eastern Kentucky University has branch campuses in Corbin, Danville, Hazard, Manchester, and Somerset. The campus located in Lancaster, co-located with Bluegrass Community and Technical College and adult basic education, has not had classes since the spring of 2013 and was in the process of renovating new space purchased by the university.
Northern Kentucky University is located south of Cincinnati, Ohio, in Highland Heights. The student population is approximately 15,405. Founded in 1968, the university offers 72 bachelors, 24 graduate, and 3 doctoral degrees. The university has one branch campus in Williamstown and has a service region consisting of three counties, although it serves students from the entire state.

Kentucky State University, the state’s only historically black college and university, was chartered in 1886. The university is located in Frankfort, the state capital of Kentucky. Its student population is approximately 2,500, and the institution offers 24 undergraduate and 5 graduate degree programs. Kentucky State University does not have any branch campuses within its six-county service region; consequently, it was not included in the current study.

Located in the south central region of the state, Western Kentucky University serves approximately 21,000 students. The university is located in Bowling Green; serves 27 surrounding counties; and offers 170 undergraduate degrees, over 80 graduate and specialist degrees, and 3 doctoral degrees. The university has branch campuses in Elizabethtown, Glasgow, and Owensboro.

Morehead State University is located in the foothills of the Daniel Boone National Forest. Founded in 1887, it serves a student population of approximately 11,000 from 22 counties, with 177 undergraduate and 78 graduate degree programs. The university has branch campuses in Ashland, Mt. Sterling, Prestonsburg, and Hazard. The West Liberty campus closed in the fall of 2013.

Murray State University is located in the western end of the state in Murray. The university, serving an 18 county service region, was founded in 1922 and had a Fall 2013
enrollment of 10,934 students. Murray has 155 undergraduate, 63 graduate and specialist degrees, and 2 doctoral programs. Its branch campuses are located in Paducah, Hopkinsville, Henderson, and Madisonville.

**Participants**

The current study targeted the 17 branch campus administrators of Kentucky’s eight regional postsecondary institutions. Branch campus administrators serve as the leaders responsible for daily operations, reporting to a supervisor at the next administrative level on the main campus (Bailey, 2002; Burke, 2007). This group was targeted in two distinct phases. First, the administrators were invited to complete the online survey to provide quantitative information about their campuses. A second sub-group was chosen with the intent of conducting key informant interviews. The subjects were initially purposefully selected due to a particular characteristic – in this case, the branch campuses that generated the highest percentage of the credit production at each parent university. The population size of the entire set of participants (n=17) was sufficiently small in order to include all possible subjects in the initial phase of the study; the entire population was not included in the second phase due to its large size.

A purposive sample was selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the subjects are investigated based on the judgment of the researcher (Creswell, 2003). The goal of purposive sampling is to focus on specific characteristics of a population that will best answer the research questions. The sample for the current study was not representative of the population (generalization), but this was not considered to be a weakness for collecting the desired qualitative data.
Data Collection Instruments

Survey Instrument

An internet-based, self-reporting survey methodology was employed using an instrument developed specifically for Phase 1 of the study. The survey instrument consisted of 24 questions organized into three sections. The first addressed the demographics of branch campus administrators and included questions that encompassed employee title, job status, career longevity, employment status, degrees earned, field of study, and the title of the direct supervisor on the main campus. The second section addressed type of branch campus model and asset details through a series of questions related to campus operations, square footage, ownership, distance from the main campus, programming, and course delivery. The final section addressed academic disciplines offered, non-credit offerings, and other services through five questions. The remaining two open-ended questions provided participants with the opportunity to discuss services not reported in previous questions that impacted academic and social integration and factors that limited the provision of additional services.

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

A semi-structured interview protocol (Phase 2) was developed for use with key informant interviews to ensure consistency with interviews and to minimize researcher bias (Appendix F). Interview questions were structured around the three barriers that impact student persistence: situational, dispositional, and institutional (Cross, 1981). Key informants were encouraged to respond candidly to the open-ended questions and to provide additional information relevant to the operation of branch campuses that was not provided in the survey instrument.
**Data Collection and Analysis**

Upon approval to proceed with the research study by the Institutional Review Board at Western Kentucky University (see Appendix A), an advance phone call was made to branch campus administrators. This call detailed the purpose of the research, encouraged participation in the study, and assessed the reliability of known email addresses. Immediately following the phone conversation and email verification, an email was sent with the survey link to branch campus administrators. Scheduling calls and emails was somewhat hampered by inclement weather, which closed all of the four-year institutions throughout the state. The survey began with an informed consent statement (Appendix C) and encouraged participants to complete the survey within two weeks. A reminder phone call and email was made to non-respondents at the end of the two-week time frame urging their assistance. At the end of 30 days, non-respondents received a final follow-up email; only two potential respondents had not completed the survey. Descriptive data collected from the surveys were analyzed and presented using frequency scales and table summaries for comparative purposes.

Subsequent to a review of data that was received from university institutional research staff, key informant semi-structured interviews were scheduled. Phone calls and emails were made to the six key informants chosen requesting permission to schedule interviews. Three consented to the interview. Individuals were assured that no personal risk would occur as a result of their participation and they could terminate the interview at any time. Key informants were advised that interviews would require no more than 90 minutes.
Recording equipment was used during the interviews to capture the dialog. Upon completion of the interviews, responses were analyzed for content to identify services and supports related to Cross’s (1981) barriers to adult learning. Results are presented in Chapter IV. Data collected from these interviews were recorded and presented anonymously; i.e., no statement or group of statements was attributable to any particular individual or branch campus. The names of the interviewees are known only to the researcher. Participants were assured that data would be destroyed and that they would have the opportunity to review summarized data prior to publication. All participants were sent an executive summary of the research results and were able to request an electronic copy of the completed dissertation.

**Trustworthiness**

With the exception of the branch campus administrators at the researcher’s home institution, participants were unfamiliar to the researcher. The researcher is an employee of Murray State University but does not have supervisory responsibility for a branch campus or the branch campus administrators. Participants in Phase 2 of the study were not acknowledged by name or by institution, and the information from the semi-structured interviews was reported in a manner that maintained anonymity and confidentiality. Participants in the key informant interviewees received an IRB generated informed consent document (Appendix B) prior to participation. To contribute to the credibility of the qualitative aspect of this study member checks were conducted to provide give key informants with an opportunity to furnish input on the accuracy of individual transcripts (Merriam, 1998). Upon coding of interviews, copies of the
transcripts and coding notations were emailed to each key informant for review. Each informant was asked the following questions:

1. Does the transcript accurately reflect your responses to the interview questions?
2. Does the coding and analysis accurately reflect your experiences as a branch campus administrator?
3. Is there additional information you would like to add to the transcripts?

Finally, a second researcher not involved in the current study was engaged to code data independently and to discuss the developing themes. The researchers then compared identified codes to assess the degree to which consistent codes were identified for the same data. This inter-rater agreement supported consistency of coding (Barusch, Gringeri, & George, 2011).

The use of the multiple methods of information gathering reflected an attempt to secure an accurate understanding of branch campuses in Kentucky. This included information gathered from three unique sources: survey instrument, institutional review data, and semi-structured interviews. As educational issues often are multi-faceted, the use of a single methodology may not have yielded all the information necessary to answer each research question (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996).

**Ethical Considerations**

Maintenance of participant confidentiality is vital in research (Patton, 1990). The researcher of the current study ensured that confidentiality of respondent identities was maintained through secure records storage of all data gathered. Ethical responsibility in research was an ongoing process and was maintained throughout the course of the current
research. Ethical standards were maintained by treating participants with respect and ensuring that data were reported truthfully and accurately (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In order to ensure the comfort of key informants, interviews were conducted at a venue of the informants’ choice.

**Summary**

This chapter described the purpose of the current study, which was designed to examine the branch campus contribution to the university mission. The research questions were detailed, and the three-part research strategy was outlined for distribution of the survey to branch campus administrators, contacting institutional research staff, and conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants.

The methods proposed for data analysis also were detailed, with results presented in Chapter IV. A rationale for the use of surveys and semi-structured research designs was provided, along with issues of maximizing the quality of data collection and adherence to standard research ethics.
CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of the current study was to examine the way in which branch campuses in Kentucky contribute to the mission of their main campuses. Specifically, this study sought to identify those practices executed on branch campuses to promote the retention and success of nontraditional students by minimizing the impact of institutional, dispositional, and situational barriers. This chapter presents the major findings of the study, including descriptive statistics from the survey and institutional research data, as well as the outcomes of the thematic analysis of key informant interviews. A discussion of these results and recommendations for policy implications and future research will follow in Chapter V.

In an attempt to identify the contributions of branch campuses to the mission of the main campus, the following five research questions were posed:

1. What are the unique features and characteristics of the branch campuses in Kentucky?
   a. What are the demographics of branch campus administrators (e.g., years in position, position title, and highest degree held)?
   b. What are the asset details of the branch campus (e.g., property ownership, property type, square footage, and distance from the main campus)?
   c. What are the staffing patterns of branch campus administrative staff (e.g., full-time, part-time, and administrative role)?
   d. What are the demographics of the student population at the branch campus (e.g., age, student headcount, graduate level, undergraduate level, and non-degree seeking)?
2. How do branch campus administrators describe their contribution to the educational mission of its main campus through:
   a. Core function of teaching (e.g., academic programming and delivery methods)?
   b. Certification/credit-hour production?

3. What strategies or practices do the branch campuses implement to promote:
   a. Student persistence and success (to minimize dispositional, institutional, and situational barriers)?
   b. Community partnerships?

4. What unexplored opportunities do branch campus administrators identify that could increase the ability of the branch campus to promote the educational mission of the main campus?

5. What prevents or limits the ability of the branch campus to carry out the educational mission of the main campus?

Survey Protocol

Phone calls, followed by email requests to participate in an online survey, were sent to 17 administrators at Eastern Kentucky University, Murray State University, Morehead State University, Western Kentucky University, and Northern Kentucky University. Kentucky State University does not have a branch or extended campus. Although the University of Kentucky and University of Louisville have external sites, those sites perform specific functions that do not include the provision of university-wide course offerings.
Contact information for branch campus administrators was obtained from each institution’s website. An attempt was made to contact each administrator by telephone to explain the research and to prompt support prior to sending an email with a link to the survey. Most pre-calls were delayed as a result of a significant winter weather event that closed campuses in the entire state. In an effort to adhere to the predetermined research schedule despite the weather closures, the researcher proceeded by initiating contact by email to the 14 remaining administrators and followed up with a phone call the following week when campuses reopened. The email that explained the research is included in Appendix D.

