


2017

# Pre-College Program Students' Academic Engagement and Persistence in Higher Education Studies

Deborah Ann bers  
*Walden University*

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Deborah Chambers

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Review Committee

Dr. Kathryn Hollywood, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Marilyn Wells, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. David Bail, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2017

Abstract

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Education Studies

by

Deborah Ann Chambers

MEd, The University of the West Indies, 2000

Post Graduate Education Diploma, The University of the West Indies, 1991

BA, University of Ottawa, 1983

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

July 2017

## Abstract

The Caribbean University's Pre-College Program (PCP) served as the conduit for the nation's academically underprepared high school graduates to matriculate to university and earn a degree. The PCP student enrollment increased annually since 2010; however, less than 70% of the total PCP students matriculated to an associate degree. Without a formal program evaluation, the empirical evidence into the factors that influenced PCP students' progress remained unknown. The purpose of this participatory-summative logic outcomes program evaluation was to measure stakeholders' perspectives of the ways in which the PCP's purpose, structure, and outcomes were manifested in the practices at the Caribbean University. A purposeful sample of 9 PCP students from the 2010 to 2015 PCP cohorts volunteered and received a 31-item Likert-scale College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ) on-line survey to garner insights into the factors influencing the PCP learners' outcomes. Nine PCP faculty members and the deputy registrar completed separate versions of an online questionnaire. The PCP students' responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The open-ended responses were coded and analyzed. The PCP faculty members and deputy registrar's open-ended responses were coded, and thematically analyzed. Participants' responses identified institutional, curricular, and admissions criteria issues that influenced PCP students' low academic performance while supporting the PCP's program continuation. Findings and recommendations were included in an executive report for the study site. Providing the outcomes of this research to the leadership at the study site may lead to positive social change by supporting a second chance for this Caribbean nation's academically underprepared high school graduates who seek a college degree.

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## Dedication

This is dedicated to my parents Terrence and Vilma Lee, and Rawle and Jeanette Scott who ignited my passion for lifelong learning and encouraged my journey.

This doctoral study is also dedicated to my husband Rohan Chambers for his unwavering belief in me and his support.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect that low program completion rates of students enrolled in one Precollege Program (PCP) had on the PCP students' ability to matriculate to higher education studies. In this study, I explored the experiences and challenges of faculty who teach developmental education courses and the academic organization's influence on students' engagement and persistence in higher education studies. Collectively, the local stakeholders' personal accounts, coupled with literature from research studies, supported this research framework's rationale. The reason for proposing this study, sought to address the experiences, persistence challenges, and issues faced by the 2010 to 2012 PCP student cohorts in their ability to attain matriculation status to pursue higher education studies at the Caribbean University. The study indicated the affect that the low matriculation numbers had on the PCP support and funding, students' morale, and the nation's workforce.

In this section, I discuss the effect that the PCPs' low college persistence rates had on the local context and the nation. This discussion was supported with evidence in the literature review outlining the challenges and experiences of developmental education students and factors affecting their ability to engage and persist in an academic environment. I identify the key terms and concepts associated with the study and indicate the alignment of these terms the problem's significance. The study's overarching research question as well as the study's conceptual framework are presented. Researchers Terenzini and Reason's (2005) comprehensive model of influences on student learning

and persistence served as the conceptual framework and was coupled with Davidson, Beck, and Milligan's (2009) theory on college students' completion and persistence. According to the evaluation's findings, there is a need for the Caribbean university to re-examine the administration and management of the PCP.

### **Definition of the Problem**

According to data from the Caribbean University registrar's office, 128 students enrolled in a 1-year PCP during the 2010 to 2012 academic years. In the fall 2010 semester, 52 PCP students registered; however, 43 students enrolled and nine students withdrew before the start of the fall semester. The 2010 PCP was a pilot project designed and offered to meet the growing numbers of academically underprepared high school students who did not meet the Caribbean University's matriculation requirements for an associate degree. The former Caribbean University registrar stated that 25 (58.1%) PCP students from the 2010 to 2011 cohort did not attain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 2.0 or higher and were unable to matriculate to one of the Caribbean University's associate degree programs (Caribbean University Registrar's Office, 2011). Of the 25 PCP students who failed to matriculate to an associate degree, 12 (48%) did not register for any courses in the following spring 2011 semester at the Caribbean University. Thirteen (52%) of the 25 students, however, registered for Spring 2011 courses; but, their CGPAs at the end of the 2010 to 2011 academic year were below 2.0, resulting in an incomplete PCP status. The PCP students could not matriculate to the Caribbean University's associate degree programs until they repeated and passed all courses they had failed (Caribbean University Registrar's Office, 2011). The factors

affecting the Caribbean University PCP students' low matriculation rates were unknown and attempts to collect empirical data were unfruitful.

Two-thirds of the 2010 to 2011 PCP student cohort did not persist to an associate degree. The Caribbean University's PCP students enrolled in the program attained at least two external examination passes and a Caribbean University entrance examination score from 120 to 159. Therefore, the 18 students from a cohort of 43 PCP students persisting to an associate degree was cause for concern and deserving of exploration. A total of 85 PCP students enrolled in the 2011 to 2012 academic year. According to analysis, 79 PCP students enrolled in the fall 2011, and six students enrolled in the spring 2012 semesters.

According to the fall Semester 1 term results, 37 (46.8%) of the 79 PCP students successfully completed all their courses. However, 31(39.2%) of PCP students successfully completed Semester 1 and enrolled in spring semester 2, 2012 (Caribbean University's Deputy Registrar's Office, 2012). The spring 2012 Semester 2 results for the six new PCP students, along with the program completion and matriculation status for the 2011 to 2012 cohort of 85 PCP students, was requested for the Caribbean University's office.

Demographic data were collected from the Caribbean University 2010 to 2012 PCP students' during their registration and were updated during academic advising sessions. The faculty who taught the PCP students enrolled at the Caribbean University from 2010 to 2012 was another data source, and during update sessions on the PCP students' progress, faculty shared insights on the PCP students. The 2010 to 2012 PCP students presented with diverse academic backgrounds and abilities, cultural differences,



family involvement in their education, personal education goals, self-efficacy issues, and socioeconomic backgrounds. These students were first-and second-generation college students, single parent students, and students who worked part-time. The 2010 to 2012 PCP student cohorts were also comprised of transfer students from international tertiary education institutions, and students returning to university after stepping out for one semester, or more. The aforementioned factors have the potential to influence university students' academic and social integration, their success, and persistence to higher education studies (Bean, 1990; Engle, & Tinto, 2008). Bean and Eaton (2000) found that students' retention and persistence to graduation may also be associated with the individuals' psychological motivations, and that students' needs influenced their academic and social integration. The Caribbean University's PCP students are academically underprepared and cannot matriculate to university. The nation's PCP students, therefore, need assistance if they are going to navigate the higher education system successfully, complete their developmental education program successfully, and persist in higher education studies.

Retaining academically underprepared university students is a challenge, and the research literature is replete with studies on developmental education programs, college students' academic engagement, and persistence challenges. Researchers have generated several combinations of factors that influenced college students' engagement, success, and persistence, and recommended approaches in meeting academically underprepared students' needs were identified. Such research findings were documented in the seminal works and more recent research studies (Astin, 1984, 1993, 2005; Bailey, 2009;

Bean, 1990; Bettinger, & Long, 2008; Engstrom, & Tinto, 2008; Pacsarella, & Terenzini, 1979, 1983, 1991, 2005; Reason, 2009; Spady, 1971; Tinto, 1975, 2007, 2009). Engstrom and Tinto (2008) focused on academically underprepared, low-income college students from 13 2-year American community colleges, stating that students' inability to attain a 4-college undergraduate degree is still evident among students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Researchers accounted for students' inability to attain a bachelor's degree, namely the increasing numbers of students lacking the requisite academic skills to persist in college (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008, p. 7). The students' needs and factors affecting students' academic under preparedness must be understood to allow any hope of academic advancement for academically underprepared students seeking an associate degree from this Caribbean University. The PCP faculty and the Caribbean University's administration articulated their concern regarding the low PCP students' matriculation rates. Potentially, without an understanding by administration and faculty of the factors influencing and shaping learning among the PCP's students, there was a probability that the PCP would continue be ineffective in attaining its mission. The increasing numbers of these students who have not attained matriculation requirements for an associate degree underscores the possibility that the PCP may not be serving the needs of its stakeholders.

A plethora of research exists on factors influencing the retention and persistence of North America's developmental education college students. However, there is a paucity of Caribbean college and university developmental education students' research studies in the literature. The factors that have a bearing on the Caribbean colleges' academically underprepared students' engagement, success, and persistence to higher

education studies were not studied. In this evaluative study, I sought to identify and understand those factors which singularly and, or collectively, affected this Caribbean University's 128 PCP students' academic engagement, success, and persistence in higher education studies during the years 2010 to 2012.

The Caribbean University's PCP faculty, especially those who teach the college developmental courses in English, math, and college survival skills, repeatedly voiced their concern over the increasing numbers of PCP students' inability to successfully complete their studies and advance to another semester. The Caribbean University's developmental education faculty stated

Precollege students' lack focus and basic mathematical skills. The English professors lamented over the students' poor grammar and sentence structure abilities, and the college skills faculty struggled to get students to demonstrate critical thinking skills, read assignments, and curb their tardiness (Caribbean University PCP faculty, personal communication, September 2010 to July, 2012).

Comments from faculty members who teach the 100-level associate degree courses to the PCP students were different from the foundational level faculty members' comments.

The 100-level course faculty asked clarifying questions such as, "what is the precollege program? How did the precollege students get in? What external exam or subjects did the precollege students pass? What score did they attain on the Caribbean University's entrance exam? How many pre-college students are there?" (Caribbean University, PCP faculty personal communication, December 2010). Unlike the faculty who taught the developmental courses, none of the 100-level faculty members voiced any concern with

the PCP students' performance. The 100-level faculty members' lack of reporting on the PCP students' progress was because of the 100-level courses faculty members' unawareness of their mixed-ability classes. The Caribbean University's 100-level courses faculty were unaware that their classes comprised students with normal college matriculation status and PCP students. The discussion with the 100-level course PCP faculty members garnered these comments "we are not aware who the precollege students are unless they share this with us." "There are students performing below average, but I just thought they were really weak students." One faculty member asked, "What is a precollege student?" (Caribbean University's 100-level courses faculty, personal communication, November 24-25, 2011). While the 100-level PCP faculty acknowledged that the PCP students may not grasp the concepts as quickly as the traditionally matriculated college students the 100-level course faculty did not state that they would approach their teaching or assessment differently. In fact, the 100-level faculty shared, "I do not believe that I would have approached my teaching differently, these are really basic concepts and the students must grasp them" (Caribbean University 100-level faculty, personal communication, November 24-25, 2011).

Less than 70% of the 2010 to 2012 PCPs students successfully attained a 2.0 CGPA in their developmental program. These low passing rates hindered any advancement to a Caribbean University associate degree. Unable to attain matriculation status, the PCP students' pursuit of this goal for these students tended to be suspended if not eliminated. If I can identify those factors that impacted the small Caribbean University's PCP students' in attaining the matriculation to an associate degree, then the

Caribbean University's faculty, curriculum committee, administration, and student support services can strive to foster learning environments which support the diverse learning needs of this population.

### **Rationale**

#### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

The purpose of this study was to explore perceptions related to the effectiveness of the PCP in assisting the 2010 to 2012 student cohorts in matriculating to the Caribbean University's associate degree programs. It was the collective belief by the Caribbean University's administration, curriculum development team, and faculty in 2010 that the introduction of a PCP would serve to meet the needs of academically underprepared students seeking to pursue higher education studies. During a departmental chairs' meeting, the Caribbean University's president stated, "the nation's Education Ministry recognized the need for remedial education and endorsed the Caribbean University's PCP" (personal communication, June 2010). The introduction of the PCP in September 2010 was to be a bridge program that allowed students transitioning from high school and other potential students without the requisite Caribbean University's matriculation requirements the opportunity at gaining access to tertiary education and getting on the path to lifelong education. This decision to provide a PCP has its challenges as students entering without meeting minimum college entrance requirements are at high risk for not completing the developmental courses and matriculating to their first year (Engle & Tinto, 2008). In this study, I explored the problems, challenges, and experiences of the Caribbean University's 2010 to 2015 PCP's students. To date, the PCP and its students

were not studied, and the factors influencing the PCP students' ability to successfully complete the 1-year program and attain matriculation status to an associate degree remained unknown. According to the Caribbean University's registrar, the 25 PCP students from the 2010 to 2011 cohort who needed to repeat failed courses and attain a 2.0 CGPA were still trying to achieve a 2.0 CGPA and matriculate to an associate degree while there were students who dropped out of the program. Without empirical data, the Caribbean University's administration was unable to implement effective solutions that would enhance the PCP students' opportunity for a higher education. If the factors influencing the Caribbean University's PCP student experiences and learning needs were to be identified, then a holistic intervention strategy by the Caribbean University's administration, faculty, instructional designers, and student services to support this diverse learner population would be developed and implemented. If the PCP strives to fill the gap for the Caribbean nation's academically underprepared students seeking to acquire a tertiary education, then the Caribbean University needs to examine the purpose, structure, and intended outcomes of the PCP and the students enrolled in the program.

### **Definitions**

*Academic engagement:* Pascarella and Terenzini's (2005) definition of academic engagement was used in this research study. Pascarella and Terenzini defined academic engagement as a student's behavior through active involvement in a variety of educational experiences and activities.

*Caribbean University's PCP students:* Students who have not met the Caribbean University's matriculation requirements of five external exam passes to enroll in an

associate degree program (Caribbean University's Precollege Matriculation Program Handbook, 2010, p. 4).

*Matriculation criteria for the Caribbean University's PCP:* PCP students having successfully completed the PCP by passing the foundation courses and attaining nine college credits from the 100-level courses with a CGPA of 2.0 and better are eligible to apply to the Caribbean University's associate degree programs (Caribbean University's Precollege Matriculation Program Handbook, 2010, p.7).

*Matriculation to an associate degree:* PCP students who successfully complete their foundation and 100-level associate degree courses with a CGPA of 2.0 are eligible to matriculate to an associate degree at the Caribbean University (Caribbean University's Precollege Matriculation Program Handbook, 2010, p.7).

*Persistence:* The terms retention and persistence are used interchangeably in the research literature (Reason, 2009). However, Reason (2009) contended that retention focuses on institutional needs and persistence on the students' needs and behaviors. In this study, the term persistence referenced the students' reenrollment in successive semesters at the Caribbean University until successful program completion.

*Precollege program (PCP):* The Caribbean University offers a 1-year program to students who have not met the matriculation criteria for entry to an associate degree. The PCP comprises five noncredit courses in math 98 and 99, English 98 and 99, and college survival skills referred to as the foundation courses. These five foundation courses were combined with three 100-level associate degree credit-bearing courses each with a 3-

credit weighting for a total of eight courses and nine credits (Caribbean University's Precollege Matriculation Program Handbook, 2010, p.1-36).

### **Significance**

The PCP was introduced as a pilot in 2010 and continues to cater to the growing numbers of academically underprepared high school graduates unable to meet the Caribbean University's associate degree matriculation requirements. The PCP matriculation requirement, the orientation process, the curriculum, delivery methods, and academic advising were believed to be appropriate at that time to meet the learners' needs. However, the low numbers of PCP students from the 2010 to 2011 cohort who successfully completed the program raised concern among the faculty who taught the math 98 and 99, English 98 and 99, and college survival skills courses.

The PCP matriculation requirements, orientation process, and the curriculum and faculty remained the same for the second PCP students' cohort during 2011 to 2012. Noted with the second intake were the larger class sizes as the numbers of students needing developmental education increased. By the middle of the first semester, the Caribbean University's faculty who taught the math, English, and college survival skills courses noticed the similar trend of poor academic engagement and persistence skills amongst the 2011 to 2012 PCP students. The foundation courses faculty constantly shared their concerns regarding the PCP students' lack of preparation, disengagement, and poor performance amongst themselves. Concerns were shared with the university administration; however, no formal attempts to conduct a program evaluation were apparent.



This research study was a direct result of no formal evaluation to appreciate the factors that continued to stymie the PCP students' successful program completion and the students' progress to higher education studies at the Caribbean University. This research study was not only timely, but also necessary as evidenced by the high failure rates of the two PCP students' cohorts and the sustained increased annual increase of academically underprepared high school student graduates seeking acceptance to the Caribbean University's associate degree programs. In addition to the PCP losing its credibility, the low numbers of PCP students matriculating to an associate degree further compounds their chances for further education, gainful employment, and civic and volunteer engagement. Limited education opportunities for the growing sector of this Caribbean nation's youth fuels this nation's need for the increased reliance on an expatriate worker population. The high unemployment numbers among the nation's youth was documented in the 2012 national census report. In tandem with the nation's low youth employment statistics were reports from the local protective services of a growing number of youths involved in gang life activity. These local accounts were a testimony to Pascarella and Terenzini's (2005) assertion that college completion was linked to higher earnings, lower unemployment rates, and reduced criminal activity.

The sustained high failure rate among the PCP students prompted the Caribbean University's registrar in July 2012 to call a meeting. A small committee including the university's president, deans, student services, and faculty who were either instrumental in the PCP program design and /or teaching the foundation courses were invited. The meeting agenda focused on the PCP students' high failure rates and the curriculum. The

meeting ended with additional courses being added to the existing pool of 100-level courses and an increase in the PCP's entrance matriculation requirements being recommended. However those factors that singularly and/or collectively worked together to engender student academic engagement, success, and persistence, and the diminished PCP students' high failure rates remained unknown. A third and fourth cohort of PCP students began their program in the fall 2012 and 2013 respectively, and a formal PCP program evaluation had not been conducted. There is a need for the PCP as evidenced by the increasing annual student intakes.

### **Guiding/Research Question**

The overarching question of this program evaluation research study was the following: In what ways are the PCP's purpose, structure, and outcomes manifested in practices at the Caribbean University? I sought to investigate the following:

- Research Question # 1: In what way(s) does the PCP's purpose or mission influence stakeholders?
- Research Question # 2: What are the PCP students' and faculty views of the PCP's structural format (e.g., course content, delivery methods, duration of the curriculum, academic advising, and program coordination)?
- Research Question # 3: How do the PCP students' rate a set of factors that affected their academic engagement and persistence at the Caribbean University?

The three research questions were projected against the backdrop of the 2010 to 2012 PCP students' low program completion and matriculation rates to the Caribbean University's associate degree programs. The research questions were formulated based on a discussion with the Caribbean University's Registrar regarding the pending proposal to increase the associate degrees' matriculation requirement for PCP students. The CGPA for the PCP students could increase from 2.0 (C-) to 2.5 (C+) (Caribbean University's registrar, personal communication, March 2012). Attaining a higher CGPA would leverage the PCP students' ability to persist in their college careers. However, with the administration still unaware of the factors impeding the PCP students' ability to attain the current stipulated 2.0 CGPA, attaining the proposed 2.5 CGPA associate degree matriculation criteria will have a greater negative impact on the numbers of PCP students persisting in higher education at this Caribbean University. Without the university administration identifying the factors that affected the 2010 to 2012 PCP students' academic disengagement and low persistence levels, and addressing them holistically, then increasing access to an associate degree will remain an elusive dream for PCP students.

### **Review of the Literature**

I used several methods for the literature review. One method was to use current, primary, peer-reviewed literature, and Boolean search terms. The key search terms for this literature review included *academic engagement*, *academically underprepared*, *at-risk college students*, *college prep programs*, *college student retention*, *college students' perspective on college preparedness*, *faculty perspective on college preparedness*,

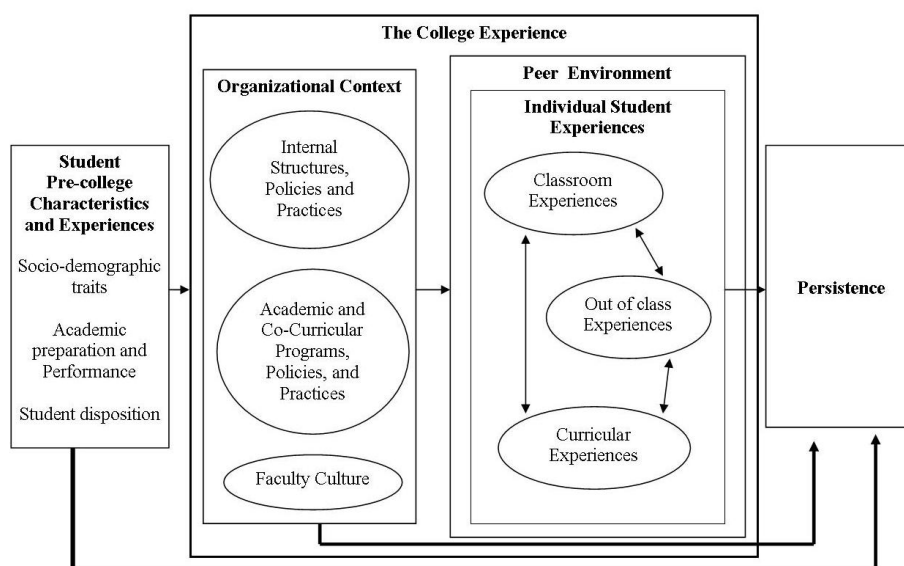
*persistence, precollege programs, retention, and underprepared college students.*

Increasing PCP students' enrollment numbers accompanied by high failure rates and low student matriculation levels marred the 2010 to 2012 PCP students' progress to higher education studies. The PCP designed to assist the nations academically underprepared high school graduates matriculate to higher education studies was not meeting its mandate. The low academic engagement, program completion, and persistence reports of this Caribbean nations' developmental education students were no different from the international research findings of students enrolled in First Year Education programs. The difference, however, is that research studies and empirical data delineating those factors that influence college developmental education students outside of the Caribbean are more readily conducted and documented. Unaware of the factors mitigating against the PCP students' progress stymies this Caribbean University's student and institutional growth.

In an attempt to examine those factors delaying the Caribbean University's PCP, students' persistence, and success in matriculating to higher education studies, research studies addressing the local problem were considered under four headings. I examine the study's conceptual framework and the research studies' findings on students' precollege characteristics and experiences. The organizational context is the third heading and is followed by the fourth section in the literature review, which is on the research findings on the student peer environment and the individual student experiences.

Terenzini and Reason's (2005) comprehensive model influences student learning and persistence and served as this study's conceptual framework. Terenzini and Reason's

student learning and persistence model was an extension and synthesis of the theories and models from noted scholars in the field: Tinto's (1975, 1993) academic integration theory, Astin's (1985, 1993) inputs-environment-outcomes (I-E-O) theory of involvement, Pascarella's (1985) general model for assessing change, and Berger and Milem's (2000) model for studying organizational effects on students' outcomes (Reason, 2009, p. 661). Terenzini and Reason's comprehensive model of influences on student learning and persistence depicted in Figure 1 served as this study's conceptual framework and reprinted with permission (Appendix B).



*Figure 1.* A comprehensive model of influences on students learning and persistence. Adapted from "An examination of persistence research through the lens of a comprehensive conceptual framework", by Robert D. Reason, 2008, *Journal of College Student Development*, 50, p.661.

Factors influencing persistence and advancement of students enrolled in college developmental courses have been cited in the literature (Bailey, 2009; Bailey, Jeong, &

Cho, 2010; Bettinger & Long, 2008; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Howell, Kurlaender, & Grodsky 2010.) Students' precollege characteristics, lack of college preparation, poor academic engagement, underused institutional support services, ineffective program structure, and content delivery methods are some of factors that influence student persistence. Researchers have influenced student learning and the persistence model, which represents the four major theoretical constructs on college students' engagement, persistence, and retention (Jenkins, Jaggars, Roksa, Zeidenberg, & Cho, 2009; Mattison, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Reason 2009; Terenzini & Reason, 2005). I drew on Terenzini and Reason's (2005). The conceptual framework also included variables that scholars have reported as affecting student persistence namely (a) student precollege characteristics and experiences (including sociodemographic traits, academic preparation, and performance, and student dispositions); (b) the organizational context (including the institution's policies and procedures, programs' mission, matriculation selectivity, class size, diversity in curriculum content, and delivery methodology, and institutional support services); (c) the student peer environment; and (d) the individual student experience (a subset of the student peer environment), comprised of classroom experiences, out-of class experiences, and curricular experiences (Reason, 2009, p. 662). The inclusion of the organizational context in Terenzini and Reason's conceptual framework underscores the influence that an organization has on the students' environment and behaviors. Institutional policies and practices, Terenzini and Reason contended, are levers for increasing students' engagement and persistence (p. 679).

## **Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature**

### **Conceptual Framework**

While it is thought that the ultimate goal of every college student is to secure a degree, Reason (2009) showed that this might not be the objective of every college student. Reason pointed out that “individual students define their goals,” which means, “a student may successfully persist without being retained to graduation” (p. 660). College administration and faculty need to be mindful that not all students enrolled at university have a college completion goal. Some students may choose to leave a university voluntarily because their needs were not being met or because they have already attained whatever knowledge or skills they hoped to gain from university. Some students no longer view the time and effort to attain a degree as a valued return on their investment. Smith, Garton, and Kitchel (2010) examined the University of Missouri’s agriculture students’ participation in a secondary agricultural program to determine if the first-year students’ enrolled in a secondary agriculture program yielded a greater academic performance and retention (p. 28). Terenzini and Reason’s (2005) influences on student learning and persistence model was employed as the investigators’ conceptual framework (p. 26). Cox et al. (2010) investigated faculty pedagogical practices, professional activities, and perceptions of their campus’ approach to students’ first of year college and employed Terenzini and Reason’s influences on student learning and persistence model to design their research study’s questionnaires (p. 772) as a guide. However, the instrument used in the current 2010 study was a revised version of a survey on first year of college used by Reason et al. (2006, 2007).

The literature is replete with decades of research studies in the field of college students' academic engagement and persistence. Researches such as Astin (1984,1993, 2005); Bailey (2008, 2009); Barbatis (2010); Howell, Kurlaender, and Grodsky, (2010); Kuh (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008); Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, and Gonyea (2007); Levin, and Calcango (2008); Pascarella, and Terenzini, (1979, 1983,1991, 2005); Tinto (1975, 2007), and Veenstra (2009) have extensive findings that focus on student achievement and academic persistence. The literature review begins with the study's conceptual framework and examines Reason and Terenzini's (2005) comprehensive model of influences on student learning and persistence. The students' precollege characteristics and experiences the second heading is presented with attendant sub-headings of students' socio-demographic traits, and precollege students' academic preparation, and college entrance examination scores to illustrate the impact of each actor on students' persistence. The research findings of Astin, (1975); Bailey (2009); Engstrom, and Tinto (2008); Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, and Gonyea (2006, 2007, 2008); Lundberg, Schreiner, Hovaguimian, and Miller (2007); Merritt (2008); Pike, and Kuh (2005); Seideman (2005), Tinto, (1975, 1987, 1993, 2000, 2007) and Hughes, Gibbons, and Mynatt (2013) were considered in preparation for this study. The third heading the organizational context focuses on research literature findings, which report the impact of the organization on college students' persistence. Finally, the literature review the study's fourth heading discusses the students' peer environment and the individual students' experiences. The literature review began with an examination of the research findings of students' precollege characteristics and experiences.



### **Students' Precollege Characteristics and Experiences**

Astin (1993); Kuh Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, and Gonyea (2006, 2007, 2008); Kuh (2001, 2003, 2009); Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993, 2000, 2007), and Wolf-Wendel, Ward, and Kinzie (2009) posited that engagement and persistence theories acknowledged that student pre-college characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds may impact students' academic, and social engagement, and ultimately students' ability to persist in college. Tinto's (1975, 1987) seminal work acknowledged freshmen students' characteristics and the impact that students' attributes, experiences, and backgrounds had on college students' persistence. Tinto's earlier works paid particular attention to freshmen students' level of social integration/social inclusion, the relationships they established with peers and professors, and the students' transitioning process in their freshman year. Tinto's (2000a) academic integration theory acknowledged the complexities of student learning and engagement, and Tinto posited that students' success, and persistence are influenced by two central concepts namely students' academic and social integration. This symbiotic relationship between these two variables Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993, 2000a) proffered was critical during a students' first year at college. Tinto saw the relationship between the college and the student as an important determinant in students' staying or leaving behavior (Seidman, 2005). Four decades after his seminal work Tinto's clarion call to academic administrators and faculty to ensure students experience a sense of belonging, rings true in fostering students' academic engagement and persistence.