Sixteen respondents completed the survey, resulting in a 94% response rate. Data gathered from this survey, as well as institutional research office documents, provided a profile of administrators and the campuses they led. Key informant interviews were conducted with three administrators to gather in-depth information related to efforts to minimize the impact of institutional, dispositional, and situational barriers on nontraditional student success and retention. None of the campuses met the SACSCOC definition of a branch campus, but were more closely aligned with the NABCA research committee’s definition of an off-campus center (Bebko & Huffman, 2011). Off-campus centers are geographically separate sites from the main campus, with on-site administration, limited programming, few or no resident faculty, minimal budgetary responsibility, and few student support services (Bebko & Huffman, 2011). The SACSCOC requires that branch campuses, extended campuses, and off-campus centers provide comparable services for their students. From this point forward, these sites will be referred to as off-campus centers.
Respondent Demographics

The first research question explored the unique characteristics of off-campus center administrators through a series of six survey questions. Table 2 provides demographic information on the 16 administrators who completed the survey questions related to gender, employment status, employment longevity, faculty status, highest degree earned, and title (RQ1b).

Table 2 shows that of the 16 respondents who completed the survey question to identify gender, 31% were male and 69% were female. The majority of respondents did not have faculty rank (94%). Seventy-five percent of respondents served in a full-time capacity with a mean years of employment of 8.4. The respondents’ years of experience as off-campus center administrators ranged from nine months to 25 years. Five respondents reported other degree statuses that included several terminal degrees in progress. The majority of respondents held the title of director (64%), although coordinator and chancellor also were observed as titles held by these administrators.
Table 2

*Frequency Distributions of Demographic Characteristics of Administrators*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Rank</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Degree Earned</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ed. S.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ed. D.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ph. D.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position Title</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chancellor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Some responded twice (other), indicating additional degree work in progress.

**Campus Characteristics**

**Asset Details**

Administrators were asked to classify the type of site (RQ1b) using three identifiers: stand-alone campus, co-located campus, or storefront operations/sites. A stand-alone off-campus center was defined as a location that is geographically apart and independent from the main center and is permanent in nature. A co-located center shares space with a community college or other related institution. A storefront operation/site provides a physical presence (leased or owned space) at which programming is delivered primarily by distance education. The majority of centers in Kentucky’s four-year postsecondary system were co-located centers (50%). Stand-alone centers were the next
most frequently observed (38%). Two of the 16 respondents reported serving as administrators of storefront operations/sites.

The majority of respondents reported the center space as leased (44%). Five reported that space was provided at no cost through partnership arrangements, and an additional four reported that the university owned the space. The Elizabethtown center supported a twig at the Fort Knox Education Services Center. The square footage of the entire off-campus centers ranged from 5,178 to 53,000. These centers were located between 35 and 160 miles from the main campus, with a median distance of 69 miles.

Table 3

*Asset Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Ownership</td>
<td>Stand-alone</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-located</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leased</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Owned</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Staffing Patterns**

The number of full-time staff assigned to these centers ranged from none (staffed by a part-time student worker) to 16. Staffing categories included management, clerical, technical, custodial, student worker, and graduate student. Thirteen respondents reported also using part-time administrative staff to support campus operations. Other off-campus center staff included student support services, TRIO, transfer advisor, nursing lab coordinator, night manager, and temporary employees. One center reported using security personnel. Seven campuses reported no permanent faculty assignment; four had two full-time faculty. One center reported a high of 18 resident faculty, followed by six at another
site. Adjunct or interactive television/video services were used exclusively at two centers. Four respondents reported that their direct supervisor on the main campus held the title of dean. An additional four respondents reported to the associate provost. The remaining respondents identified a variety of supervisors, including the vice president, associate/vice provost, and executive director of governmental relations/governmental affairs.

Table 4

*Administrative Staffing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum Value</th>
<th>Maximum Value</th>
<th>Average Value</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technician</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodian</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Worker</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Student Demographics*

The sizes of the main institutions at which the respondents were employed ranged from a Fall 2013 student enrollment of 7,360 (Morehead State University) to 23,593 (Western Kentucky University). Eastern Kentucky University had the most off-campus centers (Six – one is closed for relocation and is excluded in data analysis); Murray State University and Morehead State University each had four extended campuses, Western Kentucky University had three extended campuses, and Northern Kentucky University had one extended campus.
Western Kentucky University

The three off-campus centers associated with Western Kentucky University generated 11% of the overall institutional credit hours in Fall 2013. The Glasgow center generated the most credit hours, offering 228 course sections. The three centers had a combined total of 1,396 traditional and 1,172 nontraditional students. Owensboro, Glasgow, and Elizabethtown enrolled 193, 684 and 215 full-time students, respectively. Part-time student enrollments for Owensboro were 455; Glasgow = 959; and Elizabethtown = 631. The centers also had a number of non-degree seeking students (Owensboro = 33; Glasgow = 39; Elizabethtown = 34).

Table 5

Enrollment Data for Western Kentucky University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Credit Hrs. Attempt</th>
<th>Enrollment Headcount</th>
<th>No. Graduate Students</th>
<th>No. Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>% Credit Hrs. Generated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>209,964</td>
<td>20,456</td>
<td>2,370</td>
<td>14,949</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owensboro</td>
<td>4,939</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>14,139</td>
<td>1,643</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1,493</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabethtown</td>
<td>6,234</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>235,275</td>
<td>23,593</td>
<td>2,939</td>
<td>17,517</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Murray State University

The four centers associated with Murray State University generated 3.34% of the overall institutional credit hours in Fall 2013. The Paducah center generated the most credit hours, offering 39 course sections. The four centers had a combined total of 236 traditional and 420 nontraditional students. Paducah, Henderson, Hopkinsville, and Madisonville enrolled 121, 16, 98, and 65 full-time students, respectively. Part-time student enrollments for Paducah were 166; Henderson = 18; Hopkinsville = 117; and
Madisonville = 109. The centers also had a number of non-degree seeking students (Paducah = 48; Henderson = 0; Hopkinsville = 56; Madisonville = 12).

Table 6

Enrollment Data for Murray State University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Credit Hrs. Attempt</th>
<th>Enrollment Headcount</th>
<th>No. Graduate Students</th>
<th>No. Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>% Credit Hrs. Generated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>120,078</td>
<td>9,841</td>
<td>1,594</td>
<td>8,247</td>
<td>96.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paducah</td>
<td>1,562</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henderson</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopkinsville</td>
<td>1,173</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madisonville</td>
<td>1,068</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>124,215</td>
<td>10,551</td>
<td>1,861</td>
<td>8,690</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Morehead State University

The four off-campus centers associated with Morehead State University generated 7.42% of the overall institutional credit hours in Fall 2013. The Mt. Sterling campus generated the most credit hours by offering 76 course sections. The campuses had a combined total of 376 traditional and 470 nontraditional students. Ashland, Mt. Sterling, Prestonsburg, and Hazard enrolled 96, 282, 97, and 10 full-time students, respectively. Part-time enrollments for Ashland were 80; Mt. Sterling = 155; Prestonsburg = 111; and Hazard = 15. The campuses also had a limited number of non-degree seeking students (Ashland = 0; Mt. Sterling = 0; Prestonsburg = 5; Hazard = 1).
Table 7

*Enrollment Data for Morehead State University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Credit Hrs. Attempt</th>
<th>Enrollment Headcount</th>
<th>No. Graduate Students</th>
<th>No. Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>% Credit Hrs. Generated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>75,305</td>
<td>6,514</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>6,265</td>
<td>92.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashland</td>
<td>1,465</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Sterling</td>
<td>3,128</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestonsburg</td>
<td>1,408</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>81,399</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,360</strong></td>
<td><strong>288</strong></td>
<td><strong>7072</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Eastern Kentucky University*

Six off-campus centers were associated with Eastern Kentucky University (Lancaster center was temporarily closed due to relocation). Due to the inaccessibility of complete data from the institutional research office, the researcher was unable to calculate the percentage of credit hours generated by each center, or to report enrollment information. The information presented in Table 8 was mined from the university’s institutional fact book.

Table 8

*Enrollment Data for Eastern Kentucky University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Credit Hrs. Attempt</th>
<th>Enrollment Headcount</th>
<th>No. Graduate Students</th>
<th>No. Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>% Credit Hrs. Generated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13,209</td>
<td>1,368</td>
<td>11,841</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danville</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbin</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,465</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,401</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,064</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Northern Kentucky University

Northern Kentucky University had one off-campus center located in Williamstown. This campus generated .36% of the overall institutional credit hours in Fall 2013 through 20 course sections. The campus had a total of 50 traditional and 19 nontraditional students. Part-time student enrollments for Williamstown were 55. The center also had 36 non-degree seeking students.

Table 9

*Enrollment Data for Northern Kentucky University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Credit Hrs. Attempt</th>
<th>Enrollment Headcount</th>
<th>No. Graduate Students</th>
<th>No. Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>% Credit Hrs. Generated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>177,047</td>
<td>15,168</td>
<td>2,167</td>
<td>13,019</td>
<td>99.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamstown</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>177,686</td>
<td>15,283</td>
<td>2,167</td>
<td>13,116</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Traditional and nontraditional students do not add up to the total count, as some students were under the age of 18 (i.e., high school scholars).

Data received from institutional research offices determined that the Western Kentucky University Glasgow off-campus center generated the largest percentage of credit hours (6%) of the home institution. The Morehead State University off-campus center at Mt. Sterling generated the second highest percentage of credit hours (3.8%), closely followed by Western Kentucky University’s Elizabethtown center (3%). Although data were unavailable for all off-campus centers, the researcher was able to determine the centers with the highest credit-hour production for each institution. With the exception of the Mt. Sterling center, those centers with the highest numbers of faculty and staff also generated the higher percentages overall of credit hours produced.
Table 10

Off-campus Centers with the Highest Percentage of Credit-Hour Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Campus</th>
<th>Off-campus Center</th>
<th>Headcount Enrollment</th>
<th>% Credit Hours Generated</th>
<th>Number FT Staff</th>
<th>Number Resident Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Kentucky University</td>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>1,643</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elizabethtown</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Owensboro</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morehead State University</td>
<td>Mt. Sterling</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray State University</td>
<td>Paducah</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Delivery, Academic Disciplines, Non-credit Offerings, and Other Services

A total of 69 academic disciplines were taught at these centers. The most frequently cited disciplines were criminal justice, social work, psychology, sociology, English, special education, and elementary education. Additional academic disciplines taught at these centers included the following: communication disorders, logistics and supply chain management, social studies, human development and leadership, organizational communication, communication, public administration, teacher leadership, masters of education, masters of business administration, health care administration, agriculture, fine arts, middle school math and science, statistics, mathematics, biology, business informatics, health sciences, interdisciplinary studies, middle school language arts and social studies, organizational leadership, human services, safety sciences, anesthesia, reading, writing, school counseling, anthropology, communication studies, university studies, theater, art, business, health, philosophy, general studies, homeland.
security, music, art, economics, accounting, family studies, child studies, environmental health sciences, marketing, and sports management.