Researcher Merritt (2008) examined the changing demographics of first generation college students in North America. Through a brief descriptive memoir, the

researcher provided insights into what colleges can do to assist first generation college students' engagement and persistence. The author provided a reflective analysis of first generation college students and briefly documented personal accounts of her first generation college experiences three decades ago. Merritt chose to model Lundberg, Pike, and Kuh (2005), and Schreiner, Hovaguimian, and Miller's (2007) research findings. Lundberg, Schreiner, Hovaguimian, and Miller's study employed a random sample of 4,501 first-generation undergraduate students, and an equal 643 students from seven racial and ethnic groups (p.50). The researchers administered a College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) in an attempt to garner insights into those areas where students made an effort to integrate into college and what they learned was a result of this experience.

Administration of the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ), allowed researchers Lundberg, Schreiner, Hovaguimian, and Miller (2007) to examine the educational and social involvement of first generation students. The research findings revealed that educational and social involvement of first-generation college students resulted in academic and personal gains. The investigators discovered that race and ethnicity influenced first-generation students' involvement. A further breakdown by ethnicity revealed that African American, Native American and some Hispanic students were less involved in campus experiences, and Mexican American students were the only ethnic group with a positive effect on personal learning.

### **Socio-Demographic Traits**

Parents' educational backgrounds have been reported by Borrero and Bird (2009), and Borrero (2011); Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin (1998); Ishitani (2006); Pascarella and Chapman (1983), and Pascarella and Terenzini (1978) as affecting first generation college students' persistence. Researcher Ishitani's research findings showed that students whose parents did not attend college showed higher levels of leaving in their first through to their fourth year of college, and the highest risk period for leaving was during their second year. Research findings on college students' cultural and ethnic backgrounds were shown to affect students' academic persistence. Examples of such findings are examined in this section of the literature review.

Examining Latino college students and the influence of their cultural nuances on their college performance Borrero (2011) stated that many Latino students are learning English while trying to learn the academic content of their courses (p. 24). The Latino students therefore struggle to keep up with the other students (Borrero, & Bird, 2009). According to Borrero adding to the Latino students' academic challenges is the fact that the students' academic achievement is examined in English. Borrero and Bird (2009) made a clarion call to faculty, college administrators, and staff requesting that in an attempt to promote learning they should recognize the disconnect that youth face and honor the diversity of students' backgrounds by finding ways to utilize the wealth of multicultural resources. Borrero's (2011) interview data findings of the eight students interviewed were grouped under four core themes representative of students' perceptions of college namely, college talk, dynamic family roles, school as a support system and

community resources (p. 26). The verbatim quotes of the eight students were interspersed throughout the study and lent support to the researcher's findings.

Researchers Porchea, Allen, Robbins, and Phelps' (2010) longitudinal study of approximately 4,500 community college students ranging in ages from 16 to 65 years with a median age of 19 years and representing 21 mid-west institutions spanning 13 states was tracked over a five-year period. The study sought to answer the following research question: "What are the student characteristics that are predictive of enrollment and degree outcomes for students that initially enroll at a community college and how does the predictive value of each characteristic vary by specific outcome?" (p. 687). The study was based on the 2003 community college fall matriculates who participated in the student readiness inventory (SRI) validity study. The researchers' expectations were that students with higher academic qualifications and higher motivation levels would obtain a college degree and transfer to a four-year institution. The researchers also expected that students with higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to transfer to a four-year college. Porchea, Allen, Robbins, and Phelps expected that part-time students and those who work part-time are less likely to obtain a college degree and transfer to a four-year college. Finally, the researchers expected that students with higher degree expectation levels are more likely to obtain a community college degree and transfer to a four-year institution (p. 686-687). A 108 Likert-type item self-report instrument using a 10-scale score was administered to college freshmen during the summer and fall orientation programs and courses. The focus will now change to examine the influence of

pre-college academic preparation and entrance examination scores on college students' academic persistence.

### **Precollege Academic Preparation and Entrance Examination Scores**

Researchers Allen, Robbins, Casillas, and Oh (2008) believed that academic preparation directly affected first year college students' academic performance and indirectly affected the students' retention and transfer behavior. A research study conducted by Bailey (2009) showed that some college developmental students enter college years after leaving high school and this time lag may have influenced their college success. On the other hand, the researcher noted that there are students whose low college entrance examination scores may be because of their never taking math in high school. Another reason cited by the author why students may perform poorly in math is that while students may have taken math they never learnt the concepts. Yet another reason cited by the investigator as to why some students do not persist in developmental education courses/programs was that some immigrant students have an inability to comprehend the English written math examination (p.25-27). Bailey (2009), Gallard, Albritton and Morgan (2010), Howell, Kurlaender, Grodsky (2010), and Hughes, Gibbons and Myatt (2013) concurred with Engstrom and Tinto (2008) that the majority of community college students arrive underprepared to engage academically in college (p.11). According to Bailey, two-thirds, or more of college students enter college needing remediation in at least one major subject (p.13). Approximately 45% of community college students Staklis (2010) stated enroll in a developmental course. However, according to McClenney (2009) as much as 60% of incoming college students maybe

academically underprepared. Researchers Hughes, Gibbons and Myatt (2013) found an increasing number of high school graduates are academically underprepared for college. This under preparedness resulted in the students being placed in remedial classes (p.40). Mirroring the research findings of Engstrom and Tinto's (2008) study, Bailey's research findings also showed that degree completion for remedial students is rare. The low completion rates among the developmental education students Barbatis (2010) attributed to their discouragement and the extended time in college. Citing the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) of community college students enrolled in developmental education Bailey (2009) reported that the findings from the NELS showed that less than one-quarter of the students enrolled in developmental education complete a degree, or certificate within eight years of enrollment (p. 14). Researchers Howell, Kurlaender, and Grodsky's (2010) analysis of the NELS study's findings showed that among the highest achieving high school students 77% of these students who begin a four-year college completed their degree. Among the lowest achieving high school students who attend a four college 37% of these students complete college and graduate by age 26 (p.727). Bailey, however quickly added that while the NELS research findings showed that developmental education students are more likely to not persist as often as their non-developmental counterparts that the NELS research findings does not suggest that developmental education itself causes, or leads poor student outcomes (p.15). Howell, Kurlaender, and Grodsky (2010) contend that there are insufficient studies on the effects of remediation on college students' persistence. In their study these investigators acknowledged Martorell and McFarlin's (2009) research findings of no remediation

effect for students who pass the early assessment program (EAP) remediation examinations at the margin and their ability to persist in a Texas public two and four year college.

Howell, Kurlaender, and Grodsky (2010) reflecting on Engstrom, and Tinto (2008), and Bailey's (2009) statement that degree completion is rare for developmental education students, and that the outcome may not necessarily be the result of the developmental education, claimed that there are insufficient studies conducted on the effects of remedial education. This lack of research further adds to the need for this study which sought to understand the students and faculty members' perspectives of the PCP in light of the increasing numbers of the Caribbean nation's PCP students' non completion rates. The effect of the organization on students' performance and academic persistence were also researched for its ability to influence students' academic engagement and persistence. This following section of this literature review will focus on the organizational context and its influence on college students' persistence.

### **The Organizational Context**

The information on the organizational context will highlight the importance of a university's policies and procedures and the need for its compliance at all levels to effect maximum benefits to stakeholders. Addressing an academic institution, the literature will discuss the relationship between factors such as the program's mission, admissions selectivity, class size, the curriculum, the faculty, diversity in content delivery methods, and institutional support services on college students' persistence. These research findings will be illustrated through the research studies of Bailey (2009); Engstrom, and

Tinto (2008); Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, and Gonyea (2006, 2007, 2008); Hollis (2009); Reason (2009), and Porchea, Allen, Robbins, and Phelps (2010).

Investigators Berger and Milem (2000) differentiated between the structural-demographic organizational characteristics, which encompass institutional traits that are whether the institution is public or private, the institution's size, its curricular mission, and the admission selectivity. The organizations' behavior dimensions, the researchers contend addresses the organization's culture and its ability to engage students through a collegial and supportive environment, and positively guide students' persistence. Researchers Astin (1975); Engstrom, and Tinto (2008), and Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, and Gonyea (2006, 2007, 2008) proffered that a collaborative learning environment where students are engaged learners both inside and outside of the classroom enhanced students' academic engagement. According to Astin, and Kuh Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, and Gonyea, and Tinto, college and university faculty who take the time to understand their students' diverse learner backgrounds, and seek to appropriately challenge their students' abilities through this process promote students' affiliation with the learning environment. Investigators Terenzini and Reason (2005) posited that it is not what organizations are, for example their size, location, and institutional type, but rather what organizations do, that is their policies, values, and actions that have a greater influence on its stakeholders. Agreeing with Terenzini and Reason's stance on the organization's polices and values and the impact on students, Hollis (2009) posited that as colleges are enrolling more and more first-generation students from diverse backgrounds it is imperative that colleges have remediation and developmental support to assist these students to persist in college.



Porchea, Allen, Robbins, and Phelps' (2010) research findings showed that greater student enrollment numbers, greater in-state tuition, and fewer full time faculty members were predictive factors attributed to students transferring to a four-year institution without obtaining a degree (p.699). Whereas greater in-state tuition, a smaller percentage of students receiving financial aid and a greater percentage of minority students was associated with students remaining enrolled versus dropping out. The influence of the environment and individual students' experiences on college students' persistence will be introduced next.

### **Student Peer Environment and the Individual Student Experience**

The program curricula and classroom experiences, interactions with peers, students' interactions with faculty inside, and outside of the classroom, and the result these factors have on students' learning, development, and college persistence outcomes will be discussed. Tinto (1993) contended that students must possess sufficient academic skills to persist throughout their college studies. Tinto found that when students have the basic academic skills it is more likely that they will feel validated as a member of the campus community. According to Kuh (2008) and Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, and Gonyea (2007) students leave college for a number of personal and institutional reasons; for example, change in major, financial reasons, family demands, and a poor psychosocial fit. With the increasing numbers of academically underprepared students entering the Caribbean University annually and the unknown factors which influence the PCP students' experiences, and their decisions to engage, and persist in college, Terenzini and Reason's (2005) conceptual framework which includes Tinto's (1987, 1993) academic

integration theory will serve well for this proposed study. Tinto's academic integration theory was considered unique to the field of student development because it was one of the early theories that focused on explaining students' voluntary departure from college as an issue not just with the student, but also with the institution (Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009, p. 414). Tinto's (1987, 1998) theory of institutional departure states that students will persist to the extent that they are connected to their institution in an academic and social sense. Academic institutions must acknowledge its diverse learner population and must have a better understanding of how student integration efforts compare with students' success and persistence (Engstrom, & Tinto, 2008). Answers to problems, challenges, and experiences and those factors which effected the Caribbean University's PCP students' integration which in turn may and may have influenced the 2010 to 2012 students' low completion rates, and matriculation to higher education studies were sought in this research study.

### **Implications**

As is true for any university the most revered indicator of effectiveness is student learning. When students are not attaining the curricula's mission, or program's intended outcomes it is incumbent upon the education institutions' administration to investigate the possible reasons delaying the students' success. The Caribbean University's entrance examination during the 2010 to 2012 period showed an annual increase in the number of high school graduate students needing to enroll in developmental education courses (Caribbean University's registrar, personal communication, July 3, 2012). Based upon the students' Caribbean University entrance examination scores the students are placed in a

program appropriate to their academic level. In May 2012, the Caribbean University's registrar administered a revised and more robust entrance examination. The new entrance examination was coupled with an increased entrance criterion for PCP students, which stated that PCP matriculating students needed to attain a math and English combined score of 110 to 139 marks. In May 2012, the Caribbean University applied the newly prescribed entrance examination-marking scheme and 84 students attained scores from 110 to 139 making them eligible for the PCP. The results of the more robust Caribbean University's entrance examination in the spring 2012 showed that more students than the 2010 to 2012 cohorts were eligible for the PCP, and only 18 high school graduates attained matriculation scores that allowed them to enroll in a fall 2012 associate degree program.

Less than 70% of the 2010 to 2012 PCP students attained the required 2.0 cumulative GPA matriculation criteria to enroll in an associate degree program at this Caribbean University in spite of their taking foundational courses. The PCP evaluation research study's findings will hopefully provide this Caribbean University's administration, faculty, instructional development team, and student services with insights into those factors which mitigate, or enhance the PCP students' academic engagement, persistence, and ability to matriculate to an associate degree. Armed with the knowledge of those factors, which stymied the PCP students' success the Caribbean University's administration, faculty, instructional development personnel, and student services could consider these empirical data and have them to inform the university's institutional policies, procedures, and decisions on the PCP. Having considered the

study's findings, weighed the benefits of these insights to the PCPs mission, and projected outcomes the Caribbean University's administration could be encouraged to suggest the need for a PCP redesign, faculty development workshops, or the enhancement of institutional support services that target the needs of a diverse learner population.

The presentation of a proposed white paper outlining the findings and insights from the proposed PCP evaluation research study should assist the Caribbean University in meeting the learning needs of its growing academically and culturally diverse learner population. An understanding of the PCP students' precollege characteristics, and the factors, which leverage their learning, success, and persistence, would allow this Caribbean University's administration, faculty, staff, and student services to enhance their service to these students. Increasing persistence among academically underprepared students positively influences diversity in higher education and increases the education and career opportunities of otherwise marginalized individuals. The Caribbean university's PCP sought to provide education equity and opportunity. As a result, the researcher hopes that the findings from this research study should provide the PCP students with a stronger chance of attaining a 2.0 CGPA, matriculating to a Caribbean University associate degree, and becoming a contributor to the nation's sustainability.

### **Summary**

The Caribbean University's precollege students may have an array of challenges and issues that hinder their ability to engage and persist in college. However, since the inception of the 2010 precollege program to meet the needs of this academically diverse learner population, an evaluation to ascertain the effectiveness of the developmental

efforts was missing. The PCP students are not attaining the 2.0 CGPA to matriculate to an associate degree. In fact, the former Caribbean University's registrar in 2010 stated that only 18 students from the 2010-2011 PCP student cohorts attained matriculation status to an associate degree (Caribbean University Registrar, personal communication, July 2010). In 2012, the current registrar stated that only 10% of the 75 PCP students would attain the stipulated GPA to enroll in the 2012-2013 academic year (Caribbean University Registrar, personal communication, July 2012). There is something gravely wrong when faculty cannot identify, and get a firm grasp on the factors causing the PCP students' academic engagement, success, and persistence. This inability by the Caribbean University's faculty, staff, and administration was slowly causing the PCP to lose its credibility in being the program that empowers academically underprepared students and provides a pathway for them to higher education studies.

The 2010 to 2012 PCP students' academic engagement and persistence was not stymied by specifically identified single, or combination of factors. While the research literature points to a range of factors each with the potential to influence academically underprepared students' ability to enroll in successive semesters, the nature, and combination of the impeding factors as identified in the research literature may not all apply in the Caribbean nation context. Individually, or collectively any combination of factors could be influencing the Caribbean University's PCP students' academic engagement and persistence. This program evaluation study sought to investigate and gain insights into the factors that affected the PCP students' ability to successfully complete the program and matriculate to an associate degree. This program evaluation

study was conducted in an attempt to better serve this Caribbean University's academically diverse students and leverage their ability in attaining their academic goals. The next chapter, the methodology introduces the study's research design, the study's purposive stakeholder samples, the proposed data collection approaches, and the accompanying data collection instruments. Justification for the study's samples, the data collection instruments, and the employment of a logic evaluation model follows the methodology. This chapter ends with a discussion of the study's limitations and a brief summary.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Introduction**

In this section, I introduce the research design and approach; a justification for its selection; and an explanation of how the summative-approach, program evaluation research design links to the research problem. The concurrent forms of data collection procedures, data analyses, and the justification for the design and approach are presented. Because I employed a mixed-methods design, a description of the outcomes-based summative evaluation approach and its justification are discussed. The outcomes and performance measures indicators and the study's overall evaluation goals are explained. The study's research design and justification is introduced.

### **Research Design and Approach**

In an attempt to provide the quantitative and qualitative perspectives of the study's participants, a mixed-methods approach was employed in this study. Although a mixed-methods approach for the summative evaluation of the PCP was used, the study's data collection and analyses were weighted towards the qualitative data collection components through the employment of open-ended questionnaires for the PCP faculty and university registrar and the interviews with a random selection of five PCP students. Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) sought to dispel the misconception that summative evaluations must employ a quantitative data analysis and formative evaluations with a qualitative approach (p. 320). A mixed-methods approach was selected for this study in an attempt to present a wider representation of the participants' perspectives. I incorporated a quantitative data collection and analysis component

through the administration and analysis of the 31 Likert-type items CPQ to the PCP volunteer student sample. Administration of the CPQ solicited mostly quantitative students' responses with only one open-ended comment question. There was a demographic component of the CPQ, which provided insight into the PCP students' precollege characteristics and background. The incorporation of qualitative and quantitative data collection and data analysis approaches in a participatory program evaluation, Lodico et al. contended, provided greater flexibility, a more in-depth examination of the study's context, and the participants' perspectives (p. 282).

I used a dual data collection strategy. The CPQ Survey Monkey questionnaire was administered with assistance from the Caribbean University' Deputy Registrar to the study's 128 PCP students. Concomitant with the CPQ distribution exercise, both the PCPs volunteer faculty and the university's deputy registrar each received an e-mailed Survey Monkey, 10-item open-ended questionnaire seeking their perspectives of the PCP. I gathered data from three groups of participants to provide the Caribbean University's administration with a comprehensive account of the factors that may influence the PCP students' matriculation to higher education. Simple descriptive statistics were employed in the data analysis of the PCP students' responses to the CPQ. The PCP faculty and the university registrar's responses to the two 10-item open-ended questionnaires were de-identified and coded in preparation for analysis. The PCP faculty and university registrar's responses were grouped thematically and examined for similarities and differences in perspectives. The similarities and differences in perspectives, namely, the



PCP students' responses to the CPQ, and the Caribbean University's PCP faculty and registrar's responses were examined and reported thematically.

The logic outcomes-based model was used, and a justification for its applicability to the study's research questions are presented. The characteristics of the research study's population, the samples, and the criteria employed in identifying the study's sample of the PCP students, faculty, and the registrar are discussed in detail. The procedures employed in attaining the PCP students', the faculty members', and the Caribbean University registrar's consent to participate in the research study are presented and followed with a summary of the ethical measures and procedures conducted in the study. A description of the data collection approaches and justification for each are delineated. This discussion is followed by a section on the study's data analysis methodology and limitations.

I employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. However, the study was weighted on the qualitative methodology to understand the Caribbean University's PCP students', faculty members', and Registrar's perspectives of the PCP students' challenges and experiences in trying to matriculate to higher education studies. In a participatory-summativ evaluation approach, I explored the problems, challenges, and experiences that affected the academic engagement, persistence, and matriculation of the Caribbean University's 2010 to 2012 PCP student cohorts (Spaulding, 2008, p. 14).

The purpose of this research study was to explore and understand the problems, challenges, and experiences of the Caribbean University's 2010 to 2012 PCP students in their attempts to matriculate to an associate degree. In this section, I describe the

summative program evaluation research study design, which employed a participatory-orientated program evaluation methodology to collect data for this study. A detailed account of the research study's participants, methods of data collection, and analysis follows.

### **Rational for a Program Evaluation Design**

A predominately participatory-summative program evaluation design was used in this study. According to Spaulding (2008), a participatory-oriented program evaluation focuses on the needs of the stakeholders and differs from the other research designs in that the approach allows the researcher to include the research participants in the program evaluation process (p. 14). The naturalistic inquiry methods of the participatory summative evaluation allowed me to include an array of stakeholders in examining a multiplicity of data during the data gathering processes. The participatory summative program evaluation's inclusive methodology allowed me to inspect and portray key issues and the stakeholders' multiple realities, values, and perspectives. Guba and Lincoln (1981, 1989), and Patton (1986, 1997) stated that the inductive approach and constructivist nature of the labor intensive participatory evaluation research design builds rapport, empowers the program providers to act on the knowledge gained, and increases the likelihood that the program evaluation findings will be used to improve the students' and institution's performance.

According to Cousins and Earl (1992, 1995), there are two types of participatory evaluations: practical and emancipatory evaluation. The overarching objective of the practical participatory approach is collaborative in nature as opposed to the

transformative participatory method linked to Freire (1970, 1982), which seeks to develop/emancipate the stakeholders. This participatory-summative program evaluation study adopted a practical participatory orientation. A participatory-summative program evaluation research study design was selected over a phenomenological research method, or a grounded theory approach. The participatory-summative program evaluation methodology provided the researcher with the ability to examine multiple layers of data and dig beneath the surface to obtain rich narrative via a dialogic interaction with the students, faculty, and the Deputy Registrar in order to construct meaning. The participatory-summative program evaluation design which focuses on the persons whom the program serves and seeks to involve the program's participants in the evaluation process augers well for this research study (Spaulding, 2008, p.14). The comingling of the proposed research study's data allowed for a more holistic representation and understanding of the factors which influenced the PCP students' academic engagement, persistence issues, and their challenges in matriculating to higher education studies. Additionally, the multi-faceted nature of the participatory-summative program evaluation methodology allowed this researcher to examine the extent to which the PCP's purpose, structure, and outcomes manifested in practices at the Caribbean University. This study did not seek to devise a theory of why students do not persist but to rather to identify and understand the PCP students', faculty members, and Deputy Registrar's perspectives, attitudes towards, and beliefs of those factors, which suppressed the PCP students' academic engagement and persistence in higher education studies. Having procured and understood the PCP students, Deputy Registrar and faculty members' perspectives

regarding those factors which influenced the PCP students' engagement and matriculation abilities; this researcher utilized these data to design a holistic intervention strategy to leverage the University's PCP students' ability in attaining a university education.

Three research questions guided this research study and assisted the researcher in examining, identifying, and understanding the factors, which delayed the PCP students' program completion and matriculation abilities to higher education studies. The research study's overarching questions asked in what ways are the PCP's purpose, structure, and outcomes manifested in practices at the Caribbean University. Drawing from this study's overarching question, three research questions were asked to investigate the following:

Research Question # 1: In what way(s) does the PCP's purpose or mission influence stakeholders? Research Question # 2: What are the PCP students' and faculty's views of the PCP's structural format? (e.g., course content, delivery methods, duration of the curriculum, academic advising, and program coordination), and Research Question # 3: How do the PCP students' rate those factors which influenced their academic engagement, program completion, and persistence at the Caribbean University?

A logic outcomes model was selected and implemented as the analytic evaluation tool to assist in measuring the performance outcomes of the Caribbean University's PCP in meeting its mission and leveraging students' University access. The systematic nature of the logic outcomes model allowed this researcher to assess the effectiveness of the PCP's outcomes, and influence, and make recommendations for interventions. Before this process was undertaken, the study's evaluation focus areas, the study's key

audiences, and some questions the key audiences may have about the PCP were identified and presented (Kellogg, 2004). Before beginning the data collection phase of the research study, the IRB's approval was attained. Once the IRB's approval was granted, this researcher secured the Informed Consent Form from the study's three proposed purposive stakeholders, namely the PCP students, the PCP faculty, and the Caribbean University's Registrar. A flowchart was employed to assist with this study's evaluation question development. An indicators development flowchart was also developed and presented (Appendix Table A1).

According to Cobigo, Morin, and Mercier (2012), the logic outcomes model provided the framework this researcher needed to conduct a program evaluation by collecting and interpreting data from various sources, and exploring different methods in the process (Cooksy, Gill, & Kelly, 2001). Rogers (2008) posited that logic models are particularly relevant when evaluating the effectiveness of complex interventions (p. 2). The proposed summative logic outcomes model allowed this researcher to focus on the PCP's mission and stated outcomes. The PCP's component parts were examined, stakeholders' perspectives regarding the PCP's effectiveness in leveraging the students' matriculation to higher education studies were explored and reported on to exemplify the PCP's effectiveness.

When a program faults on producing expected outcomes, the university administration, faculty members, and staff must identify and understand why before making programmatic decisions. This participatory-summative program evaluation study sought to garner the PCP stakeholders' perspectives in an attempt to assist the Caribbean

University's administration in their program decision-making processes and assist students in attaining a higher education. The summative nature of this program evaluation allowed this researcher to examine the impact of the PCP's outcomes to ascertain the extent to which the Caribbean University's PCP intervention attained its stated goals and objectives (Kellogg Foundation, 2004). A summative logic outcomes analytic approach was employed and was thought to be the most appropriate approach to garner stakeholders' perspectives on the effectiveness of the Caribbean University PCP intervention. Researchers Haeffele, Hood, Feldmann, (2011) stated that a formative-based program approach examined the inputs, activities, and program outputs components of the logic model. In contrast, the summative-based approach examined the outcomes and effect when the logic model was employed. A participatory-summative program evaluation, logic outcomes analytical framework was proposed as this research study's evaluation tool. The researcher focused on the PCP's outcomes and outcomes as per the perspectives of the Caribbean University's PCP students, faculty, and Deputy Registrar regarding the PCP's success in attaining its stated goals and objectives. The study's setting and sample are presented in the following section.

### **Setting and Participants Selection**

The research study was conducted at a small Caribbean University, which offers high school graduates unable to access higher education an opportunity to do so via enrollment in a 1-year precollege program. One hundred and twenty-eight students enrolled in the PCP during the years 2010 to 2012. Although students withdrew from the PCP programs as early as the first semester, with assistance from the Deputy Registrar

efforts were made to contact all 128 students and invite them to voluntarily participate in the study. I communicated with the University's Registrar requesting a list of the PCP students email addresses, however I was informed that the PCP students' names could not be shared. I then sought to procure assistance from the Academic Dean, who enlisted the Deputy Registrar to assist in the distribution of the Survey Monkey CPQ to the PCP students. The PCP students were sent an invitation to participate voluntarily in the study via survey monkey. Invitations were extended only to those PCP students 18 years and older. The Caribbean University PCP faculty members and the Deputy Registrar committed verbally to participate in the study. Since all PCP students enrolled at the Caribbean University must be 17 years and older, the study's sample of 128 PCP students did not pose a problem as the research study's invitations were administered in 2014. The currency of the Caribbean University's PCP's students' personal records database, did not pose a problem, and the Caribbean University's Deputy Registrar administered the survey monkey invitations to all 128 PCP students. Each PCP student received an emailed Informed Consent Form and a CPQ (Appendix C). The invitation letters provided an overview of the research focus; detailed the data collection processes, the timeframe for completing and returning the CPQ, the data usage, and the reporting methods of the study's findings. Nine PCP students from the 2010 to 2013 cohorts returned their CPQs, and none of them indicated an interest in being interviewed for the study.

### **Faculty Member Selection**

The 16 PCP faculty members who taught the foundation and 100 level courses during the period 2010 to 2012 each received an email from the researcher with an attached Informed Consent Form. I had their email addresses since I worked with the 16 PCP faculty members at the Caribbean University and as a faculty member who also taught in the PCP. In addition, all faculty contact details were accessible on the Caribbean University's website.

The Informed Consent Form outlined the focus of the research study, explained the process of the study for the PCP faculty, and sought their consent to volunteer. I received a verbal commitment from the faculty members who taught the 2010 to 2012 PCP student cohorts to participate in the study. It was my intention to obtain as many of the PCP faculty members' perspectives of the factors that may have contributed to the PCP students' inability to progress in their higher education studies. While obtaining a 100% questionnaire response rate was ideal, it was naive to not acknowledge that a high response rate is usually associated with persons who have a vested interest in the study. According to Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) a 30% to 50% response rate is acceptable (p. 171). Nine of the 16 PCP faculty members participated in the survey monkey PCP questionnaire. A 50% participation rate was considered acceptable by researchers Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010).

The nine PCP faculty who respond to the online open ended Survey Monkey questionnaire had their responses analyzed and presented thematically. Cognizant of the small PCP Caribbean University faculty population and the adherence to uphold the



confidential nature of the shared information the raw data of the study needs to be requested from the researcher.

### **Deputy Registrar**

The University's Registrar resigned in 2014 and an immediate request was made to the Academic Dean seeking assistance from the registrar's office to have the CPQ administered to the PCP students. The Academic Dean granted approval and the deputy registrar was assigned to assist with procuring the PCP students' names from the data base and forwarding to the respective 2010 to 2012 cohorts.

## **Context and Strategy – Qualitative Sequence**

### **Accessing the Deputy Registrar**

The university's Deputy Registrar received an e-mailed Informed Consent Form. The scope of the research study was outlined and the Deputy Registrar's intent to participate in the study was sought. A Survey Monkey expert piloted questionnaire was sent with the two-week return time limit requested. Seeking to secure the study's volunteers confidentiality the data were coded, analyzed, and presented thematically. The raw data needs to be requested from the researcher.