Table 11

*Most Frequently Reported Academic Disciplines*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Discipline</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Information Systems</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Administration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thirteen respondents (81%) indicated that students were able to complete a degree in its entirety at the off-campus center. Completion of a degree at some centers also required partnership agreements with the local community college or online coursework through the main institution. Courses were delivered by interactive television/video services, face to face, and hybrid. Respondents indicated that a slight majority of classes were offered by interactive services or other electronic means (56%).

Table 12

*Course Delivery Methods*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Delivery Method</th>
<th>Minimum Value</th>
<th>Maximum Value</th>
<th>Average Value</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactive TV/Video Systems</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>55.94</td>
<td>28.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>30.19</td>
<td>22.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.63</td>
<td>10.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non-credit Programming

Non-credit programming provides continuing education responsive to the needs of the local community, business, and industry (RQ2b). These courses provide enrichment and learning opportunities for all age groups. In addition, certificate programs provide education that results in a certificate of completion, rather than a degree. Certificate programs prepare students to complete a specific task or educate them about one particular aspect of their specialized field. Although postsecondary institutions may not view non-credit programming as part of their mission, offering these services can fulfill a valuable need for the communities in which off-campus centers are located. The researcher was unable to isolate specific data on non-credit programming hours produced by the off-campus centers, but determined that several of the off-campus centers offered these programs.

Non-credit programming and certification course offerings varied by campus. The Center for Career and Workforce Development, located on the main campus at Eastern Kentucky University, offered a variety of courses at its Corbin, Manchester, and Somerset centers. Courses included, but were not limited to, First Line Supervision Certificate Program, Leadership Excellence for Middle Managers, Manufacturing Maintenance Certificate Program, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, a variety of computer classes, and Society for Human Resource Management Training. In addition, Eastern Kentucky University and Western Kentucky University were in the process of partnering to provide OSHA training.

Several main campuses and their off-campus centers also offered online certification programs, with the students receiving academic advising and support from
the extended campus if they lived in that service region. Northern Kentucky University leased a facility in Erlanger in which training and performance improvement services were provided to business and governmental entities. Referred to as the *Metropolitan and Education Training Center* (MET), the site was not considered to be an off-campus center (it did not provide academic programming), but solely delivered certification and non-credit programming. Non-credit coursework also was offered at its Grant County center to meet community needs.

Staff at the Western Kentucky University Owensboro center coordinated a leadership certification program entitled *Dynamic Leadership Institute*. This program provided relevant leadership skills that led to increased student marketability. The four-phase program promoted self-exploration and personal development. The Division of Extended Learning and Outreach (DELO) at Western offered both credit and non-credit courses. The division partnered with various campus departments, businesses, and organizations to provide customized training and/or to develop degree programs that met specific needs.

The Danville off-campus center offered summer camp opportunities for area K-12 students. The Non-Credit and Youth Programs office at Murray State University offered camps, workshops, and online career training opportunities. Murray also offered a variety of online open enrollment programs designed to increase professional skills in high demand occupations. Several other campuses also worked with local school districts and community organizations to offer space for special student events and community activities.
Student Support Services

The third research question sought to identify strategies or practices that the off-campus centers implemented to promote student persistence and success. All respondents reported offering some form of academic advising for their students. Additional student support services offered on these campuses are detailed in Table 13.

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Support Services Offered on Respondent Campuses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variable</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookstore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Lectures, Workshops, Seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services to Students with Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only four centers reported providing access to food services (25%). One noted that students were able to access food services, the bookstore, and tutoring through the nearby community college. Another respondent indicated that all services were offered in some form, but not necessarily face to face. This specific respondent indicated that counseling was available through video conferencing or by telephone.

Student Activities

A variety of student activities also were identified as efforts directed at increasing student success and persistence (RQ3). Eleven centers reported supporting student clubs
while nine reported hosting cultural events (69%). None offered Greek activities, wellness facilities, or inter-collegiate student sporting events.

Table 14

*Student Activities Offered on Respondent Campuses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Government Association</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Student Activities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Clubs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness Facilities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-collegiate Sporting Events</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Events</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to a query about offering other services and activities that were not reported in other questions, administrators indicated they made referrals to the main campus when services were unavailable at their site. One site organized field trips to various corporations and other institutions outside the community in which the center was located. Seminars and professional development opportunities were offered in partnership with the local community college to ease the transfer to the four-year institution. A partnership agreement was in place at one site, which allowed students to participate in social, cultural, and academic activities at both the four-year institution and the community college. Research Question 4 is discussed in the following section, with the analysis of key informant interviews.

Survey respondents were asked to identify services and activities they were unable to provide due to budgetary constraints or other competing priorities (RQ5). Seven of the 14 respondents indicated a need for health and wellness activities for
students and staff, citing tuition and fees that included costs for ancillary services regardless of the site with which the student was affiliated. The suggestion was made for the main campus to negotiate an arrangement with a local health club to support health and wellness activities for center-based students. Other needs expressed in response to this question included a need for counseling, career services, a full-time librarian, writing center, speaking center, engineering and science laboratories, math lab, transportation to assist students (van and bus), financial aid, and tutoring for all academic program areas. Mention also was made of the need for more partnership agreements with the local community colleges, which could result in an increase in off-campus center enrollment. Another center administrator expressed concern that the cohort approach to course programming restricted potential enrollments. The lack of availability of relevant educational programming provided in its entirety at these sites was identified as a concern, and it was suggested that providing complete program offerings would lead to increased enrollment at these off-campus centers.

This concludes the presentation of quantitative data gleaned from the online survey instrument on these centers and their programs. What follows next are the results of key informant interviews conducted with administrators of three of the off-campus centers in Kentucky.

**Analysis of Key Informant Interviews**

Prior to petitioning key informants, the interview schedule was reviewed by the research committee of the NABCA. No suggestions for question revisions were made. Interviews were arranged by telephone or email, and were scheduled according to each informant’s availability. The researcher met with all key informants for approximately
45-90 minutes in the location of their choice. Questions were posed in the order that they appeared on the interview guide; however, the researcher supplemented those questions as needed to clarify participant responses or to extract more information. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed into Microsoft Word.

Subsequent to interview transcription, care was used to preserve the anonymity of participants. In addition, direct quotes were edited slightly to conceal any verbiage that could have inadvertently revealed the identity of informants. Identifiable information was replaced with generic terms for an administrator’s role, location, or institution. Interview transcripts were edited to retain the coherence of participants’ responses by omitting false starts and vocal tics (e.g., “you know,” “uh,” or “mm”). The edited interview transcripts were returned to each participant to review for accuracy, and revisions were made as requested. To increase clarity in responses, centers were referred to as Center A, Center B, and Center C.

The analysis of data from key informant interviews occurred in four stages: transcription; generation of categories of barriers; identification of developing themes; and, finally, the synthesis of those themes. First, the researcher scanned the transcripts individually and compared them to one another, developing preliminary categories for further review. The interview transcripts were then coded to create more defined categories. Transcripts were mined in this manner until themes emerged based on commonalities in each interview and the identification of dispositional, situational, and institutional barriers. Finally, information collected from the data analysis process was collapsed into several major themes and used to summarize and interpret the findings.
Introductory Questions

A series of introductory questions were asked of the three key informants to introduce the research topic and to set the stage for delving into the specific details of services offered to increase the persistence and success of nontraditional students. The questions related to institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers were emailed in advance to the informants, excluding the introductory questions.

The first question asked key informants to identify aspects that made their center special or unique. All three respondents indicated that their location provided the local community access that it otherwise might not have been able to access. In fact, the establishment of two sites managed by these informants were the direct result of community intervention and partnership efforts to increase local degree attainment rates. The student population at each of these off-campus centers was unique. Center A almost exclusively served traditional age and dual credit (high school) students. Center B almost solely served nontraditional students. The student population at Center C was an equal mix of both traditional and nontraditional students, but the administrator cautioned that many of those traditional students faced nontraditional barriers, resulting in almost identical needs for both populations.

The second introductory question asked key informants to describe their involvement in choosing the courses that were offered at their sites. The administrator at Center A indicated that, as they typically offered coursework needed for students to meet general education requirements, the staff maintained a thorough awareness of the requirements and prerequisites for first- and second-year students. The key informant at Center B indicated that, after consultation with student advisors, efforts were made to
petition deans, department chairs, the provost, and even the president to secure programs on the campus. The final key informant (Center C) indicated that requests were routed through the dean, who then advocated for coursework in collaboration with colleagues on the main campus.

Key informants were asked whether main campus colleagues and administrators understood the needs of center students and the unique needs of the communities in which they were located. All three indicated some disconnect between the main and the off-campus centers. The staff at Center B elaborated by discussing tutoring needs for students: “When I approached [main campus] about the students’ needs because we could not fulfill them, they were looking at us and telling us that they were not able to help fulfill that tutoring need, although online it is published that they can help in that capacity.” The unwillingness of main campus faculty to teach on the extended campuses, even if only by electronic means, was discussed by the administrator at Center C. “A lot of our full-time faculty will not even consider teaching on Interactive Television.”

The final introductory question asked key informants whether assessments were used to measure institutional performance; and, if so, were those results used to modify student services at the centers. All three administrators indicated the use of either formal or informal methods of assessment. One center conducted needs-based surveys of the student population on a rotating basis to provide information concerning an untapped group of participants. Academic advisors and other key staff also were identified as a means of gathering information about the needs of students and institutional performance. “Old school suggestion boxes” to elicit feedback were used at Center B. That same key informant shared “We have to be able to quickly change what services we offer or shelve
according to what the needs of the students are.” An anonymous email account was used at Center B as a means of allowing students to share concerns without being identified.

**Interview Questions Related to Barriers to Adult Learning**

The interview schedule included nine questions related to institutional, dispositional, and situational barriers experienced by nontraditional students, as identified by Cross (1981). The results of these questions follow, organized by barrier. In addition, several themes surfaced during analysis of the interviews, five of which were isolated from the transcript data. These emergent themes also are discussed in the following sections.

**Minimizing the Impact of Institutional Barriers**

A strong awareness of the institutional barriers that impact student persistence and success was evident in the responses from the three key informants. Institutional barriers are procedures that unintentionally discourage students from participating in learning activities (Cross, 1981). These include institutional formalities that, while sometimes necessary for university procedures, may add undue stress on the nontraditional student.

Center B staff worked to find experts within the community to fulfill student tutoring needs, as students on its off-campus center did not have easy access to the live tutoring center on the main campus. The center was able to meet most tutoring needs, but occasionally encountered needs they could not fulfill. This center also maintained a full-time student affairs staff member available to students in the evening hours. This was deemed particularly important because the bulk of the students were on campus during the evening. Campus B also provided center-based academic advisors and career development staff who assisted with course scheduling and planning future career goals.
Students at this center had access to a library with full- and part-time librarians during the day and in the evenings. To support adjunct instructors in their efforts to deliver quality curricula using pedagogy that engaged the student, this center referred instructors to the faculty development center. Bookstore services also were offered, allowing students instant access to textbooks without being hindered by delayed shipping from the main campus and infrequent book buyback programs.

Center C utilized an academic advisor who worked closely with advisors on the main campus to ensure that student needs were met either at the off-campus center or as they transitioned to the main campus. This center received visits from the cooperative services office and career services to support student needs. Staff from the financial aid office previously visited the campus twice monthly, but that face-to-face service ceased when the office experienced cuts to its travel budget. Financial aid personnel met with students twice monthly by video conferencing.

**Minimizing the Impact of Dispositional Barriers**

Key informants and their staff identified a number of supportive services related to dispositional barriers. These barriers originate internally and include psychological elements such as low motivation, fear of failure, and lack of confidence (Cross, 1981). A lack of interventions to boost these perceived inadequacies may result in student stopout or dropout (Tinto, 1975; 1993).

Center A utilized a resident faculty member to offer a writing center at the site. This individual partnered with adjunct faculty to identify due dates of upcoming assignments and then scheduled availability accordingly. An on-site math instructor (part-time) also was available to students on this campus to provide tutoring to support
math skills. Center A also conducted a new student orientation to familiarize students with the services available on that campus.

Center B provided a variety of clubs to support student interest in a particular profession. All clubs were sponsored by a faculty member, which also increased student/faculty interaction (i.e., academic integration). This center offered special services to help students manage stress levels during finals week. One especially unique service identified during the interview was shoulder massages (replicating a similar service provided on the main campus). Student orientation sessions were conducted each semester to inform students of services available and to allow them to become familiar with campus staff. This service was particularly beneficial for transfer students. Center B was in the process of developing a writing center to support student writing skills. Center staff also supported students by conducting mock interviews and resume review and feedback. The center’s library staff were available to teach students the way in which to access online databases to enhance their confidence in their research skills.

Center C also offered academically focused clubs and stated that students experienced significant growth in their confidence levels as a result of their participation in these clubs. This center also offered a series of student success seminars. The key informant indicated that these seminars were successful because they were limited to one hour, which fit well with busy student schedules. They also increase student familiarity with center staff, improving their comfort level with seeking assistance when they encountered barriers during the semester. Center C provided a student transition tour for those who were moving to the main campus. Center staff transported students to the main campus and conducted a tour that included a meal, as well as locating the computer labs,
library, and ATM machines. This effort minimized the anxiety felt by students as they transitioned to the much larger main campus environment.

**Minimizing the Impact of Situational Barriers**

A variety of actions were implemented by key informants and their staff to minimize situational barriers experienced by off-campus center students. These barriers are related to personal life conditions, such as family and work responsibilities (Cross, 1981). To assist students with budgetary constraints and to try to simulate a benefit that main campus students experience, staff at Center B entreated local businesses to provide discounts to those students who show their university identification card. Numerous local businesses participated in this effort. While childcare services were not available at this center, a daycare facility was located in close proximity to the center, making it convenient to the students. In addition, staff at Center B worked in partnership with the local community college to provide students with access to head start/pre-school services when slots were available. Students who used this service were charged based on income. Continuing its partnership with the community college, Center B provided students with access to a clothing bank as a resource for professional clothing for upcoming interviews or student teaching assignments.

A resource guide was developed on Campus C and regularly distributed to students to assist in locating low-cost alternatives for textbooks from sources in addition to the bookstore on the main campus. Students at Center C knew they could access a resource room until late in the evening to complete coursework that required Internet access. These late hours (10:00 p.m.) were implemented due to the center administrator’s awareness that only 85% of the service area had Internet access.
Other Efforts to Support Student Persistence and Success

Numerous other services were provided at these three centers that did not align directly into a specific category of institutional, dispositional, and situational barriers but nevertheless provided support to their student populations as they sought to navigate the postsecondary system. For example, both Centers A and B hosted an annual cookout for students and faculty. During final exams week, Center A provided a variety of healthy food and snacks to fuel students rushing in from personal and professional commitments prior to taking exams. This center also transported students to large corporations in the region as a co-curricular experience.

Center B sponsored a football night activity to create a sense of connection to the main campus. This outdoor activity featured a large blow-up screen, and current students and alumni were invited to attend the family-friendly event. Recognizing the importance of the family to the nontraditional student, Campus C provided a family movie night at least once a semester. Students were encouraged to bring their children and were treated to a children’s movie, popcorn, and candy. Health services also visited the off-campus center to provide free flu shots and other limited services.

Synthesis of Recurring Themes

Data analysis to identify recurring themes occurred in four stages: transcription; identification of categories of barriers; classification of developing themes; and finally, synthesis of those themes. Individual transcripts were scanned and compared to develop preliminary categories. Collapsing these categories into common areas resulted in well-defined themes. These themes were then used to summarize and interpret findings and are presented in the following sections.
Faculty Resources

All three key informants expressed frustration with their thwarted attempts to convince faculty from the main campus to teach on the extended campuses. One informant stated, “They don’t think it’s a problem to ask folks to drive to main campus. But if you ask them to drive here to teach a class, it’s too far.” When asked about advocating for courses on the extended campus, another key informant indicated, “It’s very helpful to have two faculty members who are mine, even though I’m not their discipline specialist, but their salaries are paid by my cost center.” This administrator noted that, during new student orientation sessions, many faculty members made an attempt to attend and engage with students. The third informant expressed concern that no incentives are in place at the main campus to encourage faculty to teach at the off-campus centers or, at the very least, to teach by interactive television. This administrator recalled that, in the past, faculty members received release time for teaching at the centers, but that system was no longer in place. “They don’t want to come here to teach, whether it’s day or night.” The administrator further clarified, “Since so many teachers are still – they’re not doing a lot of interaction with a student – it’s [interactive television] a very viable means of teaching a class.”

Interaction with students was sometimes impacted by the type of instructor. Adjunct instructors were recognized for their “real world experience, but after working all day in their professional positions, they want to come to campus, teach their class, and leave.” Faculty who were housed at the centers were seen as more available to students and more likely to participate in co-curricular and special activities. One administrator
acknowledged a marked difference in student interaction and engagement between the adjunct instructors and resident faculty members.

Institutional Support for Additional Classes and Regular Course Rotation

Offering courses in a strategic way to maximize meeting students’ needs was a desire expressed by all informants. Unfortunately, due to budgetary requirements related to course enrollments, Center A was severely limited in its ability to offer specific courses or to offer more than one section of a course. The administrator shared: “We have really had to rely more and more on ITV . . . as a way to bring students into classes that are already happening here because of that class size issue.”

Another informant expressed concern about the lack of priority efforts to “schedule a rotation that would ensure a complete delivery of a program” to meet students’ educational needs. The administrator followed this statement by reminding the researcher that, in attempting to meet the Council on Postsecondary Education’s goal of increased access and degree attainment in Kentucky, it was imperative that the main campus make a concerted effort to provide timely and relevant coursework at the off-campus centers. The informant went on to suggest that each academic college on the main campus consider appointing a coordinator to work with the centers to develop a regular course schedule and rotation pattern. This initiative would be viewed by center administrators and students as “making a commitment to you and to your students that we will deliver these classes in this way to meet your needs.”

The third informant admitted that the main campus understood the need to do more to address the way courses are structured to “be more conducive to the adult learner who is working and trying to plan a schedule between where they are right now and
The administrator stressed that students with multiple personal and professional commitments need to be able to know semesters in advance those courses that will be offered in order to plan accordingly. The administrator indicated that, in recognition of this need to support and meet the needs of the nontraditional student, the main campus had hired a staff person to “focus on enrollment management of the adult learner.”

**Importance of Staff Immersion in the Local Community**

The informants emphasized that immersion in the community in which the center is located is crucial to identifying and remaining abreast of changing local needs. The administrators and their staff were members of groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, workforce development taskforce, and other civic and social organizations. They also frequented other events such as school awards ceremonies and career fairs. The administrator at Center A stated that staff attend community-based events on a daily basis, which provided purposeful opportunities to pinpoint local needs. This same center also distributed a survey to business and industry, asking not only for their continuing education needs, but also assessing their willingness to invest in the education of their employees, through financial support of paying tuition/fees and release time from work.

Another administrator met regularly with local city and county government officials, leadership of civic and social organizations, and business leaders. In the course of those meetings, the administrator sought to identify their education and professional development needs, encouraged them to hire university graduates, explored potential internship opportunities for center students, and solicited opportunities to meet with
business and industry staff for recruitment purposes (particularly if that employer sponsored an employee tuition assistance program). This center instituted a unique approach to internship placements. Rather than simply locating employers who had internship availability, center staff worked with the students to identify interest in certain businesses and industry and then approached the employer to advocate on behalf of that student. Several students were sent to the employer to interview for the internship, thus providing the employer with choices and creating a sense of partnership between the institution and the employer. As this individual aptly stated, “Community needs and student needs all have to come together. You can’t separate – you can’t produce graduates that don’t meet the needs of the community.”

**Revenue Generation**

All informants indicated that revenue generation currently was not a role for their off-campus center, but very likely would be in the near future. The administrator at Center A advised that the main campus was moving to a revenue-centered model for budgeting purposes. This individual expressed serious concerns about the longevity of the extended campus, if such a model were implemented, due to their small class enrollments and the emphasis on dual credit student enrollment. The administrator requested that the extended center be “held harmless, or the center could close.” The informant also noted that the main campus had to make decisions based on money and expressed concern for the future of the off-campus center.

Another informant stated that, while the campus was not required to generate revenue, in essence it was operated as a cash cow. As defined by Bebko and Huffman (2011), the cash cow campus operates with a small staff of adjunct instructors providing
the bulk of high demand academic programming. This administrator indicated that
negotiations were ongoing to create a new funding model for the center based on
enrollment growth. The administrator hoped “to keep a percentage of the tuition dollars
on new growth that would then give us some resources to hire staff and some of the
things that we need.”