### **Establishing a Researcher-Participant Relationship**

As a former department chair and faculty member at the Caribbean University, I taught the PCP students from 2010 to 2012. I also conducted academic advisement sessions with more than 60 of the PCP students. I have an understanding of the academic experiences and personal challenges as voiced by the PCP's faculty and students. Since I am no longer employed at the Caribbean University, the limited day-to-day interaction

with the PCP students, faculty, and the Registrar should assist and allow for open and frank sharing and exploration of their perspectives of the issues and challenges experienced by the Caribbean University PCP students' ability to matriculate to levels of higher education studies. The information from these data collection exercises should provide the Caribbean University's administration and faculty with deeper insights into the factors that contributed to the PCP students' low persistence levels. The research findings should assist the Caribbean University in further identifying the need to conduct a further investigation into other areas of the PCP.

Given the qualitative nature of the participatory-summative program evaluation research study, interviews were also suggested as part of the data collection process, however, the PCP students who responded to the CPQ did not indicate an interest in being interviewed.

### **Researcher-Participant Relationship with the Faculty and Deputy Registrar**

The 16 PCP faculty members were invited to be participants of the second group from which data were collected. Like the 16 faculty members, I also taught the PCP students during the period under study. However, I am no longer an employee of the Caribbean University and none of the 16 faculty members were supervised by me. Since many PCP faculty members were no longer with the Caribbean University, the 16 PCP faculty members who were still employed received an Informed Consent Form requesting their voluntary participation in a short open-ended questionnaire administered via Survey Monkey. All 16 faculty members were asked to each sign a consent form agreeing to participate and allowing the researcher to share the research study's findings with the

Caribbean University's administration. Since the faculty also expressed concern about better understanding the factors that influenced the PCP students' ability to progress in higher education studies they were willing to participate in the study. The Caribbean University's Registrar, a former colleague, also received a Survey Monkey e-mailed Informed Consent Form requesting him to be a voluntary participant in a short open-ended Survey Monkey questionnaire. The Registrar however left the university earlier in 2014 and instead the Deputy Registrar who knew of the PCP program and students was invited to participate in the Survey Monkey questionnaire. Both the former Registrar and the Deputy Registrar were equally concerned about the low PCP students' matriculation rates, and expressed their willingness to explore the reasons for the PCP students' poor engagement and performance. Since I am no longer employed at the university under study, there was no threat of retaliation with the information shared.

### **Context and Strategy**

The research study employed a mixed methods approach in collecting data from the three groups of participants, namely the PCP students, the PCP faculty, and the university Deputy Registrar to explore the PCP students' challenges and experiences while attempting to matriculate to higher education studies. This data collection process presented the Caribbean University's administrators with a comprehensive report of the participants' perspectives of the factors influencing the PCP students' college academic engagement and persistence. An Executive Report will delineate the PCP students' perspectives of the PCP, the curriculum, the program delivery and the institutional support services in assisting their progress in attaining matriculation status to higher

education studies. The PCP faculty and the university Deputy Registrar's views of the PCP curriculum, the university matriculation criteria to the PCP, the faculty members' challenges in delivering and engaging the students, and the PCP students' ability to progress in the program will be reported. The PCP's program evaluation executive summary will provide the Caribbean University's administration with empirical data to assist their evaluation of the PCPs effectiveness in attaining its objectives. The Executive Report also offers the university administration a foundation from which informed decisions regarding the PCP curriculum, the program's matriculation requirements, the content delivery methods, the program's coordination, and the institutional support services. Two of the data collection processes occurred simultaneously. The administration of the PCP faculty and the Deputy Registrar's Survey Monkey questionnaires occurred concurrently.

### **Data Collection Methods - Qualitative Sequence**

#### **Faculty Data Collection Method**

An expert piloted open-ended Survey Monkey 10 item questionnaire was administered to the 16 PCP faculty members. The questionnaire sought to procure the faculty member's perspectives of the PCP curriculum, and the adequacy of the PCPs students' matriculation requirements to the PCP. Additionally, the Survey Monkey questionnaire sought to garner the PCP's strengths and shortcomings in attaining its mission; the effectiveness of the institutional support services and explore the views of the faculty regarding their opinions of those factors which influenced the PCP students' academic engagement and persistence in higher education studies. The faculty members

had two weeks in which to complete the questionnaire. Elements of the PCP faculty members' responses to the 10-item questionnaire were referenced thematically in the findings section of the study. In an effort to uphold the anonymity of the PCP faculty, the original raw data from the Survey Monkey questionnaire must be requested from the researcher.

### **Registrar Data Collection Method**

Similar to the PCP faculty members' expert piloted eight-item survey monkey administered questionnaire, the Caribbean University's Deputy Registrar's perspectives of the PCP and the challenges in her opinion may have influenced the PCPs students' progress to higher education studies. Additionally the Deputy Registrar was asked to reflect and provide an opinion as to how the PCP assisted the PCP students in attaining their higher education goals. The questionnaire was to take no more than 30 minutes to complete and had a two week completion request. Elements of the University Registrar's responses to the eight-item questionnaire were referenced thematically in the findings section of the proposed study. In an effort to uphold the anonymity, the original raw data from the Survey Monkey questionnaire must be requested from the researcher.

### **Summary Faculty and Registrar Data Collection Procedures**

In an attempt to avoid vagueness, ambiguity, and to ensure that the questionnaire items were tailored to the research question (Glesne, 2011), the services of an expert panel was used to review all questions and interview protocol for the study. The PCP volunteer faculty and the registrar each received a 10 item open-ended emailed survey monkey researcher-designed questionnaire. The PCP students received their CPQ later as

the Deputy Registrar needed time to procure the students' email addresses from the 2010 to 2013 database. The questions similar in nature to those asked of the PCP students sought to secure the faculty members' and the registrar's perspectives of the PCP's effectiveness in attaining its objectives. The faculty members' and Registrar's perspectives of the factors that influenced the PCP students' program completion and matriculation status to higher education studies were collated and analyzed for reporting purposes. The faculty members' and Deputy Registrar's views of the PCP design, courses delivery methods, program duration, and program coordination were needed to ensure a comprehensive program evaluation. The two Survey Monkey questionnaires sought to secure the faculty members' and Deputy Registrar's perspectives of the PCP matriculation criteria, and the Caribbean University's institutional support services. Faculty members' perspectives of the PCP's components which, in their opinion, positively influenced students' matriculation to an associate degree program, and the PCP's components which in their opinion negatively impacted the PCP students' matriculation to an associate degree program was also sought by the researcher. Finally, the faculty members' and the Deputy Registrar's opinions on recommend changes to enhance the PCP's effectiveness in attaining its objectives and positively influencing the PCP students' matriculation outcomes were asked. A copy of the PCP's faculty members' and the Registrar's questionnaires are seen in (Appendices F and G) respectively. The responses from the PCP faculty members and Deputy Registrar were clearly articulated and there was no need for further clarification by this researcher.

The PCP faculty members' and Deputy Registrar's completed questionnaires were printed and de-identified in preparation for analysis. The faculty members' and Registrar's question item responses were hand coded, and the responses grouped thematically for reporting purposes. In all instances, pseudonyms were assigned to the PCP students', faculty members', and the Deputy Registrar's data when reporting on the findings in order to uphold the participants' anonymity.

In an attempt to present the purposive sample of PCP students', faculty members', and the registrar's authentic voices, the researcher, being the principal investigator, and a former professor who taught the college survival skills course, used bracketing, and an epoche to address, and set aside any biases, and assumptions (Moustakas, 1999, as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 25). A journal was also used to record personal insights and notes while collecting, and analyzing the data. The journal entries were referenced when reporting on the study's findings.

### **Data Collection – Quantitative Sequence**

An Executive Report will delineate the PCP students' perspectives of the PCP, the curriculum, the program delivery and the institutional support services in assisting their progress in attaining matriculation status to higher education studies. The PCP faculty and the university Deputy Registrar's views of the PCP curriculum, the university matriculation criteria to the PCP, the faculty members' challenges in delivering and engaging the students, and the PCP students' ability to progress in the program will be reported. The PCP's program evaluation executive summary will provide the Caribbean University's administration with empirical data to assist their evaluation of the PCPs

effectiveness in attaining its objectives. The Executive Report also offers the university administration a foundation from which informed decisions regarding the PCP curriculum, the program's matriculation requirements, the content delivery methods, the program's coordination, and the institutional support services. Two of the data collection processes occurred simultaneously. The administration of the PCP faculty and the Deputy Registrar's Survey Monkey questionnaires occurred concurrently.

### **Context and Strategy**

The PCP students' survey monkey CPQ was delayed by 3 weeks as the Deputy Registrar sought to procure the names of the PCP students to enable her sending the CPQ. The PCP students, faculty, and Deputy Registrar had two weeks to complete and return their respective questionnaires and consent forms which accompanied the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires served as their signed consent to participate in the research study. Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) stated that a 30% to 50 % participant response rate is acceptable for a questionnaire. The study examined the 128 PCP student cohorts who enrolled in the PCP from 2010 to 2014. Dependent upon the student personal data captured by the application forms at the time of registration and still on file in the Registrar's office I expected at least 38 PCP students (30%) of the PCP 2010 to 2014 population would constitute a valid study. I anticipated that the data collection processes would take three months, however the data collection period for the PCP students was extended by six weeks after learning of the university Registrar's departure. Therefore, the period from the distribution of the Survey Monkey CPQ to the data collection took five months and 2 weeks.



### **The PCP Students' Data Collection Methods**

In an attempt to garner the PCP students' perspectives of the factors which impacted their academic engagement and matriculation to higher education studies at the Caribbean University, this researcher administered (with the assistance of the Deputy Registrar) a Survey Monkey questionnaire. The 31-item questionnaire was adapted from Davidson, Beck, and Milligan's (2009) college persistence questionnaire (CPQ) version 3 (Appendix C). Referencing Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) assertions that a participant's questionnaire response rate of 30% to 50 % was acceptable, I projected that at least 38 PCP students (30 %) of the total 128 PCP students would make the study viable. However, I was mindful that for this number to be attained the participants must also to be invested in the research and its findings. The PCP students' sample included volunteer participants who withdrew from the program, students who were still enrolled and seeking to attain matriculation status, and students who attained the 2.0 GPA and enrolled in an associate degree at the Caribbean University. The CPQ was administered four times to the PCP 2010 to 2014 student cohorts. Only nine students volunteered and returned completed CPQs.

### **Instrument Type and Data Collected**

The researcher obtained permission from the CPQ creators to administer the questionnaire (see Appendix D). The CPQ employed a five-item Likert-scale response and the designers included a not applicable option in the event that the question was not relevant to the target audience. The study's PCP student participants were asked to respond to the 31 question items, which were grouped under nine categories, namely:

Academic Integration; Financial Strain; Institutional Commitment; Academic Motivation; Scholastic Conscientiousness; Degree Commitment; Social Integration; Academic Efficacy and Academic Advising. The students responded to the 31 questions using a five point Likert scale with response scores ranging from 0- Not Applicable; 1- Strongly Disagree; 2- Disagree; 3- Neutral; 4 - Agree, and 5- Strongly Agree. While this investigator selected 31 questions from the original CPQ-V3 short version instrument, in an attempt to ensure the adapted CPQ's item reliability and validity this researcher sought and obtained permission to conduct a pilot study of the adapted CPQ. It is this investigator's belief that the adapted CPQ allowed students to answer Question # 3 of this research study. The students' responses to the CPQ's nine categories of questions were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics and are presented in a table format. Appendix I.

### **Reliability and Validity of the CPQ**

According to the CPQ designers Davidson, Beck, and Milligan (2009), the psychometric tool serves to provide college personnel with an opportunity to:

- a) Identify students at-risk of dropping out;
- b) discover why a given student is likely to discontinue his, or her education, and
- c) determine the variables that best distinguish undergraduates who will persist from those who will not persist at their institutions. (p. 2)

The CPQ validating exercises conducted by the creators of the instrument supported the findings of noted researchers in the field namely Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), and Tinto (1993) who also suggested that during the first six to eight weeks after

matriculation that individual specific experiences that occur impact freshmen students' decisions to persist. As such the CPQ is usually administered during the sixth to eight week of the first semester to measure students' academic integration, social integration, degree of commitment, their views on institutional commitment, academic conscientiousness, academic efficacy, their academic motivation, the level of collegiate stress being experienced, their views on the academic advising, and any financial strain being experienced. The CPQ –V3 has 81 questions and users respond to the question items through a five-point Likert scale. The designers added a sixth option of not applicable, and affixed a 0 value in the event that the question was not relevant. Although the CPQ-V3 was a relatively new instrument, validated in 2009, it has been administered to North American students at Angelo State University, Appalachian State University, Catawba College, Greenville Technical Community College, Troy University, Tusculum University, and the University of Cincinnati to identify at-risk college students. The CPQ creators Davidson, Beck, and Milligan (2009) also designed a short form of the CPQ-V3, which comprises 33 questions. The CPQ-V3 short form addresses the same categories as the CPQ-V3 81 item questionnaire. Taking into consideration that the proposed study sought to garner the perspectives of PCP students, many of whom demonstrated low engagement levels, this researcher explained this factor in an email discussion to the designers. The request for a shorter version of the CPQ-V3, if available, was requested. In an email response from the designers, a CPQ-V3 short form version was shared and permission granted for administering the instrument to the research sample of PCP

students (see appendix D). The CPQ-V3 short form was the instrument of choice for this research study.

### **Data Analysis and Validation Procedures**

#### **Raw Data**

Elements of the PCP students' responses to the CPQ were referenced in the findings section of this study, and presented in a table format. In an effort to uphold the anonymity of the PCP students, the original raw data from the CPQ must be requested from the researcher.

#### **Data Analysis Procedures – PCP students**

The PCP student participants completed CPQ questionnaires were de-identified, grouped according to the academic year in which the PCP students were enrolled that is 2010 to 2011, or 2011 to 2012, 2012 to 2013, 2013 to 2014 and prepared for analysis. The students question item responses were coded using the following: Academic Integration - AI, Financial Strain – FS, Institutional Commitment - IC, Academic Motivation - AM, Scholastic Conscientiousness - SC, Degree Commitment - DC, Social Integration - SI, Academic Efficacy - AE, and Academic Advising – AA. The nine codes were also suggested by the CPQ designers. This researcher adjusted the code list depending on the data generated from the students' interviews, and faculty, and the deputy registrar's questionnaire responses.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was initially considered to assist with the data analysis and reporting, but the small data sets did not necessitate the SPSS usage. Simple descriptive statistical analysis of mean scores, and

frequency by age, sex, and nationality were presented. The PCP students' responses to the 31-item questionnaire grouped under nine categories were presented using simple descriptive statistical analyses (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010, p. 266).

### **Data Analysis Procedures – Faculty and Deputy Registrar**

The summative nature of the program evaluation design provided a holistic perspective, and understanding of the experiences, and accounts of the Caribbean University's PCP faculty, and registrar towards the factors influencing the PCP students'/matriculation ability to an associate degree. The predominately qualitative research study focused on identifying the essence of the Caribbean University's PCP's faculty members', and the Deputy Registrar's lived experiences, their assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs towards those factors which impacted the 2010 to 2015 PCP students' attainment of a 2.0 CGPA to persist to higher education studies.

In the event this researcher needed to seek clarification on a response, the faculty and Deputy Registrar's responses to the open-ended questionnaires were copied, de-identified, and numbered. The raw data were hand coded, and some possible codes for consideration to assist with the data analysis were identified; for example, PCP objectives, challenging experiences teaching PCP students, PCP's strengths, institutional support, PCP weaknesses, and recommendations. The faculty members' responses to the questionnaire were separated by course categories; for example foundation course of math 98 and 99, English 98 and 99 and college survival skills to ascertain the similarities and differences in faculty perceptions and experiences among the foundation faculty cohort. A similar questionnaire item analysis was conducted with the PCP faculty who

teach the 100-level courses. Since the proposed study's sample is relatively small, I analyzed the data manually without the assistance of the Atlas ti software.

The Registrar's responses to the 10-item questionnaire were de-identified in preparation for analysis. The possible codes for the registrar's questionnaire were success of PCP in attaining program objectives, factors impacting the PPC students' attainment, factors impacting PCP faculty members' ability to engage students, PCP strengths, PCP weaknesses, PCP student entrance criteria, PCP student matriculation criteria and recommendations. Due to the study's small sample, neither NVIVO nor Atlas ti were employed in the data analysis.

Additionally, the researcher employed the elements of the logic model and analyzed quotes from the faculty and deputy registrar's questionnaire item responses. For instance, the investigator grouped the faculty and Deputy Registrar's questionnaire item responses under the broad category heading outcomes and employed sub headings of initial outcome, intermediate outcome, and long-term impact. Other possible categories under which the clustered quotes were grouped and findings reported were inhibitors of change, and mechanisms of change. Member checks with the faculty members, and Deputy Registrar were conducted on the questionnaire item responses to ensure authenticity of the participants' voices. Pseudo names were used in the reporting process to preserve the anonymity of the study's participants.

In summary, the PCP students' responses to the CPQ were analyzed and reported using simple descriptive statistics (see Appendix I). The PCP students', the PCP faculty members', and deputy registrar's transcribed and analyzed findings are presented

thematically and diagrammatically. Simple descriptive statistics was employed to analyze the PCP students' responses to the CPQ questionnaires, the PCP faculty members and the deputy registrar's online Survey Monkey questionnaires. Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) contended that employing data collection from multiple sources assists in triangulating the data (p. 288).

### **Data Triangulation**

In an attempt to heighten the trustworthiness and validity of the research findings, the data were triangulated by supporting when appropriate the quantitative findings of the PCP students' CPQ with the qualitative findings of the PCP faculty and deputy registrar. A similar exercise was conducted with the analyzed data findings of the PCP faculty and registrar's Survey Monkey questionnaires. The findings from these questionnaires were viewed against the quantitative statistical analyses of PCP students' responses to the CPQ to identify and report any similarities and differences in the opinions of this study's three groups of participants.

Striving to guard against bias, this researcher conducted a peer debriefing by sharing interpretations of the data with a peer colleague who had no investment in the outcome of the PCP evaluation research study. According to Patton (2002), peer debriefing allows the researcher to externalize their feelings of the research findings in an attempt to prepare the investigators to respond to challenges and questions with clarity.

### **Protection of Participants**

Cognizant of the confidentiality protocols and the importance of upholding the anonymity of the PCP students, faculty, and registrar, all data collected and analyzed

were de-identified before reporting and securely stored to ensure participant protection. During the data collection phase, each participant was reminded of the research study's intention and projected usage of the analyzed data. Only the 2010 to 2015 PCP who were 18 years and older were invited to participate in the research study. Additionally the Caribbean University's PCP faculty members and Deputy Registrar were invited to participate voluntarily in their respective data gathering exercises. Before the data collection, the PCP student participants were asked their desire to proceed and complete the proposed CPQ. A similar data procurement clarifying exercise, which outlines the intent of the research study, and the usage of the data collected, was conducted with the PCP faculty members and the deputy registrar. This data collection and usage clarification was in the format of a letter sent along with the survey monkey questionnaires. Should any of the research study's volunteers that is, the PCP students, the PCP faculty, or the Deputy Registrar had the opportunity to withdraw from the research study at any point during the data collection phase they were able to withdraw without any repercussions. All data generated during the data collection phases were de-identified and kept in a safe storage cabinet in the researchers' possession in the United States of America.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was conducted at a small Caribbean University, which has a small numbers of students seeking enrollment in a PCP. The number of students enrolled in the PCP during the 2010 to 2015 was 128. A CPQ instrument was administered only to the PCP students who were enrolled in the 2010 to 2015 PCP. The study depended on the



willingness of the purposeful small sample of the Caribbean University's students, faculty members, and Deputy Registrar. If the PCP participant students did not respond truthfully to the CPQ, which sought to identify the factors influencing their program completion and persistence, this outcome was unintended impact of the study.

The PCP was a new program initiative for the Caribbean University under study. This aspect should be acknowledged as a key limitation of transferability of findings for this program evaluation study. As a result, the findings of a small purposive sample of PCP students cannot predict whether the factors found as influencing the Caribbean University's 2010 to 2015 PCP students cohorts' program completion, and matriculation status to higher education status would be the same factors influencing all PCP students in other Caribbean tertiary education jurisdictions.

### **Data Analysis**

As stated previously, a mixed methods approach was selected for this participatory-summative program evaluation study in an attempt to explore a wider representation of the participants' perspectives. The logic outcomes model of evaluation is a systematic method which utilizes diagrams and charts to highlight program input and outcomes. Although a mixed methods approach for the participatory-summative program evaluation of the PCP was utilized, the study's data collection and analyses were more heavily weighted towards the qualitative data collection components through the employment of open-ended questionnaires for the nine PCP faculty members and the university Deputy Registrar. Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) sought to dispel the misconception that summative evaluations must employ a quantitative data analysis and

formative evaluations a qualitative approach (p.320). The qualitative components of the research were procured from the PCP students' responses to the 31– item College Preparation Questionnaire (CPQ).

The predominately, qualitative participatory- summative program evaluation design was used for this study. According to Spaulding (2008), a participatory-summative program evaluation focuses on the needs of the stakeholders and differs from the other research designs in that the approach allows the researcher to include the research participants in the program evaluation process (p.14). The inductive approach and constructivist nature of the labor intensive participatory evaluation research design builds rapport, empowers the program providers to act on the knowledge gained, and increases the likely hood that the program evaluation findings will be used to improve the students' and institution's performance.

Data analysis began at the point of data collection with the PCP faculty members, the university Deputy Registrar, and PCP students and was ongoing. Multiple data sources were utilized in an attempt to represent the PCP faculty members', the university's Deputy Registrar and the PCP students' perspectives. Questionnaire data were collected over a five and a half month period. These data were reviewed and analyzed to check for emerging themes, categories, patterns, and participants' differing perspectives. The study drew heavily on the rich qualitative data perspectives garnered from the PCP's faculty members' and the Deputy Registrar's open-ended questionnaires and examined the PCP students' quantitative responses from the CPQ to better understand those factors which influenced the PCP students' inability to matriculate to

the Caribbean university's associate degree. A description of the analysis of each research question was provided in the following paragraphs. In an attempt to maintain participants' confidentiality and anonymity, all participants were coded by a letter A to I for the nine PCP faculty, R for the Registrar and via numbers for the eight PCP students.

### **Quality and Procedures to Assure Accuracy and Credibility of Findings**

Data sources in this study included open-ended questionnaires and a 31-item college persistence questionnaire with the PCP faculty members who taught either the precollege or 100 level college courses, and the 2010 to 2015 PCP students. I had considerable knowledge of the PCP and the PCP students since I was employed at the university and taught in the PCP program. I stated that I was an external evaluator, and had some opinions regarding factors which may have influenced the PCP students inability to persist in college. Utilizing peer reviewed scholarly resources helped to control and restrict my personal ideas and beliefs. Peer review, member checking and triangulation were employed to increase the study's credibility.

The research study sought to answer: In what ways were the PCP's purpose, structure, and outcomes manifested in practices at the Caribbean University?

The study sought to investigate:

Research Question # 1: In what way(s) does the PCP's purpose or mission influence participants?

Research Question # 2: What are the PCP students' registrar and faculty views of the PCP's structural format (e.g., course content, delivery methods, duration of the curriculum, academic advising, and program coordination)?

Research Question # 3: How do the PCP students' rate a set of factors that affected their academic engagement and persistence at the Caribbean University?

### **Sub-question 1 Analysis**

The first sub-question in the study was # 1: In what way(s) does the PCP's purpose or mission influence stakeholders? The PCP faculty members' responses ranged from agreeing that "for a few students, the program has been a success. I have seen 1 or 2 students progress from Pre-college to the Associate degree and succeed in their Mathematics. The majority however, struggle terribly with Mathematics at College level, having scraped through the Mat 99 course." However, a second PCP math faculty member's perspective towards the PCP program successfully attaining its mission was responded to with this statement "I'm only aware of the math portion and have seen the programme offer a few students who were not ready for college a solid foundation and bridge into the associates program." Agreeing that the PCP program's objectives were met another faculty member stated, "I think the objectives were successfully achieved to a large extent for the students who wanted to achieve and advance academically and socially. Promoting and increasing students' reading in the content area is something that I don't think the students have grasped successfully." The perspective of another faculty member regarding the PCP's program ability in attaining its mission generated this response from one PCP faculty member "I would say that some objectives were met, but not all. I would say that it helped to strengthen the interpersonal skills (4) and encouraged the interactions with the college faculty and students (6). Other objectives were not met in full. I feel the motivation of the students was somewhat challenging and led to

unattained objectives.” One faculty (1.11%) member however stated from their perspective “none” of the PCP’s six objectives were attained. Disagreeing with this faculty member’s perspective two (22.2%) PCP faculty members expressed that in their opinion “all six of the PCP’s objectives were successfully attained.” An analysis of the PCP faculty members’ responses to the PCP program successfully meeting its mission and objectives highlighted the polar opposite perspectives among the PCP faculty members and this feedback was generated from the PCP faculty members’ responses to question item eight.

Regarding the PCP ability in attaining its mission and objectives, the deputy registrar responded only objectives “#5, #4, #2” were attained. According to the deputy registrar those objectives that were successfully met were the PCP’s ability to strengthen interpersonal skills; provide classroom instruction in academic areas and introduce students to skill- building in mathematics, writing, and other subjects; and expose students to careers in business, technology, and science. The registrar agreed with one PCP math faculty member that the PCP did not assist students in strengthen students’ skills in math, science, history, grammar, writing, and computers, or other selected areas; nor did the PCP promote and increase student interest in reading in content areas; or encourage interaction with college faculty and students.

### **Sub-question 2 Analysis**

The second sub-question for analysis was: What are the PCP students’, Deputy Registrar, and faculty members’ views of the PCP’s structural format (e.g., course content, delivery methods, duration of the curriculum, academic advising, and program

coordination). Responses from nine of the 16 PCP faculty (56.3%) who participated in the PCP survey monkey questionnaires stated, “there was a great deal of confusion with administration as to the passing grade for both Mat and Eng 98 and 99. Lecturers believed that students needed a B to move on, but students were being allowed to continue having achieved a C.” This PCP faculty member continued to state “some students were on the program, who would never be able to cope at the College level.” “I had students with various learning disabilities, who really needed specialized educational assistance. (There was one young man in 98 who didn't know what odd and even numbers were, and had no idea about basic division).” The “large classes was the biggest challenge” and this faculty member expressed that the PCP students were “in transition from high school for the most part and had difficulties in adapting to a university environment where they were expected to exercise initiative and conduct themselves as mature adults.” This PCP faculty member unlike their other Caribbean University faculty colleagues who responded to the question item on the strengths of the PCP stated the “PCP was well organized and could work, the strengths were: 1. course offerings to assist students to move into the Associate Programme seamlessly. 2. COL 100 as a bridge subject for these students. 3. Pool of qualified selected instructors to teach in the programme.” “Providing guidance to those who needed it most and helping to structure their lives” was the positive response from one PCP faculty member, however two faculty colleagues responded with “unknown” to this question on the PCP’s strengths. Question item number 11 required the PCP faculty to highlight any PCP shortcomings. Responses ranged from “proper screening of students is not done. Many of the students

are not ready for the college level. Most of them are mentally and socially unprepared.” One PCP faculty member stated “The students in PCP are not good students or they would be in the associate programme they need extra support, study skills tutoring to maintain the momentum of the programme.” Lack of coordination was communicated in the faculty members’ responses. A faculty member stated “The presence of a pre-college coordinator or counselor I feel would have been very helpful, since its inception one was hired on a part-time basis and subsequently left for personal reasons. It could be seen that some inroads were been made at the time.” “Money is always a challenge in the educational environment and so even if there is a continuation of the programme we do not have a coordinator and will not be able to hire one. “No PCP coordinator at the time” these PCP faculty members thought may have influenced the poor PCP students’ performance.

Increased time with the students was also expressed, “I would have liked more time to work with students in the application of skills. At the end of the course I wanted them not just to know the rules and the "how to's," but to be able to detect and correct errors in own writing -- I was not always happy with such outcomes.” This faculty member continued to explain that requests for a lab facility were made, “we had tried to introduce labs for this purpose but financial constraints caused this to be dropped. (The additional technology was also thought of as being too expensive).” This faculty member’s perspective was that additional technology exposure could have assisted the PCP students. A PCP program shortcoming cited by the PCP faculty was a lack of data collective initiatives and the ability to track the PCP students “tracking these students to

establish outcomes. (Data need to be made available).” Another faculty member’s perspective was that the PCP students needed support “they need extra support, study skills tutoring to maintain the momentum of the programme.” Lastly one faculty member’s viewpoint of the PCP’s shortcomings was that it did not “prepare students for university life.” Unlike the more cohesive agreement among the PCP faculty members’ responses towards the benefits of the PCP, the faculty perspectives towards the PCP’s shortcomings were quite varied. Faculty expressed concern with the PCP’s program admissions and student selection criteria, time allocation for courses, lack of appropriate student tracking, and inconsistent administrative and institutional support.

The Deputy Registrar’s comments to the PCP’s structural format (e.g., course content, delivery methods, duration of the curriculum, academic advising, and program coordination) were as follows. “Students lack of focus and readiness of the students” coupled with “lack of focus in the programme; constant changes, lack of resources,” a “more thorough explanation of expectations and more thorough analysis of the needs of the students.” The Deputy Registrar’s perspective on the indicator and predictor effectiveness of the composite math and English college entrance examination scores of 120-139 for students in the PCP students to matriculate to an associate degree at the Caribbean university. A response of “not sure” was obtained for question 8. However, the Deputy Registrar’s assessment of the situation and feedback to question 9 which addressed the high non-completion rates among the PCP student cohorts which ultimately resulted in low matriculation rates to an associate degree obtained the following response “students did not seem committed to the programme.” Finally, question 10 gave the



Deputy Registrar an opportunity to provide recommendations that would assist in enhancing the Precollege program's effectiveness and improve the PCP students' matriculation rates. According to the Deputy Registrar not until the following elements are addressed, that is a "more thorough explanation of expectations and more thorough analysis of the needs of the students" would there be any significant change in the status quo of low PCP student matriculation rates to an associate degree.

Similarities in the Deputy Registrar's feedback and the nine PCP faculty members who participated in the PCP survey monkey questionnaires were noted. Areas of similarity were found in the following PCP faculty and the Registrar's responses namely, their perceptions towards the Precollege program's ability in attaining all its objectives. Six of the nine PCP faculty and the Deputy Registrar agreed that not all PCP objectives were attained. One PCP faculty member stated that none of the six PCP's objectives were attained while two faculty agreed that all six PCP objectives were successfully attained. Another similar survey response was found in the Registrar's and the PCP faculty members' comments on the PCP students' lack of focus, commitment to the program, and their matriculation to an associate degree. Yet another similarity in responses was noted in the survey question item that addressed the PCP's strengths and weaknesses. The Deputy Registrar and the PCP faculty shared similar opinions. According to the Deputy Registrar, the PCPs strength was its ability to ready the students for and "ongoing university life and academic career." The PCP faculty shared that the PCP provided students with the "requisite knowledge and skills for transition from high school to college." Two faculty members stated that the PCP "program gave them access to the

Associate degree program.” The weaknesses of the PCP according to the Deputy Registrar were found in its “constant changes and lack of resources.” One PCP faculty stated that the PCP students “need extra support, study skills tutoring to maintain the momentum of the programme.” Another faculty member cited “no PCP coordinator,” and yet another stated, “tracking these students to establish outcomes. (Data need to be made available).”

Finally, the PCP faculty and the Deputy Registrar’s recommendations for the program’s enhancement and improved PCP students’ matriculation rates once again highlighted their comparable perspectives. For instance, the Deputy Registrar called for a “more thorough analysis of the needs of the students,” and a “more thorough explanation of expectations” should be shared. The PCP faculty suggested that the university “have more industry personnel giving presentations so the students can become more aware of the careers and hopefully that would help to guide them.” It was felt that “perhaps finding out what the students were really interested in and channeling their energies into the right direction....” might assist in boosting PCP students’ motivation and persistence. Lastly one PCP faculty member stated that “most of them have no idea what they want to do or become so they really are interested in 'nothing!'.”

Nine PCP volunteer students from the 2010 to 2015 cohorts provided their perspectives on the Caribbean university’s faculty, staff, program and institutional support. Data on these elements were collected via the survey monkey administered 31-item College Preparation Questionnaire (CPQ) designed by Davidson, Beck, and

Milligan (2009). The psychometric tool serves to provide college personnel with an opportunity to:

- (a) Identify students at-risk of dropping out; (b) discover why a given student is likely to discontinue his, or her education, and (c) determine the variables that best distinguish undergraduates who will persist from those who will not persist at their institutions. (p.2)

The CPQ generated quantitative data responses to the PCP's structural format. The following are examples of the areas (e.g., course content, delivery methods, and duration of the curriculum, academic advising, and program coordination). These areas were captured under nine factors namely: Factor 1: Academic Integration, Factor 2: Financial Strain, Factor 3: Institutional Commitment, Factor 4: Academic Motivation, Factor 5: Scholastic Conscientiousness, Factor 6: Degree Commitment, Factor 7: Social Integration, Factor 8: Academic Efficacy, and Factor 9: Academic Advising. Feedback from the nine PCP students' who participated in the CPQ provided the following feedback.

### **Factor 1 Academic Integration**

Students' feedback suggested they did not always understand faculty members' teaching and they felt that the faculty members were not always concerned about their intellectual growth. This section of the CPQ asked the PCP students to respond to six questions to learn their academic integration perceptions. Students were asked to provide insights into their faculty members' ability to provide them with course outlines on the first day of class and follow these outlines. In response to this item, PCP students # 1 and

5 (2.22%) strongly agreed, and students # 2,3,7,8 agreed (44.4%). Student # 9 (1.11%) however strongly disagreed and students # 1 and 6 (2.22%) did not respond. PCP students' satisfaction with the quality of PCP faculty instruction (item 2) received the following responses: student # 9 (1.11%) strongly agreed; students # 3, 4, 5 (33.3%) agreed and student # 2 (1.11%) was neutral. Students' response to item 3 regarding their ability to understand their instructor's thinking when lecturing had student # 4 (1.11%) strongly agreed; student # 8 (1.11%) agreed; students # 3 and 5 (22.2%) were neutral; students # 2 and 9 (22.2%) disagreed and students # 1, 6 and 7 (33.3%) chose not to respond to this item.

#### **Factor 7: Social Integration**

The PCP students' connectedness to faculty, staff and students. The PCP students' ability to connect with students, faculty members and the Caribbean university staff was examined. The nine students' responses to Factor 7: Social Integration questions outlined generated the following. Students' responses were more varied with this cluster of questions (items 21-23) which had students responding to three items. Students' perspectives regarding their sense of connectedness with faculty, students and staff were reported with the following: student # 5 (1.11%) strongly agreed there was a connection, student # 4 (1.11%) gave a neutral response while student # 3 (1.11%) disagreed there was a connection with the faculty, students and staff. Students # 1,3,4,6,7,8 (66.7%) did not respond. Responding to item 23 which focused on students' perspectives on having much in common with other students at the Caribbean university prompted the following

responses: Student # 7 (1.11%) agreed; students # 3,5,8 (33.3%) were neutral and students # 1,2,4,6,9 (55.6%) did not respond.

The analysis of Factor 7 Social Integration among this group of PCP student regarding their ability to feel connected to the PCP faculty, staff and students the data suggest a cause for concern. Five students responded gave a neutral answer to the three questions in this cluster of items, and one student disagreed. Following on from students' perspectives of their ability to connect with the Caribbean university's faculty, students and staff, the CPQ asked the PCP students to provide their insights into feelings regarding the academic workload. Six students responding with either a neutral or disagree should be investigated.

#### **Factor 9: Academic Advising**

While four 4 students reported that they agreed with the overall academic advising provided, four students also cited either being neutral or disagreeing with the services provided. Noteworthy is the high non-response rate of 77.8% for items 1 and 2 in this section that asked about PCP students' satisfaction with the academic advising and their being able to get answers to their academic questions. Ties back to some faculty members indicating they were not aware how to advise the PCP students. Independent of PCP student1, who refrained from answering all the questions in the CPQ survey monkey questionnaire for sections 1-9, the eight 2010 – 2015 PCP students who responded gave low ratings to the cluster of Academic Advising question items 28-31. Students # 3 and 5 (22.2%) gave a neutral response to item 28 when asked on the ease to acquire feedback to questions related to their education at the Caribbean college. Seven students # 1, 2, 4, 6,

7, 8, 9 (77.8%) did not respond to this item. Little difference in students responding was noted for item 29 which sought to learn the PCP students' satisfaction with the academic advising. Student # 2 (1.11%) agreed that they were satisfied, while student # 5 (1.11%) gave a neutral response and students # 1,3,4,6,7,8,9 (77.8%) did not respond. No difference in the responding pattern for CPQ items 30 and 31 of was noted. Students # 3 and 9 (22.2%) agreed that important information such as academic rules were communicated while PCP student # 5 (1.11%) gave a neutral response and students # 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 did not respond to item 30. Item 31 asked the PCP students to comment on their satisfaction with having their academically diverse needs from the majority of the other students were met. Students # 7 and 8 (22.2%) agreed their needs were met with students # 3 and 5 (22.2%) gave a neutral response and students # 1, 2, 4, 6, 9 (55.6%) did not respond. An initial analysis of the PCP students' responses to Factor 9 of the CPQ shows that the Caribbean university should address the academic advising practices offered to the PCP students. While four students reported that they agreed with the overall academic advising provided, four (44.4%) students also cited either being neutral or disagreeing with the services provided. Noteworthy is the high non-response rate of 77.8% for items 1 and 2 in this section that asked about PCP students' satisfaction with the academic advising and being able to get answers to their academic questions. Nine PCP students participated in the CPQ, however only one (1.11%) student provided a qualitative account in the open comments section. Student # 9 provided these comments of the PCP "I think that the precollege program is a good program for students who are not as educated as others, and I think the individual who came up with this idea is

brilliant, I did the precollege program and I had no regret in doing the program - why? because it gave me background information on what I did back in high school, it refreshed my mind and allow me to remember what I did. When I just left high school, went on summer break normally when you start school in September you forget all about what you did in high school, and as to the precollege program made me remember as I said before what I did in high school. Therefore, it prepared me for my associate degree. I did not fail any classes and did not have to retake just because of the experience of the pre-college program bringing back what I learned (refreshing my memory). I can only speak for myself this program I think would really help most students.”

### **Faculty Awareness of Precollege Students**

The PCP faculty members’ responses to question # 7 which sought to ascertain their knowledge/awareness of the PCP students in their classes was varied. Nine (56.3%) of the 16 faculty members responded to the PCP questionnaire. Three faculty members (33.3%) stated their knowledge of the PCP students by directly asking the PCP students and administration of the class composition. Five faculty members (55.5%) stated they were not informed of having PCP students in their classes. Three faculty members (33.3%) shared they assumed some students were in the PCP program. Responses from the three faculty members ranged from “I am not sure. Probably because of their attitude. They were not generally engaged” to “I was not aware of the Precollege students specifically unless I received e-mails with the students' names.” The third and fourth PCP faculty members’ knowledge of their respective PCP student status was cited as “... since the pre-college mostly took 98 in the Fall and 99 in the Spring, so they made up the

majority of those classes during those semesters” and “this course had only pre-college students.” One faculty member (11.1%) did not comprehend what the question was asking.

### **PCP Objective Successfully Attained**

When the PCP faculty members were asked to provide their perspective in which areas has the Precollege Program successfully attained its objectives, six (66.7%) of the nine PCP faculty expressed the PCP attained some measure of success in meeting a few of its six objectives, and to some extent assisted a few PCP students in matriculating to an associate degree. Responses from the six PCP faculty who positively identified the PCP having met its mission and objectives provided the following responses “all objectives have been attained,” “for a few students, the program has been a success.” “I think the objectives were successfully achieved to a large extent for the students who wanted to achieve and advance academically and socially.” “I’m only aware of the math portion and have seen the programme offer a few students who were not ready for college a solid foundation and bridge into the associates program.” “I would say that some objectives were met, but not all. I would say that it helped to strengthen the interpersonal skills (4) and encouraged the interactions with the college faculty and students (6).” “Objectives 4,5,6, were met,” and from one faculty member’s perspective to the PCP having met its objectives this faculty member responded “yes it has. Objectives # 1-6.” While six PCP faculty members (66.7%) acknowledge some success in the PCP attaining its objective, some of the PCP faculty member also identified elements of the PCP objectives that were not met. Two (22.2%) PCP faculty members stated, “other objectives were not met in



full. I feel the motivation of the students was somewhat challenging and led to unattained objectives.” One faculty member (1.11%) shared that “objectives # 1,2,3” were not met, agreeing one faculty member (1.11%) stated that PCP objectives 4 and 6 were met, however this same faculty member also wrote “other objectives were not met in full. I feel the motivation of the students was somewhat challenging and led to unattained objectives.” Unlike the other eight PCP faculty members who expressed success in the attainment of some of the six PCP objectives, one (1.11%) PCP faculty member wrote that “none” of the six program objectives were met. An analysis of the PCP faculty members’ responses highlights the polar opposite perspectives among the PCP faculty members that question eight generated.

A closer look at the data showed that six faculty members concur that some measure of success was attained by the PCP in meeting a few of its objectives. However, there were noted differences among the faculty members’ responses regarding which of the PCP’s six objectives were successfully attained. For example, five (55.6%) faculty agreed that the PCP’s objective #1 namely: Strengthen students’ skills in math, science, history, grammar, writing, and computers, or other selected areas was attained while four (44.4%) faculty members disagreed. Four (44.4%) faculty members agreed that PCP objective 2 namely: Expose students to careers in business, technology, and science were successfully met, while five (55.6%) faculty members did not concur. Seven (77.8%) PCP faculty agreed that objective3 namely: Promote and increase student interest in reading in content areas was not obtained. Of note, objective 3 had the highest concurrence ranking among the nine PCP faculty. Conversely five (55.6%) of the PCP

faculty stated that objectives 4: Strengthen interpersonal skills was among the PCP students: objective 5: Provide classroom instruction in academic areas and introduce students to skill building in mathematics, writing, and other subjects, and objective # 6: Encourage interaction with college faculty and students were successfully attained. Objectives # 1, 4, 5, and 6 received the second highest ranking in objective attainment from the nine PCP faculty.

In summary, question eight showed the diverse perspectives among faculty regarding the PCP program's successful attainment of its six objectives. According to seven PCP faculty members the program's structure and faculty's ability to assist the PCP students in attaining objective 3 failed.

### **PCP Faculty Most Challenging Experience**

The PCP faculty members' perspectives of their most challenging experience followed. Nine PCP faculty members offered the following responses. Five PCP faculty members (55.6%) cited motivating the PCP students as their most challenging experience. The PCP faculty members cited the following challenges "many students were working and not giving any effort seeing course as a stepping stone and not developing a skill." This faculty member further stated that it felt like "trying to motivate people who do not see the need to be in the programme in the first place, and that academics was not the first choice of a number of students." Another faculty member concurred and shared that "it is challenging to me when I am trying to impart knowledge to persons who are not interested in advancing academically; who tell you they are just there because their 'parent' tells them to be there." The second PCP faculty further added

that the PCP students had “no interest and are disruptive to the teaching/learning process.” While five faculty agreed that motivating the PCP students was their biggest challenge, a third faculty proffered that “the most challenging aspect is not unique to precollege but all struggling students, the lack of responsibility for their own efforts and ownership of proper study techniques.”

One PCP faculty member’s challenging perspective was that of “confusion with faculty and administration on agreeing on passing grade for math and English.” This faculty member cited that there was “a great deal of confusion with administration as to the passing grade for both Mat and Eng 98 and 99.” According to this faculty member “lecturers believed that students needed a B to move on, but students were being allowed to continue having achieved a C.” This faculty member cited a similar factor cited by a previous colleague that may have attributed to the challenges that the PCP faculty experienced. Another faculty member stated, “I had students with “various learning disabilities, who really needed specialized educational assistance. (There was one young man in 98 who didn't know what odd and even numbers were, and had no idea about basic division).” To compound this situation the faculty member stated that the “classes were large” and “many students were working while studying and saw the course as a stepping stone and not as a skill and developmental process. So they were largely more interested in how to make the grade with the least amount of effort.”

In response to the challenges experienced by the PCP faculty when teaching the PCP students, three faculty (33.3%) stated their challenges with “students not ready for college inability to adapt, not mature, still with a high school mentality.” Another cited

“Behavioral issues. Most students are of the mindset that they are still in high school so it takes some time to change that mindset,” PCP students “had difficulties in adapting to a university environment where they were expected to exercise initiative and conduct themselves as mature adults.” Additional issues noted by the PCP faculty member was the lack of a coordinator. Faculty responded with the following “have a supervisor who works closely with the students encouraging them to attain a higher level of learning skills.” “Invest in a Pre-College coordinator.” “Use peer counselors to help students who are deficient.” Need for “Interaction that include the parents or guardians. “Encourage Support from all stakeholders (parents, ministry, college administration, and even the community.” “It has to be a community effort that would include a partnership with the many stakeholders.”

Analysis of the PCP faculty responses to question # 9 showed that the faculty members found that the students lacked the maturity needed for college, they were not motivated, some presented learning disabilities and having to address the varied learning styles of the PCP students was compounded with their being in large classes. One faculty member shared that students in their class were working while studying and did not view the program as developmental benefiting them, but rather as a steppingstone. Lastly, one faculty member articulated their dissatisfaction with the university administration and the granting of students who did not meet the stipulated “B” grade to progress to a higher level “Lecturers believed that students needed a B to move on, but students were being allowed to continue having achieved a C.”

### **PCPs Strengths**

Describing the strengths of the PCP solicited the following comments from the nine PCP faculty members. Eight faculty members (88.9%) agreed that the PCP was the bridge from high school to university that allowed the PCP students to acquire the skill sets not attained while at high school. Some PCP faculty members stated the PCP “provide students with requisite knowledge and skills for transition from high school to college.” Agreeing another PCP faculty member stated “the programme offers very strong foundation courses for the students to help them progress in the future.”

Faculty members saw the PCP as that program which prepared the PCP students to matriculate to an associate degree. The perspectives of the five PCP faculty members (55.6%) are reflected in the following statements. One faculty member said, “For those students who had, for whatever reason, missed out on passing the required number of CXC's/IGCSE's at the High School, but were able to function mathematically at a reasonable level, the program gave them access to the Associate degree program. They were able to catch up/refresh their knowledge in areas they were unclear, and move on.” Two faculty members stated that “the PCP program offers very strong foundation courses for the students to help them progress in the future.” The fourth faculty member concurred that the PCP was that program that “attempts to impart the skills they missed in previous education and could make a major difference in bridging gaps” While the fifth faculty member saw the PCP as “providing guidance to those who needed it most and helping to structure their lives.” In spite of this apparent agreement among the majority of the PCP faculty members that the PCP served as a bridge for students to

matriculate to an associate degree, one (11.1%) faculty member stated that the benefits of the PCP were “unknown.” The majority of the PCP faculty members who participated in the survey concurred that the PCP’s intent was to serve as the program that offered a second chance to academically underprepared high school graduates. They also agreed that the PCP program provided PCP graduates a chance at attending college and attaining a college degree. In spite of the majority of the PCP faculty members coming to a common agreement on the benefit of PCP, feedback on the PCP’s shortcomings were quite varied and the responses from the PCP faculty are reflected in the following section.

### **PCP Shortcomings**

Question 11 sought to ascertain PCP faculty members’ perspectives on the PCP’s shortcomings and garnered the following responses: One PCP faculty member (11.1%) member thought that the PCP “students stand very little chance of acquiring the required skills and knowledge in 2 semesters to be able to cope with College level Mathematics.” Three faculty members (33.3%) suggested there was a miss match between students and program. According to these three faculty members, the PCP students were “Ill-prepared students,” “the students in PCP are not good students or they would be in the associate programme,” and another faculty member suggested, “proper screening of students is not done. Many of the students are not ready for the college level.” Other PCP faculty members suggested that it was “not the course but the students - some were very disruptive and had no interest in the class.” The faculty members went on to express that PCP students “most of them are mentally and socially unprepared.” Yet another faculty

member's perspective was that "they need extra support, study skills tutoring to maintain the momentum of the programme."

Looking more at the course scheduling and institutional support services one faculty member stated, "I would have liked more time to work with students in the application of skills." "We had tried to introduce labs for this purpose but financial constraints caused this to be dropped. (The additional technology was also thought of as being too expensive)." Could it have been a course time allocation or the lack of institutional support systems that may have prompted the poor PCP students' performance or could the PCP students' performance been affected by as one faculty member stated "no unique cohort experience" and "no PCP coordinator at the time?" Student tracking was also cited by a PCP faculty member as an institutional and, or administrative shortcoming. This faculty member wrote that the university should have been "tracking these students to establish outcomes. (Data need to be made available)." Lastly, one PCP faculty member's perspective of the PCP's shortcomings was that it did not "prepare students for university life." Unlike the more cohesive agreement among the PCP faculty members' responses towards the benefits of the PCP, the faculty members' perspectives towards the PCP's shortcomings as stated in their reflections above were quite varied. Faculty members expressed concern with the PCP's program admissions and student selection criteria, time allocation for courses, lack of appropriate student tracking, and inconsistent administrative and institutional support. Some examples of the PCP faculty members' statements were "proper screening of students is not done. Many of the students are not ready for the college level. Most of them are mentally and socially

unprepared.” A math PCP faculty member shared “The majority of Precollege students were not at this level, and this was the reason they had failed their Mathematics CXC/IGCSE at High School. These students stand very little chance of acquiring the required skills and knowledge in 2 semesters to be able to cope with College level Mathematics.”

Having understood the PCP faculty members’ perspectives of the PCP the following question sought to acquire their thoughts of those factors that would address and improve the PCP shortcomings. An examination of the PCP faculty questionnaire highlighted these faculty recommendations to address the PCP’s shortcomings.

### **PCP Faculty Recommendations**

Faculty members’ recommendations to question # 12 were as follows, three (33.3%) of the nine PCP faculty members recommended that the PCP needed a coordinator who will provide guidance, serve as a tutor, and a counsellor “no PCP coordinator at the time.” The PCP faculty members recommended, “They need extra support, study skills tutoring to maintain the momentum of the programme” and “a PCP supervisor to support the students and provide the necessary guidance required.” Employ a full time PCP coordinator who will assume the role of tutor and counselor.” “Involve other upperclassmen and women to mentor and tutor these students.” Create unique cohorts where they will move through the program together under the watchful eye of the coordinator.”

Two (22.2%) of the faculty members suggested that some of the PCP students who were in college were not ready and should have remain in high school until such



time, “The majority of Precollege students were not at this level, and this was the reason they had failed their Mathematics CXC/IGCSE at High School. These students stand very little chance of acquiring the required skills and knowledge in 2 semesters to be able to cope with College level Mathematics.” Sharing a similar perspective, two (22.2%) of the PCP faculty stated that the university should engage in a more efficient screening process, and requested that the PCP students’ transcripts be available to the university to better understand the graduates’ learning challenges before they entered college, “most of them are mentally and socially unprepared.” “A more efficient screening process is necessary to identify students' readiness. Some students should be kept back in high school as they are not ready for the college level.” One (1.11%) faculty member recommended that the island’s high schools should be aware of the issues that their graduates enrolled in the PCP are experiencing. Extra class time to develop skill application was thought to be a possible approach to help with the low academic performance “transcripts for students need to follow them from the High School, so that learning disabilities can be known before they enter the college.” “Liaise with secondary schools in the jurisdiction and make suggestions as to how to improve the quality of students.” Seeking to address the disciplinary issues among the PCP students, one (1.11%) faculty saw the need for the university to have disciplinary procedures to address disruptive students, “Perhaps not making them accountable enough for their lack of interest in the academic programme and “some disciplinary procedure in place to remove disruptive students.” Another faculty member (1.11%) thought that having a PCP database would allow him or her to communicate with the students, “Provide a database

of all enrolled students and reach out to them at intervals to track their progress. Perhaps a combination of and, or all of these PCP faculty members' recommendations are important. According to one faculty member (1.11%) and corroborated by the dean of academics at the research university the PCP was not offered in the summer and fall 2014 semesters According to this faculty member "the programme no longer exists."

In summary, analysis of question # 11 saw the PCP faculty recommending to the university's administration the following ideas be given serious consideration. These included: revision of the PCP entrance criteria; employing a more in-depth screening process to better understand the PCP students' ability to persist in college "a more efficient screening process is necessary to identify students' readiness," "keep high school students in high school. Invite professor to go teach them there afterschool." To having smaller student cohorts, "extra class time for skill application -- in smaller groups." One faculty member suggested that the island's high schools should be aware of the issues their graduates face and perhaps work with the schools to address some of these issues before the students enroll in college.

### **Precollege Program Matriculation Criteria**

Question 13 focused the PCP faculty members on the high school graduates who sought the Precollege Program matriculation during the years 2010 to 2012 and their needing a composite math and English score of 120-139. The question asked faculty members' opinion of the PCP students' matriculation criteria as they relate to the PCP students' academic performance. This question produced as varied a response from faculty members as the diversity among the academic capabilities of the PCP students.

Three of the nine reporting faculty members (33.3%) shared they were “not sure how the PCP entrance exam scores may have influenced the PCP students’ program performance.” Another faculty member responded with “cannot respond to this since I do not know correlation between scores and how they relate or if they have any impact on academic performance.” The third PCP faculty member stated, “I would have to know how this score compares with the matriculation requirements of other students to comment.”

Two faculty members (22.2%) expressed that the PCP entrance score should have been higher, “apparently the score range should have been set much higher because most of these students’ numeric, literacy and writing skills are still below the acceptable level.” The second faculty member stated, “I think they should be required to meet the standards that apply to the general population. I would not like standards to be lowered for them. We need to bring them up to the required standard -- otherwise we will be lowering the general university standards.” One faculty member (1.11%) thought the composite Math and English entrance criteria range of 120-139 out of 160 points was appropriate. They explained “I feel that the criteria are appropriate,” while another faculty member’s (1.11%) perspective was “the matriculation score of 120-139 out of 160 seems a bit high for this group of students, however, the higher the score the more likely that they will succeed.” The PCP students’ entrance criteria “do not guarantee academic performance” were the views of two (22.2%) faculty members, while one PCP faculty member (1.11%) suggested that despite the need for appropriate university’s entrance criteria for the PCP students, that “college readiness would be important given the context.”

### **PCP Faculty Preparedness**

Question #14 asked the PCP faculty to reflect and share their perspectives on what in their estimation prepared or equipped them to teach the PCP students, and what helped or influenced their ability. There was high consensus among faculty members regarding ability to teach the PCP students. Six (66.7%) of the nine responding PCP faculty members expressed their competency and comfort in teaching the PCP student. These six faculty members cited the following: "I have taught in high school as well as higher education and I am familiar with the challenges of transition." Another faculty member shared "faculty manuals assisted; however, I feel that some students were not prepared to be in college classes and at the time would have preferred to be elsewhere." "I also have a counseling degree and that made the process easier" According to these six PCP faculty members these factors heightened their teaching ability among the academically underprepared students.

Three of the faculty members (3.33%) however did not feel as competent as their six colleagues. These three PCP faculty members expressed their discomfort saying, "I do not have the specialized, special-needs skills that many of the students needed - and neither the time, nor the patience!" Another faculty member stated, "These groups require your most seasoned teachers -- who are sympathetic to their personal issues outside of the classroom and will exude that compassion. I was not always sure I was the best fit -- not that I am not compassionate, but that I expected them to "get with the programme." Yet another PCP faculty member's perspective was "I am prepared to teach mature university students." Of interest, the PCP faculty member who expressed their comfort in teaching

the PCP students also shared a similar teaching experience, that of once teaching in high school, “I was prepared because I taught at the secondary level early in my teaching career. I was therefore flexible and able to adjust instruction.”

One of the PCP faculty members (1.11%) who expressed their discomfort with teaching the PCP students shared “students had too many competing personal issues.” Possibly a different structural approach to the PCP of “possibly a more individualized programme that did not depend so much on a time-frame that all must meet and a grade at the end might have done the trick!” Yet another PCP faculty member suggested perhaps “more flexibility in terms of time on the part of both instructors and students would have yielded better results.”

### **Institutional Support**

Another question with evoked varied perspectives among the university’s PCP faculty member was question 15. Question 15 asked the PCP faculty members to respond to the institutional support or information, which may have assisted their interaction with the PCP students and enhanced their course delivery. One faculty member (1.11%) expressed, “I do not think that the College was the place for these students, as they could never make it through the program and on to the Associate Degree.” It appeared that other faculty member (1.11%) may have also shared this perspective and suggested that more “student services support could have provided faculty with in-depth knowledge in some of the areas” and assisted faculty in better understanding the PCP students. Two PCP faculty members (22.2%) shared that it would have been helpful to know “which students had special needs and what they were.” These two faculty members stated that it

would have helped if students' learning disabilities and or behavioural problems were communicated.” They responded stating, “Again, it would have been helpful to know which students had special needs and what they were.” The second faculty member commented on the dearth of communication and highlighted there was “none, except the occasional e-mail from the coordinator that provided pertinent information on the odd one or two students.”