While revenue generation was not part of the responsibilities at the time of the
interview, the third key informant shared that grant writing was a responsibility. Grants
were sought to sponsor special activities, services, and co-curricular opportunities to
supplement the institutional budget. This administrator and another of the center staff had
been awarded several external funding opportunities, which used to enhance learning
activities for members of the student clubs.

**Use of Advisory Boards**

Two of the off-campus centers utilized an advisory board that served two
purposes: to be well informed of changing community needs and to act as an advocate to
the main campus for new or increased courses or services. The members of these
advisory groups typically were business owners and community leaders. Some were
graduates of the institution. One center administrator advised, “They’re on there to help
us make sure that our academic programs stay current and also to help us promote what it
is that we’re doing in the different facets that they serve in.” The advisory board at Center
A met twice annually; the board at Center B met two to three times per year.

The administrator at Campus C acknowledged that, while the campus did not
have an advisory board, plans were underway to develop one. This administrator had
begun to recruit members and had strategically chosen two members of the local
community college, hoping that their input and advocacy efforts with the main campus might result in increased programming to benefit both. Ultimately, the administrator was optimistic that the involvement of community college staff on the advisory board would lead to an articulation agreement between the two institutions. One informant vocalized the importance of advisory boards by asserting, “They can be a very powerful voice for us.”

**Unexplored Opportunities and Impediments**

Research Question 4 asked key informants to identify unexplored opportunities that could increase their ability to meet the mission of the main campus. The administrator at Center B expressed concern with students’ lack of understanding of the need to utilize the support services available to increase student persistence and, ultimately their graduation. This was especially relevant to the first-generation student population that does not understand the importance of accessing services such as mock interviews, which would support their career marketability. One informant identified the lack of transfer and articulation agreements as a serious impediment to the ability of the center to meet the mission of the main campus. The administrator explained that as these students did not have local resources beyond the community college they must overcome a number of barriers to attend the main campus, rather than the local off-campus center. These barriers included their fear of leaving the familiarity of home, financial burdens created by the requirement to pay for meal plans and on-campus housing, or the distance barrier if they chose to commute.

The administrator at Center B indicated a void with executive leadership training and was in negotiations with business and industry and a supplier to provide this service.
in their region. This informant also stressed a need to develop congruence between that which the community believed it needed and the jobs it was able to support. The administrator used the examples of an engineer and accountant: “The community will tell you ‘we want engineers’ and ‘we want accountants.’ Well, that’s not really what they want – do you have jobs for engineers? Not really, and so we need to do a better job as an institution of identifying what kind of graduates would meet their needs.”

Research Question 5 asked key informants to identify items that prevented or limited their ability to carry out the institutional mission. One administrator expressed that the main campus faculty’s unfamiliarity with the center created a lack of desire to teach at the center and suggested that visits by these faculty to meet local students might minimize some of their apprehension. This administrator also stressed the need for a top-down approach to institutional commitment to the off-campus centers, suggesting that the university president could issue an edict requiring departmental support of the centers, which could more effectively meet the mission of the institution.

The administrator at Center A mused, “I don’t feel like the issue is services as much as I feel like the issue is we don’t offer academic majors through the center. And we don’t have corresponding online majors for all the things that they would like to be doing.” This administrator also cited transportation challenges as limiting efforts. Reaching the center from the adjoining counties required a circuitous route; thus, prospective students often opted for the interstate with better roadways. The county in which that center was located had a 9% degree attainment rate. Although both the locals and the government lobbied for the center to be located in their community, the low
degree attainment rate illustrated that individuals were not availing themselves of the nearby educational opportunity.

The Center B administrator indicated that a lack of support from academic affairs limited the ability to meet the mission of the main campus. The administrator lamented, “They don’t want to support – they don’t see – don’t understand our students – don’t see the value – or they’re not rewarded for working with us.” This administrator hoped that a revised funding model that allowed for hiring more resident faculty would minimize this concern. The administrator also expressed that accreditation requirements caused difficulty in bringing academic programs to the off-campus centers.

**Summary**

Gaither (1999) proposed that the critical task of extended campuses is to advocate on behalf of the needs of the local communities in which they are located. They exist to increase accessibility to place bound students who, for numerous reasons, cannot attend courses on the main campus. The needs of the students and the community may not necessarily represent the needs of the main campus, or off-campus centers in the same service area. As indicated in the key informant interviews, community pressure led to the creation or expansion of some off-campus centers, including the development of new programs and other initiatives in support of local economic development and educational attainment goals and needs.

In order to develop a thorough picture of the off-campus centers in Kentucky, several tools were used to gather demographic data and qualitative information related to minimizing the impact of barriers that affect the success of nontraditional students. As postsecondary institutions expand to meet the needs of the increasing nontraditional
student population, branch campuses, off-campus centers, extended campuses, etc., are critical to their success. It is important to understand the contribution of these sites to the main campus and the success of their students. Recommendations based on these results are discussed further in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to provide postsecondary institutional administrators with information regarding the contributions made by the branch campuses to the mission of their main campuses in Kentucky. This chapter includes a discussion of the results of the study and the conclusions drawn in response to the research questions. The chapter also includes a discussion of the implications of this research to main campus administrators and to off-campus center administrators, as well as recommendations for further research.

Cross’s (1981) barriers to adult learning was selected as the theoretical framework for this research. Central to this model were the concepts of situational, dispositional, and institutional barriers. Institutional administrators, armed with a comprehensive understanding of the barriers faced by nontraditional students will be able to meet their needs through relevant and timely support services, which increase student academic and social integration and lead to increased persistence and success (Tinto, 1993; Fairchild, 2003).

It is anticipated that higher education will continue to experience increasing enrollment trends of nontraditional students who, by virtue of their age and stage of life, experience numerous barriers that negatively impact their postsecondary experience (Brown, 2002; Chao & Good, 2004; Lundberg, 2003; USED NCES, 2012). These barriers may cause this population to experience the educational process in a different way than their traditional counterparts and may decrease their participation in academically purposeful activities that lead to social and academic integration. Services that meet the needs of this population are necessary on any campus that enrolls
substantial numbers of nontraditional students, including off-campus centers within Kentucky’s public four-year postsecondary system (Baptista, 2013; Wyatt, 2011). Data retrieved from the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education indicated that almost 19% of students within this system are 25 years and older. These percentages would be even greater with the inclusion of traditional students with nontraditional circumstances and adult students in the Kentucky Community and Technical College system.

Discussion of Research Findings

Research Question 1 sought to identify the unique features and characteristics of the branch campuses in Kentucky. This question was further divided into four sub-questions that explored demographics of the administrators, asset details of the campus, staffing patterns, and student demographics. The majority of center administrators were female, and almost two-thirds served in a full-time capacity. No consistency in the use of a title exists throughout the state, but 65% were referred to as “directors.” Administrators possessed from 1 to 25 years of experience, with a wide variety of degrees held or in progress.

The second sub-question addressed asset details of the campuses. Half of the 17 centers were co-located with another educational or related institution. Only four were owned by the parent institution. The locales for off-campus centers in Kentucky occurred in a variety of settings and partnership efforts, which is consistent with the literature review (Bebko & Huffman, 2011; Bird, 2014; Cage, 1989). One center administrator (non-key informant) shared that, due to a partnership between the main campus and the local fiscal court, a grant had been received to renovate a building purchased by the institution. The administrator at Center B indicated that the site operated as a cash cow
campus, which was the most frequently observed typology in the NABCA survey (Bebko & Huffman, 2011).

The third sub-question sought to determine the staffing patterns of the centers – specifically, the type and number of full- and part-time administrative staff, as well as the use of resident faculty. One center (storefront) was managed by an external administrator, with onsite assistance from a student worker. Conversely, one center employed onsite 16 administrative staff. Similar to findings in research by Fonseca and Bird (2007) and Bebko and Huffman (2011), these administrators and their staff served mainly in generalist capacities. It is likely that the centers with more administrative staff and resident faculty were able to operate in specialized roles, similar to the \textit{mini main campuses} identified by Bebko and Huffman. Those with smaller staff contingents were likely to serve in a more comprehensive role, similar to the \textit{increasing access campuses} typology identified by Bebko & Huffman.

The final sub-question of Research Question 1 attempted to gather demographic data from institutional research offices of the five institutions under study. The institutional research offices at Murray State University, Western Kentucky University, and Morehead State University provided the requested data within one week of the initial request. Northern Kentucky University provided the requested data within three weeks of the initial request. After several inquiries, Eastern Kentucky University responded that due to other pending requests, the information would not be available in the near future. The institutional research office at Eastern suggested that the researcher mine the university fact book to glean data, but clarified that data related to campus credit hours generated were not provided in the fact book. Given the national concern regarding
accountability and increasing degree attainment rates, it appeared to be extraordinary that some institutions did not have ready access to information on those sites. Although the fact book at Eastern Kentucky University contained enrollment data for three centers, the researcher was unable to locate data for the remaining centers. The researcher was unable to determine if the data at all campuses are not tracked, or simply not reported in the fact books. The most comprehensive source of data statewide was found in the fact books for Western Kentucky University and Morehead State University.

Research Question 2 explored the administrators’ perceptions of the contributions of the centers to the educational mission of the main campus. Three sources of information were used to gather these data – the online survey, key informant interviews, and data from institutional research. The majority of respondents indicated that students were able to obtain a full degree at the center (81%), but the breadth of degree programming was limited. Interactive television, followed by face to face, were the primary modes of course delivery.

During the key informant interviews, administrators were questioned about their role in obtaining academic programming for the center and the manner in which they advocated for new programming. These administrators used informal means for requesting additional coursework, as identified by their familiarity with community needs or as identified by their staff. This finding was consistent with recommendations from Womack and Podemski (1985) of the importance of branch campus leadership in determining academic programming relevant to community needs. Unfortunately, obtaining new or additional coursework appeared to be hampered by a lack of support or
understanding by main campus faculty and administrators of the needs of off-campus center students.

Research Question 2 also explored non-credit and certification production. These data were more difficult to capture. The methodologist who assisted with the development of the online survey recommended scaling back the number of questions to encourage respondent participation. The methodologist advised that these data could be captured by mining institution websites or by asking respondents to share publications that detailed their non-credit and certificate courses in the initial email that solicited their support. Only two respondents provided that level of detail. Efforts to mine data from institutional websites resulted in mixed information. Some institutions had specialized offices on the main campus that offered non-credit programming on campus, at off-campus centers, and at other locations by special request. However, key informant interviewees indicated that specialized coursework was regularly developed by center staff in response to community needs. An organized or routine method was not apparent for coordinating these programs institution-wide, which could be a necessity for accommodating the unique needs of each community.