One PCP faculty member (1.11%) indicated that there was really no institution support “the presence of a precollege coordinator or counselor I feel would have been very helpful.” This faculty member went on to add that there was for a short time a coordinator but they left due to personal reasons. However, during the period of their employ some positive strides were made in assisting the students. This PCP faculty member however commented on the financial issues the university is experiencing, and the possibility in spite of the positive strides witnessed with a coordinator that one might not be hired. “Since it's inception one was hired on a part-time basis and subsequently left for personal reasons. It could be seen that some inroads had been made at the time. Money is always a challenge in the educational environment and so even if there is a continuation of the programme we do not have a coordinator and will not be able to hire one.” The responses from seven of the nine faculty members though diverse in the areas they would have liked to see more institutional support, “the institution must see these classes and students as worthwhile, rather than a one-size fits all type of programme, and also suggested the need greater use of technology in the individualization of programmes -- in smaller teaching modules.” The PCP faculty members all had one underlying

element in common the need for more and frequent information on the PCP students in an attempt to better understand and serve them. It would be remiss of me to omit recognition to the statements made by two (2.22%) PCP faculty members both of whom indicated their appreciation for the institutional support. One faculty member recognized the ongoing efforts of the Dean of Academics. "I was supported fine." "The Dean of academics was rather helpful in the initial and ongoing process. He provided useful resources and on-going help." While two faculty members acknowledged their pleasure with the institutional support offered. One of their colleagues reminded the university administration "the institution must see these classes and students as worthwhile, rather than a one-size fits all type of programme, and again the call for smaller class sizes."

#### **Factors Influencing PCP Students' Non-Completion Program Rates**

There was consensus among seven of the nine faculty members (77.8%) who responded to question 16 of the PCP survey monkey questionnaire which sought to ascertain the PCP faculty members' perspectives of the factors which influenced the low success rate and ultimately poor associate degree matriculation numbers among the PCP students. Seven (77.8%) faculty members' responses ranged from lack of interest, to motivation to not seeing the PCP as an important course. A faculty member stated, "Many of the students come into the programme as a last resort -- nothing else to do." The students "did not see the PCP as a necessary course." The faculty member who identified maturity and motivation issues stated the PCP students are "in the exploration stage and are not mature to make the best educational choices." While seven PCP faculty members' perspectives of those factors that influenced the PCP students were centered

around students' lack of interest and motivation, two faculty (2.22%) once again reiterated their concern about academically underprepared students being in college. These faculty members stated, "A more efficient screening process is necessary to identify students' readiness. Some students should be kept back in high school as they are not ready for the college level." These two faculty members asserted, "I do not think that the College was the place for these students, as they could never make it through the program and on to the Associate Degree." While the second PCP faculty member stated "some students should be kept back in high school as they are not ready for the college level." Another faculty member reiterated the need to know whom among the PCP student population had special needs and what areas, as this would assist their teaching approach. "Again, it would have been helpful to know which students had special needs and what they were."

The PCP students' lack of maturity and lack of motivation was identified by the majority of the nine PCP faculty members as those defining factors that influenced students' poor performance and matriculation to an associate degree. "To develop into a good learner you must acknowledge that your effort in learning is key and be willing to give everything in obtaining your objectives." "Much of this comes back to motivation of students who have not yet figured out to any meaningful level where they are headed and what they want out of life." Two (2.22%) faculty members referred to the PCP's intention and stated, "Orientation programs should seek to fill the gap and help with the transition from high school to college." Faculty members offered that while there were various factors influencing the PCP students' matriculation progress to an associate degree,



namely “maturity and motivation issues,” “students own lack of ownership of their learning,” and “no coordinator that would help these students to overcome personal challenges,” perhaps the college may have had “too high expectations bearing in mind the students' academic history.”

Repetition for smaller class sizes, and the need for a program coordinator was enunciated by two faculty members (2.22%) “Having much smaller groups for all subjects.” “Many individuals are in the exploration stage and are not mature to make the best educational choices.”

Finally, one PCP faculty in responding to question 16 reminded us that from their perspective that we should be mindful of the “external factors that support a spirit of entitlement among these youngsters and this discourages work ethics, self-respect, and hard work” and the influence this factor has on some PCP students’ ability to persist and progress in college.

### **Recommendations to the University’s Administration**

The last question of the 17-item PCP survey monkey questionnaire asked the nine PCP faculty members to offer recommendations to the university’s administration in an attempt to enhance the PCP’s effectiveness and improve the PCP students’ matriculation rates to an associate degree. The feedback generated by this particular question highlighted the PCP faculty members’ reflection on the issues and the sharing of their personal challenges and experiences. The range of recommendations gave this researcher a glimpse into the PCP faculty members’ interest and commitment to assisting the PCP students.

The PCP faculty members' responses to question 17 ranged from recommendations of improved student and faculty support systems. Faculty members suggested, "As part of orientation have a study skills expert give a workshop." "In orientation, advise students of the importance." "Have a supervisor who works closely with the students encouraging them to attain a higher level of learning skills." "Ascertain "as for matriculation into the associate programme -- are these students really academic enough for university, or are they more suited to vocational type courses -- at least at this stage of their lives? Not everyone should pursue academics." Engage all stakeholders, that is family, former PCP students to serve as mentors. "Invest in a Precollege coordinator. "Have a robust counseling system that will help with behavioral issues." Garner financial support from the government to assist faculty. "Financial support from the Ministry, and encourage Support from all stakeholders (parents, ministry, college administration, and even the community." The recommendation for sharing best practices in teaching methods to enhance student retention elicited the following responses. "Change the course to include some more interactive activities, guest speakers, student-led activities, etc." "Have more industry personnel giving presentations so the students can become more aware of the careers and hopefully that would help to guide them. Most of them have no idea what they want to do or become so they really are interested in 'nothing'." "Perhaps finding out what the students were really interested in and channeling their energies into the right direction...." Again the researcher was reminded the program was not offered in the 2014-2015 academic year "The programme is no

longer in existence so that may be redundant, however; making students accountable for their actions and having them buy into their own lives may have helped.”

Faculty recommendations also included forming a PCP faculty group to monitor PCP students and report findings and concerns at faculty meetings. The PCP faculty members suggested, “Focus on teaching methods that would help in retention of these students. Create a group of instructors that will monitor and report on deviations in their subject areas at monthly meetings (shorter periods). In this case teachers could brainstorm and help in preventing dropout and non-completion.”

Three faculty members (3.33%) suggested modifications to the program to include external workshop support by professionals, introducing career relevant insights and having a session to assist students in better understanding college life. “Focus on teaching methods that would help in retention of these students. Create a group of instructors that will monitor and report on deviations in their subject areas at monthly meetings (shorter periods). In this case also teachers could brainstorm and help in preventing dropout and non-completion.” Two (2.22%) faculty members recommended that the university administration look at sharing teaching methods that focus on student retention, and introduce a faculty group which will monitor and report on the PCP students’ progress at monthly meetings. Finally, five (55.6%) of the PCP faculty recommended that the PCP entrance criteria be given serious consideration. These five faculty members expressed that “students should be interviewed, and their transcripts obtained from the High School” Additionally, “students should, at least, stand some chance of completing the program if they are accepted onto it.” As one faculty member

suggested the PCP should not be viewed as a program that seeks to “taking anyone who needed to be kept off the streets!” Concomitant with having a revised PCP entrance criteria, faculty members requested that the university administration seek to ensure counseling support for the PCP students they recommended: “have a robust counseling system that will help with behavioral issues.” Additionally, the counselling services would assist the PCP students in “finding out what the students were really interested in and channeling their energies into the right direction....”

The PCP faculty members’ comments on the recommendations to the university administration sparked the reflective thinking among the faculty members and generated varied suggestions. Several faculty members’ perspectives were shared regarding what they believed would be necessary for the PCP faculty to better appreciate and understand the PCP students in an attempt to engage them and assist their persistence in college. Concern over the PCP students’ entrance criteria was raised by several faculty members and commented upon throughout the feedback. PCP faculty comments included “Apparently, the score range should have been set much higher because most of these students’ numeric, literacy and writing skills are still below the acceptable level.” “As for matriculation into the associate programme -- are these students really academic enough for university, or are they more suited to vocational type courses -- at least at this stage of their lives? Not everyone should pursue academics.” Faculty members recommended, “a more efficient screening process is necessary to identify students' readiness.” A committed program coordinator and a robust counselling support system were also mentioned by several faculty members. Interestingly six (6.67%) of the nine faculty

members who participated in the survey expressed a high level of comfort in teaching the PCP students and shared that they taught at high schools prior to being employed at the university. "I was prepared because I taught at the secondary level early in my teaching career. I was therefore flexible and able to adjust instruction." "Yes. I have taught these level students previously." "I was equipped based on my years of teaching at the secondary school level plus I am interested to see students learn and benefit from their academic experiences." "I was prepared and equipped to teach the PCP students however I feel that the some students were not prepared to be in college classes and at the time would have preferred to be elsewhere." To a PCP faculty member sharing that not only were they comfortable teaching the PCP students, but they were also a counsellor, "Yes! I have taught in high school as well as higher education and I am familiar with the challenges of transition. I also have a counseling degree and that made the process easier

Those faculty members who stated being comfortable working with the PCP students drew on their prior experiences having taught diverse learners. Three (3.33%) of the PCP faculty seemingly needed assistance in teaching to an academically diverse learner population. These PCP faculty members said they did not feel prepared to teach the PCP students and provided the following reasons "I am not prepared to discipline 16 year old students. I am prepared to teach mature university students." Another faculty member shared "These groups require your most seasoned teachers -- who are sympathetic to their personal issues outside of the classroom and will exude that compassion. I was not always sure I was the best fit -- not that I am not compassionate, but that I expected them to "get with the programme" -- just to get on with the work and

meet the objectives as best as they could -- but many had too many competing personal issues. Overall, I think just more flexibility in terms of time on the part of both instructors and students would have yielded better results.”

Collectively the data seem to indicate a strong need to revisit the PCP students’ entrance criteria, the need to revisit the program structure, and student orientation. Frequent dialogue among the PCP faculty, PCP program coordinator and student services to ensure appropriate support is being rendered to the students and faculty. A PCP student/faculty orientation to introduce the program and expectations, introduce students and faculty and introduce the academic advising component. Industry personnel career orientation workshops to introduce the PCP students to career pathways. There was a clarion call for a program coordinator and counseling support services to assist both students and faculty. The student support services would assist faculty members in better understanding the PCP students and learning needs. A recommendation to have the student support services assist PCP faculty members in being better communicators and enhance their engagement with the students was offered. In summary, it appears that the PCP faculty members’ data analysis findings recommend stricter entrance criteria to bolster student persistence and matriculation to an associate degree. This change should be accompanied by institutional and stakeholder support to ensure that the PCP’s objectives are being met, and that the university’s administration and faculty are efficiently and effectively assisting the PCP students in attaining their personal and professional goals of matriculation to an associate degree.

## **Students' Data Findings**

### **PCP Students Demographics**

Nine PCP student returned surveys from the 168 CPQ Survey Monkey questionnaires that were distributed by the Caribbean university's Deputy Registrar. The Deputy Registrar helped to distribute the Survey Monkey questionnaire on three occasions to garner a wider cross-section of respondents. After a significant waiting period of 10 weeks, I proceeded with the analysis of data from the submitted surveys. Periodic checks to the Survey Monkey data collection portal were made in the event additional students submitted their CPQ.

The demographics of the nine PCP students (six females and 3 males) showed the following information: Two female students were Jamaican and seven reported being from Cayman. The nine PCP students were enrolled during the period 2010-2011(2 males and 2 females) 2011-2012 (0 males and 2 females); 2012-2013 (1 male and 2 females). The PCP students reported graduating from Clifton Hunter High School (2 students), John Grey High School (6 students) and May Pen High School (1 student). All nine students reported English being their first language. Four PCP students indicated they were single with no children, two were single with children and one was married with children. Three of the PCP students (1 male; 2 females) worked between 1-10 hours a week, two (1 male; 1female) worked 30 or more hours and four students (1 male; 3 females) did not work during the week.

## PCP student demographic information

<b>Student</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>PCP year</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Native Language</b>	<b>Marital Status and children</b>	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Work hrs. per week</b>
# 1	Female	Jamaican	2011-2012	John Grey	English	Single; no children	No	0
# 2	Female	Caymanian	2011-2012	John Grey	English	Married; children	Yes	More than 30 hrs.
# 3	Male	Caymanian	2010-2011	John Grey	English	Single; no children	Yes	More than 30 hrs.
# 4	Female	Jamaican	2012-2013	May Pen	English	Single; no children	No response	No response
# 5	Female	Caymanian	2012-2013	John Grey	English	Single; no children	No	0
# 6	Female	Caymanian	2012-2013	John Grey	English	Single; children	Yes	1-10 hrs.
# 7	Male	Caymanian	2010-2011	John Grey	English	Single; no children	No	0
# 8	Female	Caymanian	2012-2013	Clifton Hunter	English	Single-children	Yes	1-10 hrs.
# 9	Male	Caymanian	2012-2013	Clifton Hunter	English	Single; no children	Yes	1-10 hrs.

One of the demographic questions sought background information on the PCP students' mother and fathers' highest level of education. Three PCP male students in the study reported their mothers' highest level of education as being a master's degree, one stated his mother graduated from high school and the third male reported his mother had some high school education but did not graduate. The six PCP female students shared the following information: mother had a Bachelor's degree -1 student; some college but did not graduate – 2 students; and three students did not know the highest level of education



obtained by their mothers. The same question was asked to the PCP students regarding their father's highest level of education. The three PCP male students responded with graduated from high school, some high school but did not graduate and do not know. The six female PCP students' knowledge of their fathers' highest level of education ranged from high school graduate GED – 1 student; some high school but did not graduate – 1; to do not know – 4 students. The PCP students were also asked to share their academic positions at time of completing the Survey Monkey CPQ.

PCP students' demographic information

<b>Student</b>	<b>Enrolment status</b>	<b>Financial Aid</b>	<b>Mother's education</b>	<b>Father's education</b>
# 1	AS degree	None	Some high school did not graduate	Unknown
#2	Not enrolled	None	Unknown	Unknown
# 3	AS Degree	Government Scholarship	Some high school did not graduate	Some high school did not graduate
# 4	AS Degree	Private Company Scholarship	Unknown	Graduated from high school
# 5	AS Degree	None	Bachelor's degree	Unknown
# 6	Not enrolled	None	Unknown	Some high school did not graduate
# 7	Repeating Pre-college courses	Private Company Scholarship	Graduated from high school	Graduated from high school
# 8	Repeating Pre-college courses	None	Some college but did not receive a 4-year (Bachelor's) degree	Unknown
# 9	AS Degree	None	Master's Degree	Unknown

Five of the nine students self-reported being enrolled in an associate degree, that is students #s 1, 4, 6, 7 and 9 (2 males and three females). Students 2 and 5, two females,

were repeating PCP courses and students 3 and 7, two females, were not enrolled in any university courses.

The Survey Monkey Questionnaire also sought insights on any type of financial assistance received during the nine PCP students' enrollment period in the PCP. Student 3 received financial assistance from a government scholarship, and students 4 and 7 received a private company scholarship. Students # 1, 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9 did not receive any financial assistance. Reasons for deciding on attending the Caribbean university ranged from being close to home students #1, 3, 4, 5 and 7 to friends and family attended students # 3, 4 and 6; the university's reputation students 2, and 7; and academic programs offered students # 4, 8, and 9.

The nine PCP students also provided their perspectives on the Caribbean university's faculty, staff, program and institutional support. Data on these elements were collected via the College Preparation Questionnaire (CPQ) designed by Davidson, Beck, and Milligan (2009). The psychometric tool serves to provide college personnel with an opportunity to:

- (a) Identify students at-risk of dropping out; (b) discover why a given student is likely to discontinue his, or her education, and (c) determine the variables that best distinguish undergraduates who will persist from those who will not persist at their institutions. (p.2)

The CPQ validating exercises conducted by the instrument developers supported the findings of noted researchers in the field namely Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), and Tinto (1993) who also supported Davidson, Beck, and Milligan's (2009) finding that

during the first six to eight weeks after matriculation that individual specific experiences that occur impact freshmen students' decisions to persist.

The College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ) - Student Experience Form Version 3 Short Form (a 31-item questionnaire) was administered to the PCP students. The CPQ asked students about their reactions/perceptions to many aspects of their college life. The 31-item questionnaire is divided into the following headings: Factor 1: Academic Integration, Factor 2: Financial Strain, Factor 3: Institutional Commitment, Factor 4: Academic Motivation, Factor 5: Scholastic Conscientiousness, Factor 6: Degree Commitment, Factor 7: Social Integration, Factor 8: Academic Efficacy, Factor 9: Academic Advising. These factors were investigated via a survey monkey questionnaire to 168 PCP students from 2010 – 2015 to procure the PCP students perspectives to the Precollege prep program (PCP). The findings of the CPQ are reported in the following charts and narratives.

### Student Experience Form, Version 3.0 (Short Form)

Instructions: Students differ a great deal from one another in how they feel about their college experiences. This questionnaire asks you about your reactions to many aspects of your life here at this college. Please consider each of the questions carefully, and place an "x" for the answer that best represents your thoughts. There are no "right or wrong" answers, so mark your real impressions. There are only 31 questions, and it is very important that you answer all of them. This should take you about 30 minutes. Your answers will be treated as confidential information.

**Please indicate your response by putting an 'X' in the appropriate box to respond to the following items. Attempting all questions will help me better understand your college experience.**

Data analysis Factor 1 Academic Integration

<b>Factor 1 Academic Integration</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 5</b>	<b>Agree 4</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree 1</b>	<b>No Response 0</b>
1. During the first class session, many instructors presented students with a course overview which was followed.	Stds. 4,5 (22.22%)	Stds. 2, 3,7,8 (44.44%)		Std 9 (11.11%)		Stds. 1,6 (22.22%)
2. In general, I was satisfied with the quality of instruction received.	Stds. 9 (11.11%)	Stds. 3,4,5 (33.33%)	Stds. 2 (11.11%)			Stds. 1,7,6,8 (44.44%)
3. I understood the thinking of my instructors when they lectured or asked questions in class.	Stds. 4 (11.11%)	Stds. 8 (11.11%)	Stds. 3, 5 (22.22%)	Stds. 2, 9 (22.22%)		Stds. 1,6,7 (33.33%)
4. I believe the faculty was concerned about my intellectual growth.		Stds. 8 (11.11%)	Stds. 3,5 (22.22%)	Stds. 2,4,9 (33.33%)		Stds. 1,6,7 (33.33%)
5. The instructors encouraged me and made me feel like I could succeed in the program.	Stds. 9 (11.11%)	Stds. 3,7,8 (33.33%)		Stds. 2,5 (22.22%)	Stds. 4 (11.11%)	Stds. 1,6 (22.22%)
6. Feedback on assignments from the faculty was useful and helped me figure out how to improve.		Stds. 5,8 (22.22%)	Stds. 3 (11.11%)	Stds. 2,4,9 (33.33%)		Stds. 1,6,7 (33.33%)
Total # students responding	3	6	3	4	1	

This section of the CPQ asked the PCP students to respond to six questions to learn their academic integration perceptions. Students were asked to provide insights into their faculty members' ability to provide them with course outlines on the first day of class and follow these outlines. In response to this item, PCP students #1 and 5 (2.22%) strongly agreed, and students # 2, 3, 7, 8 agreed (44.4%). Student # 9 (1.11%) however strongly disagreed and students # 1 and 6 (2.22%) did not respond. PCP students' satisfaction with the quality of PCP faculty instruction (item 2) received the following responses: student #9 (1.11%) strongly agreed and stated "I think that the pre-college program is a good program for students who are not as educated as others, and I think the individual who came up with this idea is brilliant." Students # 3, 4, 5 (33.3%) agreed and student # 2 (1.11%) was neutral. Students' response to item 3 regarding their ability to understand their instructor's thinking when lecturing had student # 4 (1.11%) responding with strongly agreed; student 8 (1.11%) agreed; students #3 and 5 (22.2%) were neutral; students #2 and 9 (22.2%) disagreed and students #1, 6 and 7 (33.3%) chose not to respond to this item.

Faculty members showing concern with the intellectual growth of the PCP students (item 4) garnered the following responses: Student #8 (1.11%) agreed, while students # 3 and 5 (22.2%) were neutral, and students # 2, 4 and 9 (33.3%) disagreed with faculty being concerned about their intellectual growth. Students #1, 6 and 7 (33.3%) did not respond to this item. Two students' neutral and three students disagree response to this item should be looked at some more in terms of faculty showing more concern over the PCP students' intellectual growth.

The PCP students' responses to item 5 provided insights into the instructors' ability to encourage and make the students feel like they could succeed. Forty-four percent of the PCP students #9, and 3, 7, 8 responded indicating strongly agree and agree respectively. Thirty-three percent of the those responding that is students #3, 2, 5 and 4 disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Students 1 and 6 did not respond.

The final question in the section academic integration section explored faculty feedback on students' assignments and their usefulness in assisting them in figuring out how to improve their work and performance. PCP students #5 and 8 (22.22%) agreed that the faculty members' feedback assisted in their figuring out how to improve. Student# 3 (1.11%) was neutral, and students #2, 4 and 9 (33.3%) disagree. Students# 1, 6 and 7 (33.3%) did not respond to this item.

Factor 2 of the CPQ sought to address the financial strain if any experienced by the PCP students. The nine PCP responded with the following.

## Data analysis Factor 2 Financial Strain

<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Response</b>
<b>Financial Strain</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
7. It was difficult for me and my family to handle college tuition costs.	Stds. 9 (11.11%)			Stds. 7 (11.11%)	Stds. 5 (11.11%)	Stds. 1,2,3,4,6, 8 (66.7%)
8. It was a financial strain for me/parents to purchase course text books and essential supplies.	Stds. 2 (11.11%)	Stds. 5 (11.11%)		Stds. 3,8 (22.22%)		Stds. 1,4,6,7,9 (55.6%)
Total # students responding	2	1	0	3	1	

The data suggest that while some students may have experienced some financial stress in having to handle college tuition and purchasing course books and essential school supplies students #9 and 2 (22.22%) strongly agreed and student # 5 (1.11%) agreed, students# 7, 3 and 8 (33.3%) disagreed and student # 5 strongly disagreed. Of note student # 2 was a single parent with children and working 1-10 hours per week. Students #1, 4, 6 (33.3%) did not respond to both questions in this section. Students were asked to provide their insights on their institutional commitment, and these data were gathered for the three questions under Factor 3: Institutional Commitment.

## Data analysis Factor 3 Institutional Commitment

<b>Factor 3 Institutional Commitment</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 5</b>	<b>Agree 4</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree 1</b>	<b>No Response 0</b>
9. I was confident that this was the right university for me.		Stds. 9 (11.11%)			Stds. 3,5 (22.22%)	Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,8 (66.7%)
10. I gave much thought to stopping my university education and transferring to another college, going to work, or leaving for other reasons.	Stds. 1 (11.11%)		Stds. 5,8 (22.22%)			Stds. 2,4,6,7,9 (55.6%)
11. I believe I could earn a degree from this university.	Stds. 2,5 (22.22%)	Stds. 7,8 (22.22%)			Stds. 3 (11.11%)	Stds. 1,4,6,9 (44.44%)
Total # students responding	3	3	2	0	2	

The CPQ sought to learn the PCP students' perspectives of their institutional commitment through three items which asked students about their confidence that the Caribbean university was the right choice for them (item 9) to which student # 9 (1.11%) agreed and students #3 and 5 (22.2%) strongly disagreed. Item 10 asked students to provide insights into their thinking a lot about stopping their university education and transferring or leaving for other reasons, or going to work. In response to item 10, student #1 (1.11%) strongly agreed students #5 and 8 (22.2%) were neutral and students #2, 4, 6, 7, 9 (55.6%) did not respond. Their ability to earn a degree received the following responses: students #2 and 5 (22.22%) strongly agreed, students #7 and 8 (22.22%)



agreed and student #3 strongly disagreed. Four students #1, 4, 6, 9 (44.44%) did not respond. Item 11 actually scored the lowest non-response rate from the PCP students who participated in this study. The data suggest that the students believed attaining an associate degree was well within their ability. Student #9 responded with “I did the pre-college program and I had no regret in doing the program - why? because it gave me background information on what I did back in high school, it refreshed my mind and allow me to remember what I did.”

Factor 4: Academic Motivation asked the PCP students to respond to three questions that targeted their study habits and enjoyment in preparing their assignments.

#### Data analysis Factor 4 Academic Motivation

<b>Factor 4</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Response</b>
<b>Academic Motivation</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
12. I often encountered course assignments that were actually enjoyable.		Stds. 5,7 (22.22%)			Stds. 9 (11.1%)	Stds. 1,2,3,4,6,8 (66.7%)
13. Most of my studying was done within 24 hours of a test.			Stds. 5 (11.1%)			Stds. 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9 (88.9%)
14. I always proofread my assignments before submitting them.	Stds. 2 (11.1%)	Stds. 3,8 (22.2%)			Stds. 5 (11.1%)	Stds. 1,4,6,7,9 (55.6%)
Total # students responding	2	4	1	0	2	

Students’ responses to the items in this cluster of CPQ questions on academic motivation had students #5 and 7 (22.22%) indicating their agreement that the PCP

courses were often enjoyable, student #9 (1.11%) on the other hand strongly disagreed. Responding to item 13 which asked if most of their studying was done 24 hours before a test eight (88.9%) students did not respond and student #5(1.11%) neither agreed nor disagree. Proofreading assignments before submitting saw student #2 (1.11%) and students #3 and 8 (2.22%) strongly agree and agree respectively, while student #5 (1.11%) strongly disagreed. Interestingly item 14 had a (55.6%) non-response rate.

To better appreciate the PCP students' class participation and mannerisms as per timeliness in assignment submission, Factor 5: Scholastic Conscientiousness questions guided this data collection.

#### Data analysis Factor 5 Scholastic Conscientiousness

<b>Factor 5 Scholastic Conscientiousness</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 5</b>	<b>Agree 4</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree 1</b>	<b>No Response 0</b>
15. I often missed class for reasons other than illness, or participation in school-related activities.		Stds. 9 (11.1%)	Stds. 5 (11.1%)	Stds. 7 (11.1%)		Stds. 1,2,3,4,6, 8 (66.7%)
16. I often arrived late for classes, meetings, and other college events.			Stds. 3 (11.1%)	Stds. 2 (11.1%)	Stds. 5 (11.1%)	Stds. 1,4,6,7,8, 9 (66.7%)
17. I often turned in assignments past the due date.				Stds. 3,8 (22.2%)		Stds. 1,2,4,5,6, 7,9 (77.8%)
Total # students responding	0	1	2	4	1	

The items in the Scholastic Conscientiousness portion of the CPQ Survey Monkey questionnaire required the PCP students providing feedback on their frequency of class attendance (item 15) tardiness in attending classes (item 16) and inability to turn in assignments on time (item 17). None of the nine PCP students strongly agreed with any of the three items. Their responses indicated that they often missed classes for reasons other than illness or participation in school-related activities that is student #9 (1.11%). Student #5 (1.11%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and student #7 (1.11%) disagreed that they missed classes for no good reason. Students #3, 2 and 5 either neutral disagreed or strongly disagreed respectively with item 16, which asked if they often arrived late for classes. Item 17 which sought students' perspectives on often having late submission of assignments had students #3 and 8 (22.2%) disagreeing and their colleague students # 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7,9 (77.8%) not responding. The results indicated the students who responded tended to be timely submissions of assignments, class attendance and attendance at college events.

Degree commitment Factor 6 of the CPQ prompted students to respond to the support their family provided and their desire to persist in college. Three questions in this section of the CPQ guided the PCP students' feedback.

## Data Analysis Factor 6: Degree Commitment

<b>Factor 6 Degree Commitment</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 5</b>	<b>Agree 4</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree 1</b>	<b>No Response 0</b>
18. My family was supportive of my pursuit of a college degree.	Stds. 3 (11.1%)	Stds. 7 (11.1%)			Stds. 9 (11.1%)	Stds. 1,2,4,5,6,8 (66.7%)
19. My intention was strong to persist and obtain a degree, here or elsewhere.	Stds. 2,5 (22.2%)	Stds. 3 (11.1%)				Stds. 1,4,6,7,8,9 (66.7%)
20. When I considered the benefits of having a college degree and the time, effort, and costs of earning it, the benefits outweigh the costs.		Stds. 5,8 (22.2%)	Stds. 3 (11.1%)			Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,9 (66.7%)
Total # students responding	3	4	1	0	1	

Student responses to the three items (18-20) under the degree commitment section of the PCP provided some variation in students' responses. When asked to comment on their family's support in pursuit of a college degree, student #3 (1.11%) strongly agreed, student #7 (1.11%) agreed, student #9 (1.11%) strongly disagreed and students #1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 (66.7%) did not respond. Students were asked to indicate if they had a strong interest in obtaining their degree at the Caribbean university or elsewhere (item 19). Students #2 and 5 (22.2%) strongly agreed, student #3 (1.11%) agreed, and students #1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 (66.7%) did not respond.

The last item in this degree commitment group of questions asked the PCP students to consider the benefits of having a college degree and to examine if the time, effort and cost of earning the degree and if the benefits of having a degree outweighed the costs. Students #5 and 8 (22.2%) agreed that the benefits of a degree outweighed the costs, student 3 was neutral and students #1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9 (66.7%) gave no response to this item.

A factor that may have influenced the PCP students' inability to matriculate to an associate degree could have been the PCP students' perspective towards the lack of family support. Interestingly in spite of reporting this perceived lack of family support, student #9 self-reported being enrolled in an associate degree, while student 3 who indicated strongly agreeing with their family supporting them, self-reported not being enrolled in any university programs. Six PCP students did not respond to item 18, that is students #s 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8, however students #1, 2, 4, 6, and 7 self-reported being enrolled in an associate degree.

The PCP students' ability to connect with students, faculty members and the Caribbean university staff was examined. The nine students' responses to Factor 7: Social Integration questions are outlined below.

## Data Analysis Factor 7: Social Integration

<b>Factor 7 Social Integration</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 5</b>	<b>Agree 4</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree 1</b>	<b>No Response 0</b>
21. My sense of connectedness with faculty, students, and staff was strong.	Stds. 5 (11.1%)		Stds. 4 (11.1%)	Stds. 3 (11.1%)		Stds. 1,2,6,7,8,9 (66.7%)
22. I was satisfied with my overall campus social life, that is college organizations, and extracurricular activities.	Stds. 2 (11.1%)	Stds. 5 (11.1%)	Stds. 9 (11.1%)			Stds. 1,3,4,6,7,8 (66.7%)
23. I had much in common with students in this college.		Stds. 7 (11.1%)	Stds. 3,5,8 (33.3%)			Stds. 1,2,4,6,9 (55.6%)
Total # students responding	2	2	5	1	0	

Students' responses varied more with this cluster of questions (items 21-23) which had students responding to three items. The PCP students' perspectives regarding their sense of connectedness with faculty, students and staff was reported with the following: student #5 (1.11%) strongly agreed there was a connection, student #4 (1.11%) gave a neutral response while student #3 (1.11%) disagreed there was a connection with the faculty, students and staff. Students #1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 (66.7%) did not respond. The PCP students' perspectives on item 23 which focused on their having much in common with other students at the Caribbean university prompted the following responses: Student # 7 (1.11%) agreed; students #3, 5, 8 (33.3%) were neutral and students #1, 2, 4, 6, 9 (55.6%) did not respond.

The analysis of Factor 7 Social Integration among this group of PCP student regarding their ability to feel connected to the PCP faculty, staff and students the data suggest a cause for concern. Five students who responded gave a neutral answer to the three questions in this cluster of items, and one student disagreed. Following on from students' perspectives of their ability to connect with the Caribbean university's faculty, students and staff, the CPQ asked the PCP students to provide their insights into feelings regarding the academic workload. Data on Factor 8: Academic Efficacy's were captured via items 24-27.

#### Data Analysis Factor 8: Academic Efficacy

<b>Factor 8 Academic Efficacy</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 5</b>	<b>Agree 4</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree 1</b>	<b>No Response 0</b>
24. I felt overwhelmed by the academic workload			Stds. 5 (11.1%)			Stds. 1,2,3,4,6,7,8 ,9 (88.9%)
25. I experienced much pressure when trying to meet assignment deadlines.			Stds. 5 (11.1%)	Stds. 8 (11.1%)		Stds. 1,2,3,4,6,7,9 (77.8%)
26. My study techniques were effective.		Stds. 2,5,7,8 (44.44%)	Stds. 3 (11.11%)			Stds. 1,4,6,9 (44.44%)
27. I believed that I could attain a 2.0 GPA.	Stds. 5,9 (22.2%)	Stds. 3 (11.1%)				Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,8 (66.7%)
Total # students responding	2	5	2	1	0	

The nine PCP students who participated in this section of the CPQ did not indicate that they were overwhelmed with the academic workload. Student #5 (1.11%) gave a neutral response while the other eight (88.9%) students did not respond. While student #9 did not give a response to this item, she commented in the open comment section and stated “I did not fail any classes and did not have to retake just because of the experience of the pre-college program bringing back what I learned (refreshing my memory). I can only speak for myself this program I think would really help most students.”

Item 25 asked students to indicate the amount of pressure they felt in trying to meet assignment deadlines. Again, the level of discomfort was low among this group of PCP student. Student #5 (1.11%) reported a neutral status and student #8 (1.11%) stated that they disagreed that there was any discomfort experienced in meeting assignment deadlines. Seven (77.8%) of the students did not respond to this item. Question 26 asked the PCP to students to indicate if their study techniques were effective. There was more variation in the students’ responses to this item. Students #2, 5, 7, 8 (44.4%) agreed that their study techniques were effective while student # 3 (1.11%) was neutral and students #1, 4, 6, 9 (44.44%) were unresponsive. Item 27 sought to garner students’ perspectives on their ability to attain and sustain a 2.0 GPA which would allow them to matriculate to an associate degree. Students #1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 (66.7%) did not respond. The data suggest that students did not find the PCP work onerous as far as assignments were concerned, nor did they think their study habits were ineffective. From the self –reports provided students #1,4,6,7 and 9 attained a 2.0 GPA and were enrolled in an associate degree.



Student # 9 stated, “When I just left high school and went on summer break normally when you start school in September you forget all about what you did in high school and as to the pre-college program made me remember as I said before what I did in high school. Therefore, it prepared me for my associate degree.”

Finally, the PCP students’ perceptions of the academic advising provided was requested and obtained via items 28-31 in last section of the CPQ, namely Factor 9: Academic Advising. Listed below are the PCP students’ responses.

#### Data Analysis Factor 9: Academic Advising

<b>Factor 9 Academic Advising</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 5</b>	<b>Agree 4</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree 1</b>	<b>No Response 0</b>
28. It was easy to get answers to my questions about things related to my education here.			Stds. 3,5 (22.2%)			Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,8, 9 (77.8%)
29. I was satisfied with the academic advising received.		Stds. 2 (11.1%)	Stds. 5 (11.1%)			Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,8, 9 (77.8%)
30. Important information was communicated to students such as academic rules.		Stds. 3,9 (22.2%)		Stds. 5 (11.1%)		Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,8 (66.7%)
31. If I had needs that were different from the majority of the other students this university met those needs.		Stds. 7,8 (22.2%)		Stds. 3,5 (22.2%)		Stds. 1,2,4,6,9 (55.6%)
Total # students responding	0	5	2	3	0	

Independent of PCP student #1, who refrained from answering all the questions in the CPQ Survey Monkey Questionnaire for sections 1-9, the eight 2010 – 2015 PCP students who responded gave low ratings to the cluster of Academic Advising question items 28-31. Students # 3 and 5 (22.2%) gave a neutral response to item 28 when asked on the ease to acquire feedback to questions related to their education at the Caribbean college. Seven students # 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 (77.8%) did not respond to this item. Little difference in students responding was noted for item 29 which sought to garner the PCP students' satisfaction with the academic advising. Student # 2 (1.11%) agreed that they were satisfied, while student #5 (1.11%) gave a neutral response and students #1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 (77.8%) did not respond. No difference in the pattern of responding was noted for CPQ items 30 and 31. Students #3 and 9 agreed that important information such as academic rules were communicated while PCP student #5 gave a neutral response and students # 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 did not respond to item 30. Item 31 asked the PCP students to comment on their satisfaction with having their academically diverse needs from the majority of the other students were met. Students #7 and 8 (22.2%) agreed their needs were met with students #3 and 5 (22.2%) gave a neutral response and students #1, 2, 4, 6, 9 (55.6%) did not respond. An initial analysis of the PCP students' responses to Factor 9 of the CPQ shows that the Caribbean university should address the academic advising practices offered to the PCP students. While four (44.4%) students reported that they agreed with the overall academic advising provided, four students (44.4%) also cited either being neutral or disagreeing with the services provided. Noteworthy is the high non-response rate of (77.8%) for items 1 and 2 in this section which asked about PCP

students' satisfaction with the academic advising and being able to get answers to their academic questions. The CPQ provided students with an open comment section that allowed students to provide their perspectives. One (1.11%) completed this portion of the CPQ.

#### Open Comments

##### Student 9:

I think that the pre-college program is a good program for students who are not as educated as other students' and I think the individual who came up with this idea is brilliant. I did the pre-college program and I had no regret in doing the program - why? because it gave me background information on what I did back in high school, it refreshed my mind and allow me to remember what I did. When I just left high school and went on summer break normally when you start school in September you forget all about what you did in high school and as to the pre-college program made me remember as I said before what I did in high school. Therefore, it prepared me for my associate degree. I did not fail any classes and did not have to retake just because of the experience of the pre-college program bringing back what I learned (refreshing my memory). I can only speak for myself this program I think would really help most students.

#### Summary

The feedback from the nine PCP students' who participated in the 31-item survey monkey CPQ suggested there is need for the university to consider four areas in

particular which should assist with enhancing the experience of the PCP at the Caribbean university. Four areas are being proposed for further consideration:

**Factor 1 Academic Integration:** Students' feedback suggested they did not always understand faculty members' teaching and they felt that the faculty members were not always concerned about their intellectual growth.

**Factor 5: Scholastic Conscientiousness:** Students missing classes, arriving late and late submission of assignments the neutral, disagree and strongly disagree response suggest need for further investigation.

**Factor 7: Social Integration:** The PCP students' connectedness to faculty, staff and students. Six students responding with either a neutral or disagree should be investigated.

**Factor 9: Academic Advising:** While four (44.4%) students reported that they agreed with the overall academic advising provided, four students also cited either being neutral or disagreeing with the services provided. Noteworthy is the high non-response rate of 77.8% for items 1 and 2 in this section which asked about PCP students' satisfaction with the academic advising and being able to get answers to their academic questions. This aspect aligns to some faculty members indicating they were not aware how to advise the PCP students.

### **Sub-question 3 Analysis**

Research Question # 3: How do the PCP students' rate a set of factors that affected their academic engagement and persistence at the Caribbean University?

The data analysis indicated that the PCP students found the following factors needed some attention on the part of the university administration and the PCP faculty.

Factor 1 Academic Integration: the PCP students' feedback suggested they did not always understand faculty members' teaching and they felt that the faculty members were not always concerned about their intellectual growth.

Factor 5: Scholastic Conscientiousness: PCP students' neutral, disagree and strongly disagree response to the cluster of questions under factor 5 regarding their missing classes, arriving late, and late submission of assignments suggested need for further investigation by university administration.

Factor 7: Social Integration: The PCP students' connectedness to faculty, staff and students received a neutral or disagree response from six students and should be considered for further investigated by the university administration.

Factor 9: Academic Advising: While four (44.4%) PCP students reported that they agreed with the overall academic advising provided, four of their colleagues cited either being neutral or disagreeing with the services provided. Noteworthy is the high non- response rate of 77.8% for items 1 and 2 in this section which asked the PCP students' their perspective regarding the satisfaction with the academic advising and their being able to get answers to their academic questions. This question links back to the responses of some PCP faculty members who indicated a lack of confidence and awareness in advising the PCP students.

Having analyzed the data from the PCP students, faculty and the university's deputy registrar, my suggestion to the university administration would be to revisit the

PCP's entrance criteria, and ensure a dedicated program coordinator who would serve as the voice of both PCP students and the faculty members. The university administration through its student services department must ensure both PCP students and faculty are provided with relevant and timely guidance and academic coaching. This process will assist those faculty members who require assistance in guiding the PCP students the opportunity to be coached. Consistent and frequent communication from the Registrar's office regarding any changes in the PCP students' matriculation criteria to an associate degree must be disseminated in a timely manner among the PCP students and faculty members and followed. The student services department must share with the PCP program coordinator and the PCP faculty members any student academic issues which may hamper a PCP student from progressing. Finally, in an attempt to improve the PCP faculty members' awareness of the PCP students, and rapport building, all PCP faculty must attend the PCP students' orientation and be introduced to each other. Lastly, during the PCP student and faculty members' orientation, the PCP students must be assigned an academic advisor.

### **Conclusion**

A summative program evaluation study was conducted because the 2010-2015 PCP program had already completed four annual enrolments. The PCP students' ability to matriculate to the Caribbean university's associate degree was not showing signs of improvement and the program needed a formal evaluation to address this gap in practice of formal evaluation. Data were collected from the PCP students' Survey Monkey

administered College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ), and the Survey Monkey administered PCP questionnaires for the faculty members and the deputy registrar. Program evaluation differs from other types of research in its overall research purpose (Spaulding, 2008, p. 6). The purpose of program evaluation is program improvement. The logic model of program evaluation was applied to explore the ways that the Caribbean University's Precollege program practices resulted in the advancement of the program goals. The PCP students, faculty members and the university deputy registrar received Survey Monkey administered questionnaires and data were collected over a 14-week period and analyzed to determine in what ways the PCP met its stated goals and assisted the PCP students in matriculating to an associate degree.

This project study resulted in research-based recommendations that can be utilized for improvement of the Caribbean University's Precollege program. The resulting project of this program evaluation study was an executive report that was presented to the University's Dean of Academics, and the University President and other stakeholders. The executive report that resulted from this program evaluation project study consisted of the evaluation results and recommendations for improvement of the University's Precollege program.

## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

A predominately-qualitative research method and logic model conceptual framework guided the program evaluation project and resulted in the discovery of the Caribbean University's Pre-college Program's weaknesses and strengths. Recommendations for the Caribbean University PCP's improvement and directions for future program evaluations were supported by peer-reviewed research articles. Over 1,000 precollege programs exist, and the number continues to grow as college administrations strive to meet students' academic needs (Edwards, 2010, p. 2). However, despite the use of remedial courses, Bettinger and Long (2008) argued that not much is known of the effect of such an intervention on college students' performance as they progress in higher education studies. Instead, the extended time students spent in school doing their remedial/developmental courses contributed to a student not being able to declare a major, and this impacted students' persistence (Bettinger & Long, 2008, p. 737). Despite the years in existence, researchers unwavering persistence in examining precollege programs endures in an attempt to uncover what works best (Domina, 2009, p. 127).

### **Description and Goals**

A program evaluation of the Caribbean University's Precollege program that provided academically underprepared high school students an opportunity to upgrade their skills and matriculate to an associate degree program was conducted to determine



the ways that the Caribbean precollege program supported its objectives and goals. The PCP goals were to

1. Strengthen students' skills in math, science, history, grammar, writing, and computers, or other selected areas;
2. Expose students to careers in business, technology, and science
3. Promote and increase student interest in reading in content areas
4. Strengthen interpersonal skills
5. Provide classroom instruction in academic areas and introduce students to skill-building in mathematics, writing, and other subjects
6. Encourage interaction with college faculty and students (Overview of the Precollege Program Appendix F).

In this program evaluation study, I garnered and analyzed the perspectives of the PCP students, PCP faculty members, and the university registrar toward the PCP's effectiveness. These data-driven findings would direct the decision for the PCP program, PCP faculty members, and institutional improvements. I also highlighted those satisfactorily working PCP elements as identified by the students, faculty members, and the registrar. An examination and analysis of the university's PCP administrative practices, students' receptiveness towards the PCP faculty members' content delivery approaches, and student/faculty interaction are discussed. Findings of the PCP faculty members' perspectives of the PCP students' academic ability and motivation to receive the taught materials, faculty and Registrar issues and concerns regarding teaching large classes with academically diverse students, and faculty members and PCP students'

responses to academic advising and institutional support in addressing student and faculty needs resulted in program improvement recommendations. The project study was an evaluation of the PCP, and the resulting project was an executive report/white paper that contained findings, recommendations, and improvement options for the Caribbean University's precollege program.

In the predominantly qualitative program evaluation, I examined the extent to which the PCP's components, program content, program administration, faculty selection, faculty interface with students, content delivery approaches, student selection, student demographics, student engagement, academic advising, and institutional support as recommended by research literature were addressed during the PCP implementation. Peer-reviewed research literature guided the selection of the program evaluation components. Documented in Section 3's literature review is the literature supporting the study's recommendations. A program evaluation of the Caribbean University's precollege program students seeking matriculation to higher education studies, and those factors that may have stymied their advancement, was examined. An examination of the PCP to determine the ways in which it attained its stated objectives and goals and improved the academic preparedness of the PCP students for higher education was also conducted.

### **Rationale**

This project was selected because the unknown factors that influenced the 2010-2014 PCP students from advancing to higher education at the Caribbean University, and ultimately the PCP from attaining its stated goals and objectives remained unknown, and

perpetuated the non-matriculation gap. There was an additional gap in practice because administration conducted no program evaluation. In this PCP program evaluation, I addressed the problem, identified areas of need, provided insights, and recommendations to better serve the PCP diverse student population and assist the administration with program improvement and guidelines for further evaluations. Using logic models in program evaluation studies allows researchers the opportunity to provide university administrators and program managers who are considering organizational changes access to pragmatic information (Royse, Thyler, Padgett, & Logan, 2001).

### **Review of the Literature**

The program evaluation data analysis provided a deeper appreciation of the Caribbean University stakeholders' perspectives as they pertained to those factors that may have influenced the PCP faculty members' ability to effectively implement and impart the program content and, thereby, assist the PCP students in advancing to higher education studies. Similarly, PCP students' insights on those factors that may have influenced poor academic advancement were revealed. The literature review was conducted to support the recommendations and strengthen those areas the data analysis highlighted for improvement. Because PCP students suggested that they did not always understand faculty members' teaching, and they felt that the faculty members were not always concerned about their intellectual growth. In the literature review, I will address academic integration. The neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree responses from the PCP students as it pertained to their missing classes, arriving late, and late submission of assignments. The PCP students' connectedness to faculty, university staff, and other

students' questions under the social integration category generated responses from six of the nine participants responding with either a neutral or disagree should be investigated.

While four (44.4%) of the PCP students reported that they agreed with the overall academic advising provided, four students also cited either being neutral or disagreeing with the services provided. Noteworthy is the high nonresponse rate of 77.8% for Items 1 and 2 under the CPQ's academic advising section, which asked about PCP students' satisfaction with the academic advising and being able to get answers to their academic questions. The students' feedback ties back to some faculty members indicating they were not aware how to advise the PCP students.

According to Levin and Calcagno (2008), notwithstanding the growing numbers of students requiring precollege courses for college advancement, the research literature on the degree to which remedial courses improve students' chances of academic success was almost unknown. Similarly, there is a dearth in Caribbean research studies for students enrolled in remedial courses and the influence these courses have on their higher education advancements. Recommendations for improving the PCP student' academic engagement and college persistence, options in faculty members content delivery and student interaction approaches, administration's communication methods regarding students, university's entrance criteria PCP students, institutional support services, and the university administration's practices for future program evaluation will be presented and supported with the research literature.

This research study's conceptual framework was grounded in Terenzini and Reason's (2005) comprehensive model of influences on students learning and

persistence. The framework allowed this researcher to examine persistence research through the lens of a comprehensive conceptual framework. Terenzini and Reason's (2005) influences on student learning and persistence model represented four major theoretical constructs on college students' engagement, persistence, and retention. Scholars accounts of variables affecting student persistence namely a) student pre-college characteristics and experiences (including socio-demographic traits, academic preparation, and performance, and student dispositions); b) the organizational context (including the institution's policies and procedures, programs' mission, matriculation selectivity, class size, diversity in curriculum content, and delivery methodology, and institutional support services); c) the student peer environment; and d) the individual student experience (a subset of the student peer environment), comprised of classroom experiences, out-of class experiences, and curricular experiences were included (Reason, 2009, p. 662). The inclusion of the organizational context in Terenzini and Reason's conceptual framework underscores the influence that an organization has on the students' environment and behaviors. Institutional policies and practices Terenzini and Reason contend are powerful levers for increasing students' engagement and persistence (p. 679).

### **Student' academic engagement and college persistence**

Tinto's (1975, 1993, 1997) Theory of Student Departure states that retention is a function of "the dispositions of individuals who enter higher education, ...the character of their interactional experiences within the institution following entry, and...the external forces which sometimes influence their behavior within the institution" (1993, p. 37). Tinto posits that students' disposition, that is their (educational or occupational)

intentions as well as their commitment (motivation/drive) are intertwined to their persistence. Interactional experiences, that is, the influence of events occurring within an institution also influence students' experiences. Concurring with Tinto's findings researchers Terenzini and Reason (2005) posited that retention is the outcome of interconnected variables, which fall into four major categories: student pre-college characteristics and experiences, the organizational context, the student peer environment, and the individual student experience.

### **Student demographics – parent/guardian education backgrounds**

Several research studies have corroborated Pascarella and Terenzini (1978) and Pascarella and Chapman's (1983) research findings on the importance, and influence of parental/guardians' educational background on students' persistence. Research studies have also examined the influence of parents/guardian's years of education experiences has on first-generation college students. The non-persistence risk for first-generation college students was higher (Ishitani, 2006; Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). Seventy-seven percent of the PCP students' self-reported as not having a parent/guardian who attained college education.

### **Socio-demographic traits**

Researchers Porchea, Allen, Robbins, and Phelps' (2010) expected that students with higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to transfer to a four- year college. Porchea, Allen, Robbins, and Phelps also expected that part-time students and those who work part-time are less likely to obtain a college degree and transfer to a four-year college. The PCP students' responses to the CPQ's Factor 2: Financial Strain

questions indicated that while some students may have experienced some financial stress in having to handle college tuition and purchasing course books and essential school supplies students # 9 and 2 (22.22%) strongly agreed and student #5 (1.11%) agreed, this may not have been the case for other students. Students # 3, 7 and 8 (33.3%) disagreed and student #5 strongly disagreed that there was a financial strain. Of note were students #2 a female, married with children and working more than 30 hours per week and student #9 a male, single, no children working 1-10 hours per week who both reported strongly agree being impacted by the financial strain that college presented. Unlike student #2's self- report, student 3 a male, single, with no children who also worked more than 30 hours per week, reported that college did not pose a financial stress. Student #3 however received a private company scholarship. Both student #7 a male, single and not employed, and student #8 a single female with children, working 1-10 hours per week, not receiving any financial assistance disagreed that college was a financial strain. However, student # 7 received a company scholarship. Lastly, student #5 a single female, unemployed and no financial assistance strongly disagreed that college being a financial stress. The two PCP students one who worked more than 30 hours and the other 1-10 hours per week, in spite of their additional income found college to be a financial strain.

### **Precollege students' characteristics and matriculation**

Merritt's (2008) research focused on the changing demographics of first-generation college students in North America. Through a brief descriptive memoir, the researcher provided insights into what colleges can do to assist first generation college students' engagement and persistence. This Caribbean university's program evaluation

findings showed that seven of the nine PCP students (77.8%) who participated self-reported that neither parent had a college education. Merritt through a reflective analysis of first generation college students briefly documented personal accounts of her first generation college experiences three decades ago. Merritt interspersed her reflective personal accounts with the research findings of a few investigators to illustrate the changing landscape of first generation college students and to highlight the impact college has on first generation students' engagement and persistence. Merritt chose to model Lundberg, Schreiner, Hovaguimian, and Miller (2007) and Pike and Kuh's (2005) research findings.

Lundberg, Schreiner, Hovaguimian, and Miller's study used a random sample of 4,501 first-generation undergraduate students, and 643 students from seven racial and ethnic groups. The researchers administered a College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) to collect students' insights into those areas where an effort was made to integrate into college, and examine what they learnt from this experience (p.50).

Lundberg, Schreiner, Hovaguimian, and Miller (2007) findings revealed that educational and social involvement of first-generation college students resulted in academic and personal gains.

In a similar study researchers Pike and Kuh (2005) research findings showed that first-generation college students' personal gains resulted from their academic and social engagement, and the college environment (Pike, & Kuh, 2005, as cited in Merritt, 2008, p. 50). Lundberg, Schreiner, Hovaguimian, and Miller (2007) found that first-generation students were less engaged and less likely to integrate diverse college experiences than



peers whose parents were college graduates. Merritt (2008) submitted that faculty members should be enlightened on first-generation students' specific needs, and the faculty should be apprised of ways to enhance class participation and peer collaboration. Additionally, Merritt suggested that colleges should seek to hire faculty and staff from various cultures and ethnicities who could serve as role models (p.50-51).

Researchers Cole, Kennedy, and Ben-Avie (2009) contend that data on students' expectations is not sufficient to gain a better understanding of first-year engagement, and researchers should also seek to know about the personal characteristics of the student and the role of the environment (p.58). Cole, Kennedy, and Ben-Avie (2009) remind us that according to Astin's (1993) Input-Environment-Output (IEO) Model that "in order to better understand the impact of college on students, we first need to assess the "inputs," or the relevant characteristics of students on entry to college" (59). Cole, Kennedy, and Ben-Avie (2009) suggested that collecting precollege information from students before their starting college, or during the first few weeks in college, can serve as a useful source of information to help college/university administrators and faculty members interpret students' performance on a program-level and institution-level assessment efforts (60). To aid either students transitioning from high school, or adults seeking to return to college a precollege student assessments administered during new student orientation is an appropriate method of collecting this important data. Cole, Kennedy, and Ben-Avie (2009) posit that the incorporation of students' Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) data accompanied with students' academic records can be used to triangulate and this combined information provides a holistic picture on which informed

students' decisions can be made. Cole, Kennedy, and Ben-Avie (2009) concluded that obtaining students' pre-college student data can be helpful in the following ways:

1. Understanding student backgrounds, experiences, and expectations so that institutions can minimize unmet expectations and increase student engagement, learning, satisfaction, and persistence.
2. Contextualizing strategic plans with entering student characteristics that are relevant for designing effective teaching and learning practices.
3. Designing and evaluating first-year programs to more effectively align them with student background characteristics and expectations.
4. Helping faculty better understand who their students are in order to modify curriculum materials and teaching practices.
5. Informing advisors about students' prior academic and extracurricular experiences, academic preparation, attitudes, and expectations to best advise the student, and
6. Merging with other data sources to provide a richer understanding of the first-year experience (p. 67).

Insights into the experiences and characteristic of the culturally diverse and academically underprepared students enrolled in developmental education programs provide college administrators, student services and faculty members with valuable information. Such an understanding of the PCP students and those factors that influenced their academic and social integration may assist this Caribbean university's administration and faculty members in removing the persistence barriers, and promoting a successful transition in higher education studies.

### **College entry assessments**

Researchers Hughes and Scott-Clayton's (2011) research highlighted the significant discussion and debate regarding college entry assessments. The authors posited that some people regarded the entry assessments as hindering incoming students, in particular disadvantaged and minority students (p. 329). Hughes and Scott-Clayton referenced Kingman and Alfred (1993) and Boylan (2002) perspectives on college

assessment. According to Kingman and Alfred assessments can be used as a means of “tracking and “cooling out” students’ college aspirations or as a means of facilitating students’ persistence and success” (p. 329-330). Boylan on the other hand stated that mandatory testing and placement is a critical initial step especially in developmental education (p. 329-330). Hughes and Scott-Clayton’s investigation showed that over the last 15 years that community college faculty and college administrators have supported mandatory assessment and placements (Berger, 1997; Hadden, 2000; Perin, 2006) (p. 330). The authors reported that placement tests are almost universal with community colleges and cited Parsad (2003) as reporting that 92% of two year institutions used placement scores ACCUPLACER, and COMPASS, developed by ACT when determining the need for remedial education. While the ACT (2006) data showed an increase in COMPASS accuracy rates compared to the predicted rates of all students assigned to a target course, Hughes and Scott-Clayton (2011) could not find similar data for the ACCUPLACER. The Caribbean university under a different registrar at one time administered the ACCUPLACER test as an alternate to the university’s entrance examination. Caribbean students who took the examination complained that some of the questions were not contextually appropriate. Upon the advice of its second registrar, the Caribbean university administered the revised, locally crafted and more robust math and English entrance examination. Students entering the 2012-2013 academic year received this revised entrance examination. While the new and more stringent entrance criteria may have siphoned some students, an increase in the number of PCP students advancing to higher education was not evident. Analysis of the PCP faculty data showed there was

still some concern among some faculty members regarding the rigor of the Caribbean University's entrance examination and its ability to provide the university administration and the registrar's office with the necessary data to make informed decisions regarding the PCP students' ability to persist in higher education studies.

If the conditions under which the precollege program students received their education remained the same was it only the upgrade of an examination that would have enhanced the precollege program students' ability to matriculate to higher education? Would a standardized entrance examination for instance COMPASS be a better predictor of students' success and persistence to higher education studies? Or would a more comprehensive approach and examination of the precollege students' pre-college characteristics assist administration in gauging these students' college readiness? Would the combination of prior knowledge of the students' precollege characteristics, a robust new entrance examination, and PCP faculty members understanding of the PCP students' profile assist in enhancing the PCP students' ability to persist and matriculate to higher education? Or would a deeper examination of the faculty member's knowledge and comfort levels in adjusting the curricula, course delivery, content sequencing, and assessment methods when teaching mixed ability student cohorts provide deeper insights?