Research Question 3 sought to determine efforts by administrators and their staff to promote student persistence and success by minimizing barriers that deter academic and social integration. Responses were divided into three categories: institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers (Cross, 1981). Two sources of information were used to gather these data – the online survey and key informant interviews. In response to questions regarding the services and activities provided at the off-campus centers, these administrators indicated that extensive services and activities were offered. Every campus
provided some form of academic advising services for their students through either
dedicated staff or generalist staff. Similarly, activities that promoted social integration
also were offered on many campuses. None of these campuses offered inter-collegiate
sports, Greek activities, or residential fitness activities. However, a few were able to
secure limited health services for students. Some of the more unique services included
student mentoring, a faculty development center that could be utilized by adjunct
instructors, and family football or movie nights. As suggested by Cross (1981) and Tinto
(1975), supportive services and student success seminars, particularly those offered
during non-routine hours, were essential in helping students successfully navigate the
higher education system and overcome those institutional, situational, and dispositional
barriers. In addition, providing social activities that recognized the importance of family
members increased the student’s social integration into the institution (Tinto, 1975,
1993).

Research Question 3 also explored the administrator’s involvement with
community organizations and groups. All three key informants indicated that high levels
of involvement in the local communities were essential to the success of their roles. Two
of the three utilized advisory boards comprised of leaders in the community. Both Bird
(2014) and Wells (1966) stated that advisory boards possess a different level of power
than the center administrators when advocating for funding and academic programming
in support of local needs. Both administrators at Center B and C, concurred with findings
in the literature. The administrator at Center C had strong expectations that strategically
choosing board members could result in increased academic programming at the off-
campus center.
Research Question 4 sought to ascertain the unexplored opportunities that would increase the off-campus center’s contribution to the mission of the main campus. Two sources of information were used to gather these data – the online survey and key informant interviews. Respondents to the online survey indicated a need for more staffing to assist with the enrollment and financial aid processes. One center indicated that the counseling center spent only three hours per semester at the off-campus site. For students who struggled with myriad barriers, three hours appeared to be inadequate to meet the student needs at these centers, which ranged in enrollment from 25 to 1,643. Visits from faculty and top-level administrators to engage with students was also expressed as a need for off-campus centers. This suggestion was consistent with Bryant’s (1993) findings that some students experienced feelings of detachment from the main campus due to, among other factors, the lack of visits from on-campus administrators.

Respondents also suggested the need for more academic and complete programming at these centers to increase enrollment. One key informant indicated the need for transfer or articulation agreements between the four-year institutions and local community and technical colleges. Surprisingly, these agreements were absent between all off-campus centers and the two-year colleges. The notion of articulation agreements has been an element of the P-16 discussion for several decades in an attempt to smooth student transitions (www.cpe.ky.gov). As these agreements typically are negotiated by main campus administrators, advocating for these agreements may be out of the realm of responsibility for off-campus center administrators. Perhaps the better approach would be to seek the assistance of the center’s advisory board to advocate for these agreements.
The absence of articulation agreements with the off-campus centers could be perceived by those in the local community as a lack of interest in their needs.

Research Question 5 asked off-campus center administrators to identify factors that impacted their ability to accomplish the educational mission of the main campus. This question was posed during the key informant interviews. Along the same line, the center administrators reported on a lack of onsite faculty and the reluctance of main campus faculty to teach at the off-campus centers. Increasing regional degree attainment rates necessitated that a full range of academic programming is offered at these centers in regular rotations to aid students in planning work and personal obligations.

**Practice Implications**

The findings from the current study have practical implications for those directly involved in the leadership of branch campuses, off-campus centers, extended campuses, and twigs, as well as for main campus administrators who supervise these staff. Insight gained from this research also may benefit adult learners contemplating pursuing postsecondary education. Even in the face of ever decreasing budgets, many of the supports and activities offered at these off-campus centers could be implemented at low or no cost to the institution, while positively minimizing the impact of institutional, dispositional, and situational barriers. The following implications for administrators correspond with the recurring themes identified from analysis of the key informant interviews.

**Implications for Off-Campus Center Administrators**

Myriad supportive services and activities were offered by off-campus center administrators and their staff, which supported those experiencing institutional,
situational, and dispositional barriers. Some were typical services (e.g., advising, library services, and research instruction) while others were atypical (e.g., family movie nights, shoulder massages, and snacks during finals week).

While off-campus centers cannot be expected to entirely duplicate services available on the main campus due to fewer human and financial resources, it is incumbent upon the staff to attempt to support nontraditional students in meaningful ways. Cross (1981); Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993); and others identified institutional barriers created by providing services only during regular university hours that provoke undue stress on nontraditional students. Off-campus centers should attempt to model the example of Center B by providing evening advising, test proctoring, library, and bookstore services. While it is unlikely in the current budget crisis that off-campus centers will receive additional funding to hire more support staff as vacancies occur, job descriptions should be revamped to include the expectation of job flexibility to ensure availability to students.

Skillful academic advising is paramount to guiding nontraditional students in carefully managing degree requirements, as well as reducing the risk of taking needless courses that cause unnecessary financial burdens. Effective advising can help to minimize nontraditional student attrition rates or, at the very least, shorten stopout periods. As they meet and interact with students prior to, during, and after classes, academic advisors and faculty are in unique positions to identify and counsel students on needs related to deficits for successfully completing coursework. They may direct and encourage students to utilize supports that will increase their success in the classroom. As reported at Center B,
it often was challenging to make nontraditional students aware that they need to access these services, not to necessarily make them aware that the services exist.

Conducting student success seminars, such as those offered at Center C, is paramount to increasing student self-efficacy in nontraditional students. Other specialized services, such as writing centers, computer labs, etc., could be funded through external sources. More than half of the administrators expressed a desire for health and wellness activities on their sites. The main campus is unlikely to proceed with building fitness centers at the off-campus sites; however, as suggested by the administrator at Center C, perhaps health and wellness staff on the main campus could negotiate fitness contracts for students with local health clubs. Failing that, most of the centers had adequate space and could negotiate with local fitness experts to offer special classes, such as Zumba or yoga. Off-campus centers also should consider collaboration with program administrators on the main campus to provide comparable specialized programming for their students. Special events such as Take Back the Night, Martin Luther King, Jr. vigils, or groundbreaking ceremonies could be transmitted by interactive television to the off-campus centers and facilitated by center staff.

Strategies that target family members, such as family movie nights and ballgame watch parties, could be implemented at low or no cost to the institution, and could significantly impact student retention. Some researchers have found (Clark, 2006; Hossler et al., 2008; Jacoby & Garland, 2004; Wyatt, 2011) that family encouragement and a family-oriented campus were strong predictors of retention. Finally, off-campus center administrators should partner with the registrar’s office, institutional research, and any offices that track student retention and attrition. Databases should be mined in order
that retention rates can be scrutinized by discernable groups – in this case, students at the off-campus centers (Spady, 1970, 1971; Tinto, 1975). These data, along with efforts to conduct exit interviews with dropouts and stopouts, would assist off-campus center staff in making meaningful attempts to support their students. Two key informants indicated they were serving increasing numbers of traditional students and traditional age students with nontraditional circumstances; therefore, off-campus administrators should consider structuring services that assume all students experience challenges to persistence and success.

Other resources and services that may contribute to the creation of an encouraging atmosphere at the off-campus centers include the creation of peer study groups, career center services, and childcare. Access to a kitchen area for food storage during periods of back-to-back classes would assist those students with constricted budgets who must limit eating out. Honor societies, such as Alpha Sigma Lambda that recognize adult students for their accomplishments, support student self-efficacy and may help to minimize the impact of dispositional barriers. Finally, intrusive advising, that incorporates intervention strategies for students who are not academically prepared, or who are experiencing barriers that might hinder their persistence, could be of benefit to this population (Earl, 1998). This model of student advising is proactive, rather than reactive.

Implications for Main Campus Administrators

Vital to supporting the mission of the main campus is the provision of academic programming that is timely and convenient at the off-campus centers. While adjunct instructors bring real-world experience to the classroom, those experiences limit the time that an adjunct can spend in educationally purposeful activities outside the classroom to
minimize barriers and to increase academic and social integration. While Centers A and B had some resident faculty, both expressed the need for additional faculty. Center C had no resident faculty and joined Center A in expressing concern for those students who were reluctant to leave their home community to attend classes offered only on the main campus. If strained university budgets do not allow for more resident faculty at these centers, main campus administrators must find ways to increase the presence of main campus departmental faculty at these sites. One such way may be to require main campus deans and department chairs to include teaching at the off-campus centers as part of the duties for all newly hired faculty. Those new faculty members could be required to spend one day per week at the off-campus centers, to teach, advise, support student clubs, and mentor students.

All three key informants indicated a need for exploring consistent course rotations that can be scheduled semesters in advance to allow students to plan more effectively. This advance scheduling would aid the nontraditional student, and traditional students with nontraditional circumstances, to plan in advance and make mindful decisions about their educational future. Main campus administrators should consider requiring deans and department chairs to develop, at minimum, a four-semester schedule for the off-campus centers. This would assist those staff at the centers who advise students in helping to develop a plan for two academic year calendars. In addition, block scheduling may help to minimize the impact of situational barriers related to work and childcare. If courses for a particular major could be scheduled back to back on Tuesday-Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to noon, employees may find it easier to receive permission from their employers for regular time off.
All key informants stressed the importance of community involvement. A visible presence in the community surrounding the off-campus center, not only aids in student recruitment, but also keeps off-campus center staff informed of pending changes to the community infrastructure. As these off-campus administrators are required to be immersed in the local community, main campus administrators should consider involving the local community in choosing the off-campus center administrator. The main campus administrator who serves as the chair of the hiring committee should invite two to three community members to serve on the committee. Involving community members in the selection process for the center administrator will aid future partnership efforts and sense of commitment to the institution. If an advisory board already is in place, selection committee members could be chosen from that group.

Advisory boards were identified by key informants as important to the success of off-campus centers. With the exception of storefront operations, main campus administrators should encourage the development of advisory boards for each off-campus site in Kentucky. Not only are their efforts with the main campus key in advocating for new programming, but these community members have knowledge of potential opportunities that may be available to support student scholarships and internships. These boards also may be aware of external funding opportunities that could lead to increases in activities or services to endorse academic and social integration, while minimizing the impact of barriers to education.