### **Faculty teaching approaches and influence on student engagement and persistence**

The Caribbean University research study's findings on precollege students and those factors, which influenced their ability to advance to higher education, added to, and supported the existing literature. The only regular contact with the institution that many

students experience is the time spent in the classroom with faculty members. Students' classroom experiences and interactions with faculty therefore are critical influencers on students' persistence (Reason, 2009; Tinto, 2006-7). The critical role that faculty members' and their teaching practices have on student engagement, retention, and persistence supported earlier retention research by Braxton, Bray, and Berger (2000); Braxton, Milem, and Sullivan (2000); Lundquist, Spalding, and Landrum (2002); Pascarella, Seifert, and Whitt (2008), and Pascarella, Salisbury, and Blaich (2011). According to Giaquinto (2009-2010) faculty members' pedagogical approaches and interaction with students are thought to influence students' persistence decisions, however very little has been written about the importance of instruction and its impact on retention (p.268).

Researchers Levin and Calcagno (2008) urged college administrators and faculty to consider a restructured curriculum that dissuades the drill-and-skill approach. Instead, Levin and Calcagno suggested the following approaches namely: including tandem classes, paired courses, packaged courses, linked courses, supplemental instruction and learning communities (p.186). The employment of a learning community, Levin and Calcagno (2008) contend aids in promoting students' persistence and success. According to the researchers a learning community relies not only on the quality of instruction but also depends on the students' involvement both socially and academically to leverage learning. Examples of such teaching/learning support initiatives are found in college orientation courses or "student success" courses that address learning styles, study skills,

time management, and successful habits (Brock, & LeBlanc, 2005; Tinto, 1993, 1997, as cited in Levin, & Calcagno, 2008, p.187).

The adoption of modified classroom approaches that employ alternative instructional strategies and focus on diverse students' learning styles and technologies according to Levin and Calcagno (2008) assists with remediation and provides diagnostic feedback and monitoring of students' progress. Finally, Levin and Calcagno (2008) posited that critical thinking, complex problem solving, and abstract reasoning have been the hallmarks of programs geared towards the academically gifted students. Concurring with Levin and Calcagno (2008), Santangelo and Tomlinson's (2009) research findings showed that employing differentiated teaching and learning approaches when delivering developmental education programs facilitated diverse learners' needs and provided an equitable opportunity for success (p. 308). The Caribbean University serves a diverse learner population, however the extent to which the Caribbean University's precollege program met the needs of its diverse learner population, and thereby its stated goals and objectives was not evident given the vast numbers of non-matriculated students.

Differentiation of instruction (DI) is an effective process of adjusting the content, and process of a learning task to accommodate diverse learner population needs (Minott, 2009; Santangelo & Tomlinson, 2009). Two Caribbean University PCP faculty members expressed feelings of unpreparedness and being challenged in knowing on how to teach the PCP students. One PCP faculty member stated they taught certificate students who matriculated to an associate degree program, but teaching the PCP students was different. Appreciating that not all students learn the same way, even students without academic

challenges, faculty members need to demonstrate flexibility and comfort with curricula modification instead of expecting students to adjust to the curriculum. Researcher Boylan (1999) posited, “not everyone can teach developmental courses just because they have an advanced degree” (p.9). The PCP faculty members must therefore possess in addition to their subject matter knowledge a sound understanding of how academically underprepared students learn. Leveraging these approaches will give students an opportunity to achieve academic excellence and advance in higher education.

### **Institutional communication and support systems**

This study’s research findings showed that not all of the PCP faculty members initially knew they were teaching PCP students, and in many instances they became aware when students were disruptive in class. The PCP faculty members stated they were not introduced to the PCP students’ during their orientation sessions, and this information may have prepared them to adjust their teachings accordingly to engage the PCP students. Other faculty however stated that they were not equipped to teach students with the range of issues presented in their classes and knowing about these issues before having the students on their classes may have better prepared them.

Addressing similar student retention issues and the outcome of orientation sessions researchers Hossler, Ziskin, and Gross (2009) examined the strategies employed in the Indiana Project on Academic Success (IPAS) and the College Board Pilot Project on Student Retention (CBS) to acquire insight into which strategies increased students’ retention and how institutions organized themselves, enhanced student persistence, and graduation (p. 4). The research was conducted over four years and had two main foci.

The first focus was to design programmatic interventions to enhance students' persistence and success, and the other to evaluate existing and campus based initiatives to improve students' learning, success and retention (p. 4). During a four-year period, the researchers gathered data to better understand the effectiveness of the institutions' retention, student learning and success policies and practices. The team of investigators worked concurrently on the CBS pilot project to develop a survey of campus policies and practices. The survey focused on first to second year retention rates, programs and policies pertaining to student persistence.

The researchers conducted a series of interviews and focus groups sessions with students, faculty and staff. The feedback from these key participants informed the design of a mandatory five-hour student orientation program. Both the IPAS and the CBS studies provided consistent findings on the following student retention factors namely:

1. Leadership must make student retention a priority to create the appropriate campus atmosphere;
2. Student services must be integrated with academic affairs;
3. A campus culture that fosters a sense of belonging;
4. A mentoring system and faculty that assist must be rewarded, and
5. Students must be provided with academic advising (p. 4).

Hossler, Ziskin, and Gross (2009) also found that most four-year colleges and universities made little effort to implement initiatives to enhance persistence, or to assess the impact of such after implementation. Campuses with lower retention rates had lower participation rates in freshman orientation programs and were also less likely to have



mandatory orientation policies. The authors' investigation showed that retention efforts can be successful with support from management, a dedicated administrative coordinator, and appropriate training resources.

Adoption of a mandatory PCP student orientation exercise with the Caribbean University's administration, faculty and students' services' in attendance could bolster faculty awareness of their PCP students, begin the faculty/student interaction, and present a unified approach in fostering persistence in higher education. In closing, Hossler, Ziskin, and Gross' (2009) research findings showed that campuses with lower retention rates had lower student participation rates in the freshman orientation programs and were also less likely to have mandatory orientation policies.

Advancing the research Mayhew, Vanderlinden, and Kim (2010) asserted colleges and universities spend an inordinate amount of time trying to arrange the best orientation programs to meet diverse students' characteristics and needs. However, these researchers found college personnel and faculty disagreeing over whether to personalize the orientation exercise to make the students feel comfortable and connected to college, to some colleges/universities members arguing whether they should introduce the content to gain faculty support with the orientation program (p. 340). Mayhew, Vanderlinden, and Kim (2010) advised that college and university administrators should seriously consider their students' varying needs and experiences and urged them to solicit student feedback regarding the students' expectations of an orientation program and how these programs could assist their transitioning and meeting the challenges of college/university life. The researchers suggested that perhaps college administrators could provide a

focused orientation session for transfer students, and one for international students.

Attention to such individualized sessions according to Mayhew, Vanderlinden, and Kim “not only solidifies the orientation program as an important tool in helping students transition to college, but ultimately helps institutions respond to those advocating for more accountability in higher education” (p.341). Despite the presence of orientation programs on college campuses the researchers contend there is a dearth in the research literature on the impact of orientation programs on students’ learning outcomes. This dearth in the literature is concerning as colleges and universities continue to experience ongoing challenges with students transitioning to college.

Comparable concerns and questions raised in the aforementioned research align with the Caribbean University’s PCP study. For example, what are the PCP students’ perspectives of the Caribbean University’s precollege orientation program? Do students who attend the precollege orientation exercises demonstrate higher retention levels than those precollege students who did not participate in the orientation exercise? Did the PCP orientation assist faculty in better understanding their students’ academic needs? What are the Caribbean University’s existing orientation policy and procedure practices, and in what ways are they subscribed to by the precollege students ’and faculty? Having gained a deeper appreciation regarding the importance of ongoing program evaluation exercises, and the valued insights garnered, perhaps this study’s research findings would prompt further investigation the university’s administration to these questions.

### **Institutional support services and student persistence**

Mayhew, Vanderlinden, and Kim's (2010) research study employed Tinto's and Astin's social and academic integration models as the theoretical framework to investigate college students' experience, and those factors influencing college students' engagement and persistence. The authors stated that research studies have begun to examine how differently orientation exercises impact community college and university students. Concurring with the researchers' findings were Pascarella, Terenzini and Wolfe (1986), Hughes and Graham (1992), Jacobs, Busby and Leath (1992), Smith and Brackin (1993), Krallman and Holcomb (1997), Herman and Lewis (2004), and Mayhew, Stipeck and Dorrow (2007) also conducted investigations into the impact of community college and universities' orientation exercises on students' engagement and persistence. The aforementioned researchers also investigated the effects of the college orientation programs on culturally, ethnically and economically diverse students' learning abilities. The researchers found that "students of color were significantly more likely than White students to report that orientation programming helped them develop friendships, adjust socially, and use campus services" (p.324).

Veenstra's (2009) research on the other hand examined the reasons why students enter college and Veenstra posited that students enter college with varied experiences, attitudes and backgrounds many of which are significant predictors for students' success (p. 19). The role of college according to Veenstra is to bring students together in a community that attempts to ensure that each student has the potential for achieving a quality, value-added learning experience. The effective outcome of the college's role the

author contends is dependent upon many players in the academic environment, for instances the college administration, faculty, staff, support services, other students, extra-curricular activities, and the interaction each student has with these categories. Veenstra underscored the importance of the students' first year/transitional year in college and posited that efforts should be made to foster a student-focused learning environment with supportive services that meet students' needs. According to Veenstra (2009), the quality of the college's support services may influence the students' decision to continue with the college or university (p.19). As an institutional approach to improving student success, Veenstra (2009) urged university administrators and faculty to identify students' pre-college characteristics. Veenstra identified nine institutional support services, and contended that these nine students' precollege characteristics namely high school academic performance, qualitative skills (math and science skills), confidence in quantitative skills, study habits, commitment to career/degree; commitment to college the student is attending; financial needs not met; family support and social engagement (p. 21-22). Veenstra concluded that these precollege characteristics, once known and data employed when interacting with students should assist university administrators and faculty in better serving and improving students' success. Veenstra's identification of the nine institutional factors and suggested practices provided valuable insights for this program evaluation study on precollege students' persistence at the Caribbean University.

Undoubtedly, Veenstra's nine precollege characteristics drills deeper and should resonate with the Caribbean university's administration and student services and prompt questions regarding: to what extent is the Caribbean University's administration and

student services aware of the precollege students' precollege characteristics and how has this information informed the curriculum design and delivery? Has the Caribbean University students' precollege characteristics been shared with the faculty and how has the faculty in turn adjusted their curricula and teaching approaches in light of this awareness to meet the precollege students' academic needs in their respective courses? The inclusion of the organizational context as outlined in Terenzini and Reason's (2005) conceptual framework underscores the influence that an organization has on the students' environment and behaviors. Institutional policies and practices Terenzini and Reason contend are powerful levers for increasing students' engagement and persistence (p. 679).

How can colleges improve student retention? What activities might college administrators attempt to include to bolster recruitment/admission strategies, promote new student orientation or first-week activities that would heighten faculty, student and institutional participation? Student persistence studies according to researchers Hunter (2006), Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) covered several factors namely: peer and faculty interactions, academic performance, financial aid, first-year seminars, academic advising, learning communities, academic and social integration, these elements should be included in all faculty and student orientation sessions. How can faculty and student services collaborate to improve the academic advising and support? Do the PCP faculty members understand the concept and are they equipped to engender learning communities?

Finally, given the diverse Caribbean PCP student population is a first-year seminar that places academically diverse students with matriculated associate degree students the best approach. Bean and Eaton (2000) found that students' retention and

persistence to graduation may also be associated with the individuals' psychological motivations, and that students' personal needs greatly influenced their academic and social integration. The Caribbean University's PCP students are academically underprepared and cannot matriculate to university. The nation's PCP students, therefore, need assistance if they are going to navigate the higher education system successfully, complete their developmental education program successfully, and persist in higher education studies.

### **Implementation**

Implementation of the Caribbean University's precollege program improvement recommendations as presented in Appendix A (Executive Summary) will bolster the university administration and PCP faculty members' ability to assist the PCP students in matriculating to higher education studies. In an attempt to further promote program evaluation practices, improve the precollege program and its students' academic chances, the university administrators will receive a data-gathering model along with a copy of the administered College Persistence Questionnaire.

### **Potential Resources, Existing Supports and Barriers**

Coaching exercises and professional development sessions can be arranged by the university administration and dean academics. A teacher-mentor group can be created and the positive practices and experiences of some of the PCP faculty peers shared and demonstrated. Some of the exercises can include best practices in differentiated learning approaches, techniques in promoting student engagement and retention, academic advising. Lightweis (2013) contends when planning instruction, acknowledging students'

diversity and readiness is paramount for a successful classroom. The facilitator can be selected from the university's teacher education department or the session can be conducted with assistance from an external facilitator.

The student services department can assist with coaching faculty members on academic advising and referral coaching techniques. Barriers are minimal, since those PCP faculty members who participated and self-identified as having some concerns in teaching the PCP students expressed a willingness to participate in order to better understand how to teach the PCP students. The study was approved by the university's administration and they are receptive of the recommendations to advance the PCP students' chances in higher education.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

Faculty members usually return two weeks prior to the semester start for their professional development week of activities. Sessions on community learning approaches, differentiated instruction, and academic advising skills can be presented and practiced. Since the number of PCP students continued to increase from 2010 to 2014, perhaps the university would consider hiring faculty members with experience in special education practices to teach some the PCP curricula and work in collaboration with internal resources to mentor the PCP faculty. Teaching technique updates sessions should be arranged every semester. While the PCP sought to assist academically underprepared students to matriculate to university, based upon the faculty members accounts of the students' academic level and ability to persist, the PCP entrance requirements and curricula need to be revisited. Successive program offerings should strive for a more

realistic entrance criteria and screening process in attempt to elevate the PCP's benefits and bolster students' confidence in their abilities to advance in higher education studies. For those students unable to attain the PCP entrance criteria can be consideration for and guided to enroll in a technical certificate program.

### **Roles and responsibilities of students and others**

The University's administration needs to be informed of the study's findings in order to support the PCP students, faculty members and the registrar in competently conducting their respective duties. Therefore, upon receipt of this project study's approval, a mutually arranged Skype meeting with the Caribbean University's administration and PCP stakeholders (PCP faculty members, registrar, and student services) will be conducted and the program evaluation findings will be presented. Additionally, the study's findings, recommendations and supporting literature review will also be presented. In an attempt to ensure stakeholders advance the program evaluation data gathering process, a logic outcomes program evaluation model along with the College Preparedness Questionnaire, the data collection survey, administered to the PCP students will be shared in an attempt to support the administration's programmatic decision making processes.

### **Project Evaluation**

This study's program evaluation examined the Caribbean University stakeholders' perspectives of the precollege program intervention and the extent to which the PCP achieved its goals, objectives, and assisted the 2010-2015 precollege student cohorts in advancing to higher education studies. A summative-based program evaluation was the



most logical design to use since it provided an assessment of the pre-college program's implementation and outcomes effectiveness in attaining its stated goals and objectives. The expert review committee affirmed this study's evaluation feasibility during the review of the study proposal. Adopting an evaluative culture assists in sound decision-making and quality assurance practices. The reiterative, data gathering process once sustained by the university administration and information used to compare previous program practices, the exercise will yield valuable empirical data. Adoption of this culture of evidence and incorporation of empirical data into the institutional, university entrance criteria, student and faculty selection criteria, academic advising approaches, and programmatic decision-making processes should enhance the outcomes of future pre-college programs.

### **Implications Including Social Change**

#### **Local Community**

This study sought to identify those factors that influenced the Caribbean University PCP students' low academic persistence levels to higher education. Identifying the factors that stymied the students' academic progress will provide the university administration with insights into the PCP's faculty members, university deputy registrar, and the PCP students' perspectives of the PCP's curriculum, content delivery methods, student selection criteria, and institutional support. This study will also assist the nation's high school administrators in understanding its graduates' shortcomings as they attempt to transition to higher education studies. It is my belief that this study will contribute to social change by providing a second chance for this Caribbean nation's

academically underprepared high school graduates who seek a college degree. Greater attention to students' personal and academic needs will provide an opportunity for each student to achieve success and to support their Caribbean community's growth and development.

### **Far-Reaching**

The insights gleaned from the precollege students, faculty members and the Deputy Registrar's perspectives of the PCP and its students present additional far-reaching implications for social change. The Caribbean university's administration can share the study's findings with the local high school administrators who in turn can share this information with their teachers in an attempt to address high school graduates' academic shortcomings and provide appropriate student support services. Additionally, the Caribbean University's PCP findings can benefit the nation's high school students seeking to matriculate to college through a collaborative working relationship between the university and the nation's high schools. This collaborative working arrangement can seek to have the university faculty members and high school teachers agreeing on those PCP components of the Math and English courses they feel confident and comfortable teaching.

Adaption of the PCP curricula and collaborative teaching arrangement between the local secondary and tertiary education providers will strengthen the communication between university faculty members, administrators, student service personnel and their corresponding colleagues in the respective high schools, to better prepare and enhance the high school graduates' chances of succeeding in their higher education quests (Karp

& Hughes, 2008, p. 863). College students with a greater sense of self-efficacy, are usually more confident, adapt better to new situations, and are more inclined to make a positive transition from high school and succeed in college according to DeWitz, Woolsey, and Walsh (2009).

Participant accounts of issues encountered by the Caribbean students, faculty members and administrators while teaching or being enrolled in the PCP should allow other higher education researchers and university administrators to pause and assess their PCP students' ability, or lack thereof to progress in higher education studies against the Caribbean University's findings. The study provided a deeper appreciation and understanding of student academic engagement and persistence issues and those challenges encountered by the PCP faculty members and administration. Additionally, section 3 literature's review highlighted factors that may influence the decision-making processes of precollege program students in their quest for higher education studies and in turn should be consider when conducting a program evaluation.

### **Conclusion**

A literature review of relevant precollege program, academic engagement and persistence, and institutional and faculty approaches to bolster students' academic advancement in higher education studies through the conduct of ongoing program evaluation exercises was examined and presented in Section 3. Recommendations for the PCP administration, student selection criteria, a heightened collaboration between student services the registrar's office and faculty in an attempt assist the PCP students' academic advancement and were highlighted. Barriers, resources and support were presented and

options to effect positive change were considered. An implementation proposal and timetable were for presented, and the far-reaching social change implications were highlighted. The discussion in Section 4 outlines the project's strengths and limitations, and potential social change implications. A self-analysis as a researcher and directions for future studies are presented.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Introduction**

This section provides an examination of the project's strengths, limitations, and recommendations for alternative approaches when addressing the project in future program evaluations. Having conducted the research study, a personal reflection, examples of lessons learnt in the areas of scholarship, project development, evaluation, and leadership are presented. The section concludes with a discussion of the project's social change influence in the Caribbean nation and the implications, applications, and directions for future precollege research.

### **Project Strengths**

The project study was predominately qualitative in nature. The Davidson, Beck, and Milligan's (2009) College Preparedness Questionnaire Version1 mixed-methods data instrument was completed by the PCP students, which added to the study's reliability and validity. The rich narrative perspective and experiences gathered from the PCP students' CPQ open-ended section complemented the shared narrative from the PCP faculty members and the university deputy registrar's responses to their PCP open-ended questionnaires and enriched the program evaluation. Coding for the qualitative aspects of the study's data analysis was a means to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The PCP faculty members, the Deputy Registrar, and university administration were willing to participate and look forward to receiving the study's findings. The PCP evaluation began with 16 faculty members; however, during the course of the research study, faculty members resigned. Nine PCP students participated and completed the CPQ; however,

they were not as receptive or cooperative in participating in an interview. Another strength of the study was the opportunity to conduct the first program evaluation of the PCP. The importance of learning the strengths and deficits of the PCP was an essential element of this research investigation.

### **Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations**

Due to the small sample size and small scope of the study, the research findings are not generalizable. Nine of the 128 (7.03%) PCP students, eight of 16 PCP faculty members (50%), and one Deputy Registrar (100%) participated in the study. As a former employee of the Caribbean university, I had no direct access to the PCP students and depended solely on the valued assistance of the Deputy Registrar to forward the survey CPQ to all PCP students. Compounding the ineffective access to the PCP students was the distance of my being in another country while conducting the data collection phase. While employed at the university during 2010-2012, the cohorts had close proximity to the PCP; however, I was unable to view the PCP's implementation for the 2013-2015 cohorts. Despite this geographic limitation, the rich narrative from interviews adds qualitative significance to this study. Thus, any attempt to secure the PCP students' verbal perspectives in future studies would provide an additional layer of valuable insights and experiences. With the recent reintroduction of the PCP, perhaps an arranged focus group with current the PCP students will solicit and garner their experiences and perspectives in a formative manner that will allow for needed changes and adjustments to the PCP program and process.

### **Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change**

The dissertation journey began with identifying a problem and acquiring insights from noted researchers in the field of underprepared college students in developmental programs and program evaluation. Through what seemed like an unending iterative process, the study gradually began to take shape and morphed into to a body of work that shares new insights from a Caribbean perspective. As a novice researcher, I learned the importance of having a clear focus of the study's intention, the data collection, and analysis methods early in the process and streamlined the research process through draft iterations. I practiced restraint and grew in my understanding that having too broad a research focus would be endless and difficult to complete. With assistance from my committee members, I trimmed those areas that are better served for future research.

Form the initial research request, the university's academic dean welcomed the program evaluation. My challenges began when I sought assistance from the registrar's office. Because I was no longer employed at the university, I was considered as an outsider, seeking assistance in connecting directly with the PCP students in an attempt to gather their perspectives of the PCP. I faced my primary hurdle and lengthy delays when trying to connect and communicate with the Registrar to explain what I needed in order to conduct the study. After numerous attempts at communicating, I learned the Registrar had resigned. This situation gave me a pathway to the Deputy Registrar who promptly responded to my request. I soon learnt from the Deputy Registrar that not all the PCP students' information was easily accessible, and it would take some to sift through all the students in their system to first identify the PCP students from the various cohorts and

then ascertain if they had a current e-mail address on file. This aspect and phase of the doctoral journey brought to the forefront my limited control over some situations and emphasized the gratitude I must acknowledge when persons act as our stepping stones of support. While no longer employed at this Caribbean University, it is my hope that this study's findings will continue to advance the dialogue on the nation's academically underprepared students. The study's findings support a collaborative approach with high school administrators and the dedicated institutional support service personnel to ensure that the remediation of students seeking access to higher education studies is provided.

#### **Analysis of Self as Scholar and Practitioner and Project Developer**

During this research process, I developed a deeper appreciation and respect for the collaborative process. My committee members, the IRB process, and fellow doctoral colleagues provided insightful engagement and encouragement. The doctoral journey demanded extreme patience, flexibility, and openness to change. I was grateful for all minor breakthroughs and benchmarks in the iterative process. In spite of my patience, my doctoral chair reminded me that sometimes I just needed to let go because I could not control participants' response times, nor the number of completed responses received. Perfect should not be the enemy of good held true. Reading numerous research studies honed my critical thinking skills and ability to construct meaningful research questions and provided insights for the qualitative data coding and ultimate analyses of responses.

I am grateful to the Caribbean University for allowing me to conduct the PCP program evaluation study. I enjoyed reconnecting with the PCP students, faculty members, and the Deputy Registrar. This study provided the opportunity to gain a deeper



understanding of the overall experiences and perspectives of the PCP's strengths and areas in need of change. As a former member and practitioner of the university community, I believe my growth and evolution as a scholar practitioner has been achieved in this study. The overall conception, development, and delivery of this project is a reminder of my development as a project manager. There were challenges and obstacles that became opportunities during this investigation. My ability to listen and learn was enhanced through this research process. I believe I have the knowledge, competencies, and skill sets to function as an effective project manager, researcher, and change agent.

Presently, I function as external evaluator, having been a part of the PCP from its inception. As an external evaluator, I join my former university administrators and faculty members in desire for the PCP to fulfill its goals and objectives in assisting the Caribbean nation's academically underprepared students in advancing in their academic studies and achieving their personal and professional dreams.

### **The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change**

Because no formal program evaluation to appreciate the factors that stymied the PCP students' successful program completion and advancement to higher education, this summative program evaluation study was conducted. In addition to losing its credibility in the eyes of the PCP faculty members and students, the program was at risk of losing government funding. Limited educational opportunities for this growing sector of the country's youth fueled this nation's need for the increased reliance on an expatriate worker population. Without the university's leaders identifying the factors that affected

the 2010 to 2015 PCP students' academic disengagement, low persistence levels, and addressing them holistically, the increasing access to an associate degree remained an elusive dream for PCP students.

It is my belief that this study will contribute to social change by providing a second chance for this Caribbean nation's underprepared high school graduates who seek a college degree. Participant accounts of issues and challenges encountered by the PCP students, faculty members, Deputy Registrar, and administrators while teaching or being enrolled in the PCP should allow other higher education researchers and university administrators to actively assess their PCP students' ability, or lack thereof to progress in higher education studies against the Caribbean University's findings. If the PCP strives to be that academic bridge which spans the gap for the Caribbean nation's academically underprepared students seeking to acquire a tertiary education, then the Caribbean University must continue to seek continuous program improvement by examining the mission, vision, purpose, structure, and intended outcomes of the PCP, and the abilities of students enrolled in the program.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

Education is perceived as a passport, the invaluable socio-economic advantage that an education provides academically underprepared students in this Caribbean nation must be underscored. When a university accepts underprepared students, it sends a message to the community, students, faculty members, and university staff that these students are capable of advancing in their academic studies, and that the necessary institutional support services are at students and faculty members' disposal.

Unfortunately, this unified support service was not the case for the majority of this Caribbean University's Precollege students. Conducting the Precollege program evaluation provided the PCP's students, PCP faculty members and the university's Deputy Registrar with an opportunity to voice their experiences and perspectives of the PCP's strengths and challenges as well as to suggest recommendations for overall improvement. This university's willingness to participate in a program evaluation demonstrated its concern in identifying the factors associated with the PCP students' poor academic progress to higher education studies in hopes of learning how to best serve this student population in the future.

This study's findings uncovered several areas in need of revision viz., the PCP's college entrance criteria; the need for a dedicated program coordinator; PCP faculty members' request for better communication with administrators and student service personnel about the PCP students' academic abilities and needs. Faculty members also requested assistance in being coached in order to provide differentiated learning options and teaching methodologies to better meet the PCP students' academic needs. Given the diverse student population, faculty members requested assistance with academic advising techniques and recommended smaller class sizes. These findings reveal the need for institutional reform and programmatic changes in the PCP. The lack of a formal program evaluation from 2010 to present fueled the faculty members' frustration and perpetuated the students' poor performance.

A university's receptiveness to embrace academic diversity undoubtedly provides its students with an opportunity and hope at achieving their academic goals. However,

without the appropriate institutional support systems these good intentions only further exacerbate student and faculty anguish and institutional disappointment. It is the belief of this researcher that this Caribbean University needs to adopt a critical analysis agenda. A collaborative, comprehensive evaluative focus will provide the necessary empirical data for the university's administrators to critically examine the precollege program's value, the PCP students' ability to succeed, and the PCP faculty members' ability to assist their students in their academic endeavors. The information learned through a continuous improvement program process will allow the university administrators to make informed institutional decisions based on data and evidence. The university's administrators, faculty members, and student service personnel must adopt a collaborative student-centered learning agenda which examines and shares the successful and effective elements of pre-college students' experiences. To measure contextual effectiveness, these selected program success elements should be implemented, evaluated, and the findings recorded and shared with university administrators, faculty members, and staff. Sergiovanni (2005) proposed that the improvement of a program, its students, faculty members, and ultimately the university's reputation stem from its leaders cultivating a collaborative culture of continuous learners who share the burden of leadership.