Main campus administrators should require revenue generation to be one of the responsibilities of off-campus center administrators. In addition, these administrators should consider reallocating a percentage of tuition dollars to the off-campus centers to
fund support services, or the employment of full- or part-time faculty. Postsecondary institutions are eligible to access external financing to fund operating needs, short- and long-term initiatives, research, and special projects. External funding often is available from local businesses, industry, private foundations, and state or federal sources. Capitalizing on the knowledge base of members of the advisory boards may identify sources of revenue that can be used to create writing centers, fund special clubs, or support scholarships for nontraditional students that could be used in the summer term when financial aid is not readily available.

Finally, top-level administrators from academic affairs, student affairs, and possibly the office of the president should schedule frequent visits to the off-campus centers. Modern day university presidents take pride in being student friendly and accessible by participating in student activities, scheduling town hall meetings, and teaching courses. Administrators also must be equally accessible to students at the off-campus centers.

**Limitations**

The current research offered only a small glimpse into the larger picture of the contribution of off-campus centers to the traditional university mission of improving lives through teaching, research, and service. This study relied on the participants’ willingness to contribute through the completion of an online survey. In addition, as the researcher was able to solicit the experiences of only three of the 17 off-campus center administrators, a representative sample may not have been obtained.

While the key informant interview sample was assumed to be representative of other off-campus centers, the sample also may have been dissimilar as a result of the
difference in student populations at each of the off-campus sites. Center A almost exclusively served a traditional student population, while Campus B served more nontraditional students, and Campus C served an almost even mix of traditional and nontraditional students. Although the researcher attempted to ensure that sites were comparable by choosing to study those attached to the public four-year institutions in Kentucky, differences existed among these off-campus centers. Those differences (e.g., student enrollment, course delivery methods, and the use of adjunct versus resident faculty) ensured that complete congruence between these off-campus centers was not possible. Within the same institution, off-campus centers were observed to vary greatly. Due to these distinct differences, results may not be generalizable to extended campuses in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, or to those centers associated with private institutions in the state.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

Research related to the impact of branch campuses, off-campus centers, and extended campuses on the mission of the main campus was noted to be sparse to nonexistent. The results of this study reflected the need for more in-depth research into the factors that impact attrition rates of nontraditional students. Additional research will further the knowledge necessary to support nontraditional students pursuing their education in non-main campus environments. The following recommendations for further research are based upon the results of the current study.

An in-depth phenomenological study, involving nontraditional students at off-campus centers who have persisted and those who have dropped or stopped out, could provide crucial insights from the student perspective of the value of distinct support
services. Care should be given to choosing various subsets of students – those 25 and older, those 25 and under, as well as those 25 and younger, who experience nontraditional circumstances. This information may be especially important for multi-site systems that serve as extensions of the main campus, and university systems with their differing missions for each campus (McGuinnes, 1991). An analysis of the type of students who comprise the majority of the student population would allow the main campus to effectively allocate resources based on student needs at the various campuses within the system. When funding is scarce, targeted service provisions could aid institutional fiscal planning.

Perceptions of faculty on the main campus related to a variety of aspects on the branch campus is an area for further research. Key informants speculated that faculty were reluctant to travel due to the distance, but other concerns also may exist that could be easily addressed. Understanding the reasons behind their unwillingness (e.g., perceptions of poor college readiness at off-campus centers, lack or minimal support and assistance from center administrators and staff, and the absence of dedicated office space) may provide clues for improvement. Center and main campus administrators could use these data to improve the perceptions and to identify incentives to encourage faculty to teach at these locations.

Several of the centers in the current study operated under transfer agreements with local community colleges. Isolating the differences in the needs of transfer students, who often comprise a significant percentage of the student population at off-campus centers, could provide beneficial information related to their persistence and success. As valuable ideas for new services often come from the group most in need of those services, focus
groups could be conducted to identify barriers and gaps in service from the student perspective. Transfer students are assumed to possess knowledge of universal institutional systems (e.g., course management systems such as Blackboard or Canvas); therefore, they do not participate in orientation sessions. However, that may not be the case, depending upon the institution the student previously attended. Data gleaned from research on the needs of transfer students could increase their successful transition into the off-campus center and could minimize the negative impact of both their transfer and those institutional barriers.

A longitudinal study to determine whether differences exist in persistence for students taught by resident faculty, adjunct instructors, or full-time faculty who commute from the main campus may identify important information related to course delivery and student success. If persistence was found to be higher at those sites that use resident faculty, results could be used by off-campus center administrators to strengthen the case for appointing resident faculty. Budgetary considerations also should be researched due to the increased costs associated with travel for main campus faculty to teach at the off-campus centers, whereas adjuncts often are from that local community and require no travel reimbursement.

Summary

Nontraditional students face countless situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers that impede their academic and social integration while pursuing a college degree. Providing a supportive environment that attempts to address these barriers will serve to further enhance the overall institutional mission and enable the success of this increasing population. Off-campus centers should be locations in which this population
can work with their peers and supportive faculty and be provided with the resources necessary to assist them in their persistence and success.

This study examined the impact of off-campus centers on the mission of the main campus and provided a framework for administrators on both the main campus and the off-campus centers for supporting students. The recurring theme from this study was that adequate programming is needed for students on these centers. Otherwise, it is impossible for them to support the mission of the main campus. As evidenced through interviews with center administrators, nontraditional and traditional students who experienced nontraditional barriers benefit from supportive campus environments that nurture their academic and social integration. When these students are successfully integrated into the center environment, they are less likely to stopout or dropout (Tinto, 1993).

Off-campus centers in Kentucky, through their efforts to support the mission of the main campus, can play a significant role in the success of students. Success at any postsecondary institution often is dependent upon the student’s ability to overcome institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Cross, 1981; Tinto, 1975; 1987; 1993). Off-campus centers are incapable of being all things to all students. However, with some institutional effort, they can provide low or no cost services and activities to minimize the impact of these barriers to learning.
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Washington, DC: Education Policy Institute, Inc.


APPENDIX A
IRB Approval Letter

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY

DATE: November 4, 2014
TO: Caroline Atkins, B.S., M.S.
FROM: Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB
PROJECT TITLE: [677020-1] The University Branch Campus Contribution to the Mission of the Main Campus in Kentucky
REFERENCE #: IRB 15-177
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: November 4, 2014
EXPIRATION DATE: March 15, 2015
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB has APPROVED your submission with cooperating institutions. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed/implied consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the stamped consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the
appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting
requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported
promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this
project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the
appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must
be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the
expiration date of March 15, 2015.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years
after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Paul Mooney at (270) 745-2129 or
irb@wku.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all
correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within
Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB's records.
APPENDIX B

IRB Consent Form for Key Informant Interviews

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT
(Interview)

Project Title: The University Branch Campus Contribution to the Mission of the Main Campus in Kentucky

Investigator: Caroline Atkins, Doctoral Student and Investigator
Western Kentucky University
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project.

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign this form. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

1. Nature and Purpose of the Project: This study is being conducted under the guidance of Dr. Ric Keaster in the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at Western Kentucky University (WKU) as part of my dissertation requirements. The research will allow me to learn more specific practices at branch campuses that contribute to the mission of the main campus as well as the unique features and characteristics of the branch campuses that support the academic and social integration of students.

2. Explanation of Procedures: This phase of the study will gather qualitative information from a small subset of branch campus administrators about the efforts of the branch campus to promote academic and social integration of the student population. The second phase will require semi-structured interviews.

3. Discomfort and Risks: There are no known risks associated with this research.

4. Benefits: You may not directly benefit from this research. I hope that your participation will provide an in-depth assessment of the importance of branch campuses in the postsecondary delivery system in Kentucky. At this time there is no single source that provides descriptive data on the branch campuses of Kentucky’s four-year institutions.

5. Confidentiality: To the best of my ability your answers to any questions that are not accessible through public records will remain confidential.

6. Refusal/Withdrawal: Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

WKU IRB# 15-177
Approval - 11/4/2014
End Date - 3/15/2015
Expedited
Original - 11/4/2014
You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

Signature of Participant ___________________________ Date __________

Witness ___________________________ Date __________

- I agree to the audio/video recording of the research. (Initial here) __________

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Paul Mooney, Human Protections Administrator
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-2129

WKU IRB# 15-177
Approval - 11/4/2014
End Date - 3/15/2015
Expedited
Original - 11/4/2014
APPENDIX C

IRB Consent Form for Online Survey

IMPLIED CONSENT DOCUMENT
(Survey)

Project Title: The University Branch Campus Contribution to the Mission of the Main Campus in Kentucky

Investigator: Caroline Atkins, Doctoral Student and Investigator
Western Kentucky University
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your agreement to participate in this project.

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1. **Nature and Purpose of the Project:** This study is being conducted under the guidance of Dr. Rie Keaster in the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at Western Kentucky University (WKU) as part of my dissertation requirements. The research will allow me to learn more specific practices at branch campuses that contribute to the mission of the main campus as well as the unique features and characteristics of the branch campuses that support the academic and social integration of students.

2. **Explanation of Procedures:** This study will involve two phases. The first phase is the online survey mentioned in the previous paragraph. The survey instrument will consist of three sections: demographic information on administrators; property information on the campuses; and demographic information on the student population. The second phase of the study will gather qualitative information from a small subset of branch campus administrators about the efforts of the branch campus to promote academic and social integration of the student population. The second phase will require semi-structured interviews. If you are randomly chosen to participate in the second phase of this research, an interview time and location will be scheduled at your convenience.

3. **Discomfort and Risks:** There are no known risks associated with this research.

4. **Benefits:** You may not directly benefit from this research. I hope that your participation will provide an in-depth assessment of the importance of branch campuses in the postsecondary delivery system in Kentucky. At this time there is no single source that provides descriptive data on the branch campuses of Kentucky’s four-year institutions.

5. **Confidentiality:** As with any online related activity the risk of a breach of confidentiality is always possible. To the best of my ability your answers to any questions that are not accessible through public records will remain confidential.

[IRB approval stamp]
WKU IRB# 15-177
Approval - 11/4/2014
End Date - 3/15/2015
Expedited
Original - 11/4/2014
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You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

**Your continued cooperation with the following survey implies your consent.**

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT
THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Paul Mooney, Human Protections Administrator
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-2129
Thanks for talking with me today. As I mentioned during that call, I am pursuing my doctorate in educational leadership at Western Kentucky University. My interest is related to exploring the impact of branch campuses on the mission of the main campus. My research has three phases. The first is to gather descriptive data on the branch campuses and their administrators. I plan to use a survey to gather that data. The second phase will require me to gather enrollment and credit hours generated at the branch campuses. I plan to work with the CPE and institutional research offices to gather that information. The last phase will involve conducting key informant interviews with administrators at random campuses to gather more detail on your efforts to overcome barriers that impact student retention.

To aid me in the first phase, I have developed a survey to gather data on the branch campuses that are attached to each of the four year institutions in our state. I would certainly appreciate your assistance in completing the survey. There are 24 quick answer questions that ask for information on staffing patterns, instructional and total campus space, student support services, etc. The survey link is provided below.

I am also interested in documenting the non-credit and certification courses offered on your campus. Do you have an easily accessible list you could send to me or could you direct me to a website resource?

If you need clarification about the questions, please feel free to call me at 270-227-9647. Thank you for your support of this important research.

Sincerely,

Caroline Atkins, Doctoral Student
Western Kentucky University
APPENDIX E

Survey Instrument

Dear Participant,  You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your agreement to participate in this project. The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have. You should keep a copy of this form for your records.

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THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Paul Mooney, Human Protections Administrator TELEPHONE: (270) 745-2129

Section I: Demographics of Branch Campus Administrators

Q1 Choose your branch campus from the list of home institutions below:

- Owensboro (1)
- Elizabethtown (2)
- Glasgow (3)
- Hopkinsville (4)
- Paducah (5)
- Madisonville (6)
- Henderson (7)
- Ashland (9)
- Mt. Sterling (10)
- Prestonsburg (11)
- Hazard (13)
- Corbin (17)
- Danville (18)
- Hazard (19)
- Manchester (21)
- Somerset (22)
- Williamstown (24)
- Click here to add: (25)
Q2 Your position is dedicated to managing the branch campus (choose one):

- Full-time (1)
- Part-time (2)
- Other (3) ____________________

Q3 Indicate the number of years you have been employed in your current position as the branch campus administrator:

Q4 Do you hold faculty rank?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q5 Indicate your gender:

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q6 Indicate your highest degree earned.

- Associate's (1)
- Bachelor's (2)
- Master's (3)
- Ed. S. (4)
- Ed. D. (5)
- Ph. D. (6)
- J. D. (7)
- Other (8) ____________________

Q7 Indicate your position title (choose one):

- Dean (1)
- Director (2)
- Coordinator (3)
- Chancellor (4)
- Other (5) ____________________
Q8 Indicate the position title of your direct supervisor on the main campus (choose one):

- Dean (1)
- Provost/Chief Academic Affairs Officer (2)
- University President (3)
- Associate Provost (4)
- Other (5) _______________

**Section II: Asset Information**

Q9 A stand-alone branch campus is defined as a location that is geographically apart and independent from the main campus and is permanent in nature. A co-located branch campus shares space with a community college or some other related institution. A storefront operation/site provides a physical presence (leased or owned space) where programming is delivered primarily by distance education. Please indicate which descriptor best fits your campus.

- Stand-alone branch campus (1)
- Co-located branch campus (2)
- Storefront operation/site (3)
- Other, please explain: (4) _______________

Q10 Indicate the approximate square footage of your branch campus:

- Square footage of instructional space (1) _______________
- Square footage of entire branch campus (2) _______________
- Other (3) _______________

Q11 Indicate whether your campus is owned or leased by the main campus (choose one):

- Owned (1)
- Leased (2)
- Other (3) _______________

Q12 Indicate how far your campus is from the main campus (miles):

Q13 Indicate the total number of full-time staff assigned to your branch campus for administrative and support purposes (all employees except faculty):
Q14 Indicate the total number of part-time staff (all employees except faculty) assigned to your branch campus for administrative and support purposes:

Q15 Indicate the number of each of the following administrative or support staff reported in questions 13 and 14 in the following employment categories (Total should equal the number of staff reported in the previous two questions):

_____ Management (1)
_____ Clerical (2)
_____ Technician (3)
_____ Custodial (4)
_____ Student Worker (5)
_____ Graduate Student (6)
_____ Security (7)
_____ Other Employment Category: (8)

Q16 How many faculty are permanently assigned to your branch campus to teach and/or advise students?

☐ Faculty (1) ____________________

Section III: Academic Disciplines, Non-credit Offerings, and Other Services

Q17 During the 2013 fall semester, please indicate the percentage of your total classes offered delivered by the following methods (total should equal 100%):

_____ Interactive Television/Video System % (1)
_____ Face-to-Face % (2)
_____ Hybrid (mix of online and face to face) (3)

Q18 Please list all the academic disciplines that were taught on your campus by any means in the fall 2013 semester. (An academic discipline is defined as a
branch of knowledge that is taught and researched as part of higher education. Examples include social work, criminal justice, supply chain logistics, etc.)

Q19 Indicate if a student is able to complete a degree in its entirety at your branch campus. If yes, indicate the number of academic disciplines offered in their entirety on your branch campus.

☐ Yes (1)  ☐ No (2)

Q20 Which of the following services are offered on your branch campus?

☐ Student Admissions (1)  ☐ Financial Aid (2)  ☐ Academic Advising (3)  ☐ Registration Assistance (4)  ☐ Food Services (5)  ☐ Bookstore (6)  ☐ Special Lectures, Workshops, and Seminars (7)  ☐ Mentoring (8)  ☐ Tutoring (9)  ☐ Counseling (10)  ☐ Career Development/Placement (11)  ☐ Services to Students with Disabilities (12)  ☐ Other (13) ____________________

Q21 Which of the following activities are offered on your branch campus?

☐ Student Government Association (1)  ☐ Student Activities (2)  ☐ Student Clubs (3)  ☐ Greek Activities (4)  ☐ Wellness Facilities (5)  ☐ Inter-collegiate Student Sporting Events (6)  ☐ Cultural Events (7)  ☐ Health Services (8)  ☐ Other (9) ____________________
Closing Comments

Q22 Are there any other services and activities offered at your branch campus that are not reported in any of the previous questions? If yes, please describe.

Q23 Are there any services and activities you would like to provide on your campus, but due to budgetary constraints or other competing priorities you are not able to provide? What are those services and activities?
APPENDIX F

Key Informant Interview Schedule

General Questions

What sets this branch campus apart or makes it special or unique?

1. As the branch campus administrator, how do you see your role in leading efforts to contribute to the mission of the main campus (academic programming and delivery methods)?

2. How do you advocate for services for the branch campus? What is your involvement in the decision making process for course offerings and services that occur on your campus?

3. How does your direct supervisor communicate with you concerning the changing priorities of the main campus? For example, priorities may change with the hiring of a new president, new initiatives, etc.

4. Do you believe main campus colleagues and administrators understand the needs of branch campus students and the unique needs of the communities where they located? Please explain your answer.

5. As the branch campus administrator, discuss your role in conducting assessments of institutional performance with the students on your campus and how you modify services based on those results.

Research Questions

Cross’s (1981) barriers to adult learning were adopted as the theoretical framework for this research. Central to this model are the concepts of situational,
dispositional, and institutional barriers. **Institutional barriers** are those educational procedures and practices that discourage adult learners. These include admission and transfer or credit policies, class scheduling, and access to necessary services such as library or counseling services. **Dispositional barriers** are those personal concerns that frequently pose greater obstacles to returning to school than other barriers. Examples of dispositional barriers include time, lack of confidence, family involvement and pressures. **Situational barriers** are those obstacles arising out of one's situation in life at a given time. For example, children needing care or supervision, transportation to classes, and financial constraints.

6. Considering strategies or practices your branch campus implements to tailor and enhance student persistence and student success, please respond to the following questions:

**Student Persistence and Success**

a. What types of academic programs and activities are provided on your campus?

b. What types of social and academic clubs or organizations are provided on your campus?

c. How do you encourage participation of nontraditional college students in academic and social activities on your branch campus?

d. How do you communicate institutional expectations to students (e.g., attendance)? How frequently are expectations communicated? Is there a formal system of providing feedback to students?
e. What activities or opportunities are provided for formal or informal interactions with faculty and students?

f. What services do you offer to provide a full-campus experience for students at this branch campus? Full-campus experience refers to services that are available on the main campus such as intramural sports, food services, bookstore, financial aid and advising assistance, etc.

g. Are there specific services or activities you offer that are designed to create a connection for students between the main and extended campus?

7. Considering strategies or practices your branch campus implements to promote community partnerships, please respond to the following:

   **Community Partnerships**

a. As the branch campus administrator, what strategies do you use to identify needs in the community surrounding your campus?

b. What efforts do you make to establish networks and partnerships in the surrounding community to advance the mission of the main campus leading to increased opportunities for internships, practicums, etc.?

c. How do the needs of local business and industry impact campus programming and operations?

d. How do partnerships with local community colleges strengthen the branch campus’ contribution to the mission of the main campus?

8. Considering strategies or practices your branch campus implements to promote student persistence, student success, and community partnerships, please respond to the following questions related to unexplored opportunities that could increase
the ability of the branch campus to promote the educational mission of the main campus:

a. What services could you be offering that might increase student persistence and success? What factors might be limiting your ability to provide these services?

b. Please discuss any regional outreach opportunities that are not currently being explored. If yes, what are they? What factors might be limiting your ability to further explore these regional outreach opportunities?

c. Discuss your role in revenue generation as a branch campus administrator. Please discuss any benchmarks required of you.

9. Considering factors that impact your ability to carry out the educational mission of the main campus, please answer the following:

a. What internal factors prevent or limit your ability to meet the mission of the main campus?

b. What external factors prevent or limit your ability to meet the mission of the main campus?

c. What future threats do you perceive may impact the ability of the branch campus to carry out the mission of the main campus?
APPENDIX G

Institutional Research Demographic Data Form

The Branch Campus Contribution to the Mission of the Main Campus in Kentucky
Course Section, Enrollment, and Student Credit Hour Summary

*Enrollment as defined by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education: Measured by the total of all in-state public and independent institutions’ fall semester undergraduate headcount enrollments, including full-time, part-time, degree-seeking, and non-degree seeking students.*

<table>
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<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Course Sections</th>
<th>Total Student Credit Hours Attempted*</th>
<th>Headcount Enrollment</th>
<th>Number of Graduate Students</th>
<th>Number of Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>Number of Traditional Students (Ages 18-24)</th>
<th>Number of Nontraditional Students (Ages 25+)</th>
<th>Number of Full-time Students</th>
<th>Number of Part-time Students</th>
<th>Number of Non-degree Seeking Students</th>
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*Total student credit hours attempted includes all course grades (e.g. Incomplete, failed, and audit)