### **Conclusion**

Conducting a summative program evaluation at a Caribbean university provided a concise representation of the PCP's strengths and growth opportunities, and gave a voice to the PCP students, faculty members and university administrators. This section allowed me to reflect on my journey as a scholar, practitioner, and project manager. By building

on a comprehensive body of knowledge through wide-ranging research reviews on pre-college programs and program evaluation, I established an effective research foundation to support this investigation. One of the study's strengths was this university administration's recognition of its diverse student population and its attempt at creating a program to assist underprepared high school students seeking to advance in higher education studies. This aspect of university awareness and response is noted and appreciated. Both the university's administrators and the PCP faculty members were supportive of the study and sought to have a deeper awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the factors that influenced the PCP students' poor academic progress. As noted previously, the small sample size for both the PCP faculty and PCP students, and my inability to have PCP students' interviews were limitations of the study. Nevertheless, having the opportunity to conduct the PCP evaluation was extremely beneficial and has provided the university with much needed data to inform future institutional decisions. The program has continued since 2010 without any in-depth evaluation of its students' poor performance and their inability to advance to higher education studies. Present and future PCP students and faculty members, and the university administrators will benefit from these research findings and insights. High school administrators will have a deeper awareness and appreciation of their graduates' skills gaps. The need for more effective collaborative relationships between the university personnel and high school administrators is supported by this study. The importance of providing more effective services and support for teachers to better prepare students for college should have a positive lasting social change effect. An increase in the number of

local students achieving personal and professional goals is a harbinger of community growth, stability, and sustainability. Other Caribbean colleges which offer a precollege program should find these research findings and recommendations beneficial in supporting their decision-making processes. Cognizant of the transient nature of the Caribbean society, future research studies may explore and examine how students from different cultures receive, and benefit from a precollege program. Additional research may investigate the success outcomes of teaching precollege students and mainstream matriculation students in same class. There are future studies embedded in this study.

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## Appendix A: Executive Report

The local problem prompting this study was the poor matriculation rates among PCP students seeking to advance to higher education studies. This issue was compounded since the university administration did not conduct a formal program evaluation to ascertain the reasons for the PCP students' poor performance. The PCP continued until 2013, and the program resumed in 2015, however still without a formal program evaluation. The overarching question of this program evaluation study sought to answer: In what ways are the PCP's purpose, structure, and outcomes manifested in practices at the Caribbean University? This study investigated:

- Research Question # 1: In what way(s) does the PCP's purpose or mission influence stakeholders?
- Research Question # 2: What are the PCP students' and faculty views of the PCP's structural format (e.g., course content, delivery methods, duration of the curriculum, academic advising, and program coordination)?
- Research Question # 3: How do the PCP students' rate a set of factors that affected their academic engagement and persistence at the Caribbean University?

The intention of this participant-oriented program evaluation was to produce a summative report of stakeholders' perspectives towards the effectiveness of the Precollege program in providing support and assisting academically underprepared high

school graduates seeking to matriculate to higher education studies. This Executive Report presents the Caribbean University's PCP findings and recommendations.

The PCP faculty members' findings and recommendations of the PCP's ability to deliver on its stated goals and objectives and prepare students to advance to higher education studies, faculty members perspectives on the PCP students' ability, and strength of the institutional support systems are discussed. The university Registrar's findings and recommendations of the precollege program follows and the PCP students' responses to the CPQs nine categories namely Academic Integration; Financial Strain; Institutional Commitment; Academic Motivation; Scholastic Conscientiousness; Degree Commitment; Social Integration; Academic Efficacy and Academic Advising are presented. The report concludes with recommendations for future PCP program evaluation practices.

### **PCP Strengths**

#### **Findings**

The University's Deputy Registrar and the PCP faculty members stated similar opinions. According to the Deputy Registrar, the PCPs strength was its ability to ready the students for an "ongoing university life and academic career." The PCP faculty members shared that the PCP provided students with the "requisite knowledge and skills for transition from high school to college." Two faculty members stated that the PCP "program gave them access to the Associate degree program."



## **PCP Shortcomings**

### Findings

The PCP faculty members cited a lack of data collection initiatives on the PCP students' issues and progress, and the ability to track and share these findings a program shortcoming and recommended revisions. One PCP faculty member stated there was lack in "tracking these students to establish outcomes. (Data need to be made available)." Another faculty member's perspective was that the PCP students needed support "they need extra support, study skills tutoring to maintain the momentum of the programme." The program design in their estimation did not provide this extra support. Another faculty member voiced the PCP did not "prepare students for university life." Additionally, the PCP faculty members stated concern with the PCP's program admissions and student selection criteria. Some faculty members expressed feelings of incompetence teaching students with such diverse learning needs. Inconsistent administrative and institutional support as also thought to be lacking.

### **PCP Faculty Members' Findings and Recommendations**

The following paragraphs present the PCP faculty members perspectives towards the university's PCP college entrance criteria; the lack of a dedicated program coordinator; need for better communication with administrators, and student services personnel about the PCP students' academic abilities and needs. The PCP faculty members expressed request for coaching in differentiated teaching options and academic advising coaching techniques in order to meet the PCP students' academic needs. Given the diverse student population, faculty members requested from the university's

administration smaller class sizes. These findings reveal the need for institutional reform and programmatic changes in the PCP.

### **PCP's College Entrance Criteria and Students Preparedness**

#### Finding

Question item # 11 in the PCP faculty members' questionnaire required the PCP faculty to state any PCP shortcomings. Responses ranged from "proper screening of students is not done. Many of the students are not ready for the college level. Most of them are mentally and socially unprepared." One PCP faculty member stated "The students in PCP are not good students or they would be in the associate programme they need extra support, study skills tutoring to maintain the momentum of the programme."

Two faculty members (22.2%) expressed the PCP entrance score should have been higher, "apparently the score range should have been set much higher because most of these students' numeric, literacy and writing skills are still below the acceptable level." The second faculty member stated, "I think they should be required to meet the standards that apply to the general population. I would not like standards to be lowered for them. We need to bring them up to the required standard -- otherwise we will be lowering the general university standards." One faculty member (1.11%) thought the composite Math and English entrance criteria range of 120-139 out of 160 points was appropriate. They explained "I feel that the criteria are appropriate," while another faculty member's (1.11%) perspective was "the matriculation score of 120-139 out of 160 seems a bit high for this group of students, however, the higher the score the more likely that they will succeed." The PCP students' entrance criteria "do not guarantee academic performance"

were the views of two (22.2%) faculty members, while one PCP faculty member (1.11%) suggested that despite the need for appropriate university's entrance criteria for the PCP students, that "college readiness would be important given the context."

### Recommendation

The University administration needs to revisit the PCP entrance criteria and determine if the admission criteria of 120-139 is adequate. This determination must be made given the fact that the PCP students are in some associate degree level classes with naturally matriculated students. Recognizing the benefits derived from having the PCP students in classes with college-matriculated students, the University's administration should consider arranging learning communities within the classes and assign a matriculated student to assist/tutor the PCP students. Note-taking may not be as effective among the PCP students and the faculty members may consider awarding extra points to naturally matriculated students who post their study notes on the class website. This approach may assist the PCP students and other matriculated students. The PCP faculty need to collaborate with the nation's high school teachers and administration, share the findings of the university's math and English college entrance examinations, provide high school principals with a copy of the entrance examinations to allow high school teachers insights to better prepare students.

### **PCP Students' Ability**

#### Finding

One PCP faculty member stated, "some students were on the program, who would never be able to cope at the College level." "I had students with various learning

disabilities, who really needed specialized educational assistance. (There was one young man in 98 who didn't know what odd and even numbers were, and had no idea about basic division).” The “large classes was the biggest challenge” and this faculty member expressed that the PCP students were “in transition from high school for the most part and had difficulties in adapting to a university environment where they were expected to exercise initiative and conduct themselves as mature adults.” A math PCP faculty member shared “The majority of Precollege students were not at this level, and this was the reason they had failed their Mathematics CXC/IGCSE at High School. These students stand very little chance of acquiring the required skills and knowledge in 2 semesters to be able to cope with College level Mathematics.” Lastly one PCP faculty member stated that “most of them have no idea what they want to do or become so they really are interested in 'nothing'.”

#### Recommendation

Undoubtedly, the PCP is a necessary program, and perhaps the only hope for this Caribbean nation’s underprepared high school graduates seeking a higher education and chance at social and economic mobility. The PCPs present structure and method of delivery is not assisting its students in advancing in their academic goals. Serious consideration must be given when hiring faculty who teach remediation courses. A cadre of faculty members trained in delivering differentiated learning approaches and experienced in teaching academically underprepared students is essential. Once these faculty members are hired, they must be provided with the appropriate and timely instructional support services. These faculty members should serve as a resource team

that provides guidance, coaching and training workshops for the university administration, faculty and staff. This resource team should also work with the nation's high school teachers to share insights on students who enroll at the university.

### **PCP Faculty Members' Request for Improved Communication**

#### **Finding**

The PCP's structural format (e.g., course content, delivery methods, duration of the curriculum, academic advising, and program coordination) generated the following faculty responses. Nine of the 16 PCP faculty members (56.3%) who participated in the PCP survey monkey questionnaires stated, "there was a great deal of confusion with administration as to the passing grade for both Mat and Eng 98 and 99. Lecturers believed that students needed a B to move on, but students were being allowed to continue having achieved a C." Faculty members stated, "I was not aware of the Pre-college students specifically unless I received e-mails with the students' names." Another faculty member stated they only knew they had PCP students in their class when "talking to the students or administration." While another voiced "I am not sure. Probably because of their attitude. They were not generally engaged."

#### **Recommendation**

Given the various issues associated with the academically underprepared PCP students, and the challenges in getting and keeping them engaged, the university administration, faculty and staff must present a unified inclusive strategy that seeks to engage and assist students in finding their way, settling in their new surroundings, and cope with their academic endeavors. This inclusive approach needs to be evident from as

early as the registration/open house sessions and sustained present throughout the students' academic career. Consistent dialogue and documented changes and findings among the academic staff, the registrar's office, student services and the program coordinator is necessary in an attempt to provide a one voice. Since PCP students will mingle with other matriculated students, any PCP program modifications should be presented during staff meetings as a further measure in boosting communication and minimizing uncertainty.

### **Request for Academic Advising, Smaller Classes and Teaching Guidance**

#### Finding

The "large classes was the biggest challenge" stated one faculty member, the PCP students were "in transition from high school for the most part and had difficulties in adapting to a university environment where they were expected to exercise initiative and conduct themselves as mature adults." "Proper screening of students is not done. Many of the students are not ready for the college level. Most of them are mentally and socially unprepared." One PCP faculty member stated "The students in PCP are not good students or they would be in the associate programme they need extra support, study skills tutoring to maintain the momentum of the programme." Need a robust counseling system that will help with behavioral issues.

#### Recommendation

Reduce class from the 30 plus students in some cases to a more manageable size of 20 students with the intent of providing PCP students more individualized attention. Introduce peer tutoring in those classes where the PCP students enrolled with the

regularly matriculated students and provide the peer tutor with an incentive for example a small stipend, special mention in college newsletter and graduation. The PCP coordinator and student services need to work closely in monitoring and assisting those students who present as having difficulties adapting to college. Once the appropriate approach in addressing the student's issues is identified, it must be communicated with the respective faculty members, again this serves as a measure to improve communication, and uphold the collaborative strategy in assisting the PCP students.

### **PCP Faculty Members Preparedness**

#### **Finding**

There was high consensus among faculty members regarding ability to teach the PCP students. Six (66.7%) of the nine responding PCP faculty members expressed their competency and comfort in teaching the PCP student. These six faculty members cited the following: "I have taught in high school as well as higher education and I am familiar with the challenges of transition." Another faculty member shared "faculty manuals assisted; however, I feel that some students were not prepared to be in college classes and at the time would have preferred to be elsewhere." "I also have a counseling degree and that made the process easier" According to these six PCP faculty members these factors heightened their teaching ability among the academically underprepared students. However, three of the faculty members (3.33%) did not feel as competent as their six colleagues. These three PCP faculty members expressed their discomfort saying, "I do not have the specialized, special-needs skills that many of the students needed - and neither the time, nor the patience!" Another faculty member stated, "These groups require

your most seasoned teachers -- who are sympathetic to their personal issues outside of the classroom and will exude that compassion. I was not always sure I was the best fit -- not that I am not compassionate, but that I expected them to "get with the programme." Yet another PCP faculty member's perspective was "I am prepared to teach mature university students." One of the PCP faculty members (1.11%) who expressed their discomfort with teaching the PCP students shared "students had too many competing personal issues." Possibly a different structural approach to the PCP of "possibly a more individualized programme that did not depend so much on a time-frame that all must meet and a grade at the end might have done the trick!" Yet another PCP faculty member suggested perhaps "more flexibility in terms of time on the part of both instructors and students would have yielded better results."

#### Recommendation

This university's PCP faculty, other faculty members who teach freshmen must be provided with the appropriate training and guidance when teaching remediation classes or classes where PCP students are enrolled. External assistance can be obtained, or faculty resources from the university's education department can assist in conducting workshops, informal classroom visits, and ongoing mentoring and coaching sessions. I agree with the recommendation presented by the PCP faculty members to "create a group of instructors that will monitor and report on deviations in their subject areas at monthly meetings (shorter periods). In this case teachers could brainstorm and help in preventing dropout and non-completion." Adoption of this collaborative approach among faculty members



and university administration will provide an avenue for faculty to voice their concerns and mitigate potential dropouts.

### **PCP Coordinator**

#### Finding

Several PCP faculty members enunciated the need for a program coordinator in their questionnaire responses. A faculty member stated, “The presence of a precollege coordinator or counselor I feel would have been very helpful, since its inception one was hired on a part-time basis and subsequently left for personal reasons. It could be seen that some inroads were been made at the time.” “Money is always a challenge in the educational environment and so even if there is a continuation of the programme we do not have a coordinator and will not be able to hire one. “No PCP coordinator at the time.” These PCP faculty members thought not having a program coordinator may have influenced the poor PCP students’ performance.

#### Recommendation

The PCP students are struggling with the transition from High School to College. This is compounded with their personal and public knowledge of their not academically prepared to be enrolled as a regular matriculated student. Some of the PCP students enrolled in courses with other PCP students who may resent being in a pre-college program, and the growing pressure is further compounded when they are enrolled in some courses with college matriculated students. Having a program coordinator to listen to their concerns, help them navigate the curricula and select courses. Someone with whom these students can express their frustrations and fears, a dedicated and constant

figurehead who represents their voices to the faculty, administration, student services, and intervenes on their behalf will ensure the articulation of the PCP students' concerns in the appropriate forum. The Deputy Registrar perspectives gleaned for the PCP questionnaire are presented below.

### **Deputy Registrar's Perspectives of PCP**

#### **Finding**

Largely the University Deputy Registrar's comments mirrored those of the PCP faculty members when responding to the PCP's structural format (e.g., course content, delivery methods, duration of the curriculum, academic advising, and program coordination). The Deputy Registrar stated "students' lack of focus and readiness of the students" coupled with "lack of focus in the programme; constant changes, lack of resources," a "more thorough explanation of expectations and more thorough analysis of the needs of the students" posed problems for the PCP students and faculty members.

### **College Entrance Criteria and PCP Non-completion**

#### **Finding**

The Deputy Registrar stated their uncertainty to the indicator and predictor effectiveness of the composite math and English college entrance examination scores of 120-139 for PCP students to matriculate to an associate degree. A response of "not sure" was obtained for question #8. However, the Deputy Registrar's assessment of the situation and feedback to question # 9, which addressed the high non-completion rates among the PCP student cohorts, which ultimately resulted in low matriculation rates to an associate degree, obtained the following response "students did not seem committed to

the programme.” According to the Deputy Registrar not until the following PCP elements are addressed, that is a “more thorough explanation of expectations and more thorough analysis of the needs of the students” would there be any significant change in the status quo of low PCP student matriculation rates to an associate degree.

#### Recommendation

The Deputy Registrar’s perspective on the need for a more thorough understanding of the PCP students’ needs and explanation of those issues that stymied their academic progress captures the essence of why this program evaluation was conducted. Her statement underscores this researcher’s recommendation for this University’s commitment to a program evaluation policy that allows for annual program evaluations in order to promote a more student-centered approach in assisting academically underprepared students persist in college.

#### **PCP Students Feedback**

The College Preparedness Questionnaire (CPQ), Davidson, Beck, and Milligan’s (2009) psychometric tool serves to provide college personnel with an opportunity to:

a) Identify students at-risk of dropping out; b) discover why a given student is likely to discontinue his, or her education, and c) determine the variables that best distinguish undergraduates who will persist from those who will not persist at their institutions. (p.2)

The 31-item CPQ generated quantitative data responses to the PCP’s structural format. A five-point Likert-type scale was used. The PCP student responses ranged from Strongly

Agree – 5, Agree – 4, Neutral- 3, Disagree – 2, Strongly Disagree-1. The following are examples of the areas (e.g., course content, delivery methods, and duration of the curriculum, academic advising, and program coordination). These areas were captured under nine factors namely: Factor 1: Academic Integration, Factor 2: Financial Strain, Factor 3: Institutional Commitment, Factor 4: Academic Motivation, Factor 5: Scholastic Conscientiousness, Factor 6: Degree Commitment, Factor 7: Social Integration, Factor 8: Academic Efficacy, and Factor 9: Academic Advising.

### **Factor 1 Academic Integration**

#### Finding

The PCP students' feedback suggested they did not always understand faculty members' teaching and they felt that the faculty members were not always concerned about their intellectual growth. Students' response to item #3 regarding their ability to understand their instructor's thinking when lecturing showed student # 4 (1.11%) strongly agreed; student # 8 (1.11%) agreed; students # 3 and 5 (22.2%) were neutral; students #2 and 9 (22.2%) disagreed and students # 1, 6 and 7 (33.3%) chose not to respond to this item.

#### Recommendation

Given the diverse student population in some classes, faculty members should be ever mindful and seek feedback from students. In an attempt to improve PCP students' understanding the faculty member may consider having a peer-tutor to assist those students in need of additional assistance. Periodically the faculty member can email or meet after class with the PCP students to get a deeper appreciation of their progress.

Having a PCP coordinator would assist as the faculty member can liaise with this person to get a grasp on students' perspectives of the course and any issues.

### **Factor 2: Financial Strain**

#### Finding

Factor 2 of the CPQ sought to address the financial strain if any experienced by the PCP students. The data suggested that while some students may have experienced some financial stress in having to handle college tuition and purchasing course books and essential school supplies students #9 and 2 (22.22%) strongly agreed and student # 5 (1.11%) agreed, students # 7, 3 and 8 (33.3%) disagreed and student # 5 strongly disagreed. Of note student # 2 was a single parent with children and working 1-10 hours per week. Students #1, 4, 6 (33.3%) did not respond to both questions in this section.

#### Recommendation

Once the standard of the PCP is elevated through the procurement of proper institutional support systems, and empirical data showing periodic program evaluations, then the nation's government and private companies may demonstrate a stronger allegiance and scholarship support for the PCP students. It is difficult for students to be going to school full-time and having, having a family and needing to work. Perhaps the university can consider some part-time jobs and perhaps a nursery to assist. Some colleges have introduced a food bank where students on a weekly basis can purchase food items at a reduced cost. This Caribbean university may consider this food bank as an option.

**Factor 3: Institutional Commitment**

## Finding

The data suggested that the PCP students believed attaining an associate degree was well within their ability. Student # 9 responded with “I did the pre-college program and I had no regret in doing the program - why? because it gave me background information on what I did back in high school, it refreshed my mind and allow me to remember what I did.” Other students reported their ability to earn a degree received the following responses: students # 2 and 5 (22.22%) strongly agreed, students #7 and 8 (22.22%) agreed and student #3 strongly disagreed. Four students #1, 4, 6, 9 (44.44%) did not respond. Item # 11 actually scored the lowest non-response rate from the PCP students who participated in this study.

## Recommendation

While the data suggested the PCP students, who participated in the study believed they were capable of matriculating and attaining an associate degree, this was not the case for the majority of the PCP students. These findings substantiate the need for continued program evaluation to garner other students’ perspectives of the PCP’s benefits.

**Factor 4: Academic Motivation**

## Finding

This section asked the PCP students to respond to three questions that targeted their study habits and enjoyment in preparing their assignments. Only two of the eight students found the PCP courses enjoyable, one student highly disagreed that it was

enjoyable and there was a 55.6% no response rate for three of the questions in this section.

#### Recommendation

Faculty members and university administration need to incorporate and examine the success of varied teaching approaches as they attempt to engage students

### **Factor 5: Scholastic Conscientiousness**

#### Finding

The PCP students' class participation and mannerisms as per timeliness in assignment submission was addressed in this section. Three questions in this section receive a high non-response rating ranging from 66.7 % to 77.8%. Those students who responded, however, self-reported timely assignment submissions, and regular attendance at class at college events.

#### Recommendation

The study's PCP students' low response rate to Factor 5's Scholastic Conscientiousness group was insufficient to draw any conclusions. The university administration will therefore need to administer the CPQ to the current PCP cohort to gather the current PCP students' perspectives on their timeliness in submitting assignments, promptness in arriving to class on time, participation in school-related activities, and frequency of class attendance.

**Factor 6: Degree Commitment**

## Finding

The PCP students' perspective towards the lack of family support could have been a contributing factor towards the PCP students' inability to matriculate to an associate degree. Interestingly in spite of reporting their perceived lack of family support, student # 9 self-reported being enrolled in an associate degree, while student # 3 who indicated strongly agreeing with their family supporting them, self-reported not being enrolled in any university programs. Six PCP students did not respond to item #18, that is students # 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8, however student # 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7 self-reported being enrolled in an associate degree.

## Recommendation

Some PCP students self-reported to not having a parent or guardian attend college. Recognizing there could be first generation college goers, the faculty members, academic advisors, and student services should make a concerted effort to encourage and support this group of students. Faculty members can become role models.

**Factor 7: Social Integration**

## Finding

The PCP students' ability to connect with students, faculty members and the Caribbean university staff was examined. Students' responses varied highly with this cluster of questions (items 21-23) which had students responding to three items. Students' perspectives regarding their sense of connectedness with faculty, other students and staff were reported with the following: student # 5 (1.11%) strongly agreed there was



a connection, student # 4 (1.11%) gave a neutral response while student # 3 (1.11%) disagreed there was a connection with the faculty, students and staff. Students # 1,3,4,6,7,8 (66.7%) did not respond. Responding to item # 23 which focused on students perspectives on having much in common with other students at the Caribbean university prompted the following responses: Student # 7 (1.11%) agreed; students # 3,5,8 (33.3%) were neutral and students #1,2,4,6,9 (55.6%) did not respond.

The analysis of Factor 7 Social Integration among this group of PCP student regarding their ability to feel connected to the PCP faculty, staff and students the data suggest a cause for concern. Five students responded gave a neutral answer to the three questions in this cluster of items, and one student disagreed. Following on from students' perspectives of their ability to connect with the Caribbean university's faculty, students and staff, the CPQ asked the PCP students to provide their insights into feelings regarding the academic workload. Six students responding with either a neutral or disagree should be investigated.

#### Recommendation

Precollege programs delivered by knowledgeable and sensitive staff can create an engaging environment for students. The data showed there were first-generation PCP college students, and this could have accounted for another layer of obstacle. Faculty members need to be sensitive to this information and can serve as role models and mentors who support the PCP students' aspirations. During the academic advising sessions (with the students' consent) the parents/guardian can be invited.

**Factor 8: Academic Efficacy**

## Finding

The nine PCP students who participated in this section of the CPQ did not indicate being overwhelmed with the academic workload. Student #5 (1.11%) gave a neutral response while the other eight (88.9%) students did not respond. While student #9 did not give a response to this item, she commented in the open comment section and stated “I did not fail any classes and did not have to retake just because of the experience of the precollege program bringing back what I learned (refreshing my memory). I can only speak for myself this program I think would really help most students.”

## Recommendation

The University administration will need to have the current PCP students respond to the CPQ’s Factor 9 Academic Efficacy questions in an attempt to gain a better appreciation of students’ perspectives of the Pre-college program and thoughts regarding their ability to attain the 2.0 GPA necessary to matriculate to an associate degree.

**Factor 9: Academic Advising**

## Finding

While four students (44.4%) reported that they agreed with the overall academic advising provided, four students (44.4%) also cited either being neutral or disagreeing with the services provided. Noteworthy is the high non-response rate of 77.8% for items # 1 and 2 in this section that asked about PCP students’ satisfaction with the academic advising and their ability to get answers to their academic questions. The PCP students’ responses ties back to some faculty members’ perspectives, which indicated they were

unaware, how to advise the PCP students. Independent of PCP student #1, who refrained from answering all the questions in the CPQ survey monkey questionnaire for sections 1-9, the eight 2010 – 2015 PCP students who responded gave low ratings to the cluster of Academic Advising question items #28-31. Students #3 and 5 (22.2%) gave a neutral response to item #28 when asked on the ease to acquire feedback to questions related to their education at the Caribbean college. Seven students, numbers # 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 (77.8%) did not respond to this item. Little difference in students responding was noted for item # 29 which sought to learn the PCP students' satisfaction with the academic advising. Student # 2 (1.11%) agreed that they were satisfied, while student # 5 (1.11%) gave a neutral response and students # 1,3,4,6,7,8,9 (77.8%) did not respond. No difference in the responding pattern for CPQ items #s 30 and 31of was noted. Students # 3 and 9 (22.2%) agreed that important information such as academic rules were communicated while PCP student # 5 (1.11%) gave a neutral response and students # 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 did not respond to item #30. Item #31 asked the PCP students to comment on their satisfaction with having their academically diverse needs from the majority of the other students were met. Students # 7 and 8 (22.2%) agreed their needs were met with students #s 3 and 5 (22.2%) gave a neutral response and students # 1, 2, 4, 6, 9 (55.6%) did not respond.

An initial analysis of the PCP students' responses to Factor 9 of the CPQ shows that the Caribbean university should address the academic advising practices offered to the PCP students. While four students reported that they agreed with the overall academic advising provided, four (44.4%) students also cited either being neutral or disagreeing

with the services provided. Noteworthy is the high non-response rate of 77.8% for items #1 and 2 in this section that asked about PCP students' satisfaction with the academic advising and being able to get answers to their academic questions.

#### Recommendation

Sustained and timely academic advising, close monitoring and documenting of students' progress and changes in students' attitude towards teachers, students, the institution, the program is essential. Based on the issues presented by the PCP students during the academic advising sessions, the appropriate support from a student services representative or the faculty member must be incorporated into the academic advising regime.

#### **Executive Report Conclusion**

The intention of this participant-oriented program evaluation was to produce a summative report of stakeholders' perspectives towards the effectiveness of the Pre-college program in providing support and assisting academically underprepared high school graduates seeking to matriculate to higher education studies. The PCP's goal was to increase the number of students progressing to an associate degree at the local university. The immediate goal of the PCP was to strengthen the foundation of the high school graduates who did not successfully meet the university entrance criteria, to serve as the bridge to students' attainment of a higher education and in the process steer them on a lifelong learning career path allowing them to become socio-economically independent. For the majority of the PCP students this was their experience. Having gathered and documented the PCP students, PCP faculty members and the Deputy

Registrar perspectives towards the PCP and presented the recommendations, this University administration for the first time has an opportunity to view the PCP through the stakeholders' lenses.

The PCP was created to address college access inequities at the Caribbean university, and therefore may not be the panacea for all the PCP students' issues. The PCP serves as an incubator and provides an avenue of second chances to students who may have had their college opportunity diminished. When the unmet academic needs of pre-college students are understood, and met through a collaborative institutional effort this strengthens the program's effectiveness. This executive report should serve as a starting point for the current PCP program review and revision. The new insights gained from this program evaluation should assist the university administrators in strengthening the PCP's effectiveness and untimely students' academic output.

## Appendix B: Letter of Permission

**Subject :** RE: Request to use the Comprehensive Model of Influences on Student Learning and Persistence  
**Date :** Tue, Dec 11, 2012 05:29 PM CST  
**From :** ["Reason, Robert D \[SOE\]" <rreason@iastate.edu>](mailto:rreason@iastate.edu)  
**To :** [Deborah Chambers <deborah.chambers2@waldenu.edu>](mailto:deborah.chambers2@waldenu.edu)  
**CC :** [Reason, Robert D \[EL PS\] \(rreason@iastate.edu\) <rreason@iastate.edu>](mailto:rreason@iastate.edu)

Deborah,

Thanks for asking... I don't think this will be a problem. You can cite the original (2005) ASHE paper, which should be available at Penn State's website (type in "Parsing Project" in the search engine and it should pop right up).

Best of luck with your research,

Bob

## Appendix C: College Persistence Questionnaire Version 3 (Short Form)

"Adapted from Davidson, Beck, and Milligan, 2009"

## Student Information Form

**Please respond to the following questions.****Gender:** Female \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Nationality\_\_\_\_\_  
High School\_\_\_\_\_  
Year Graduated**Kindly select the appropriate response to the following questions.****Approximately how many hours per week do you work on, or off campus?**

0 hrs    1-10 hrs    11-20 hrs    21-30 hrs    More than 30 hrs

**What is your native language?**

English / Spanish / Tagalog / Other \_\_\_\_\_

**What best describes your current situation?**

Married-No Children / Married-With Children / Single-No Children / Single-With Children

**What was the highest level of education completed by your mother?**8 or fewer years of formal education / Some high school but did not graduate /  
Graduated from high school or received G.E.D. / Some college but did not receive a 4-  
year (Bachelor's) degree / Graduated with Bachelor's degree / Obtained Master's Degree /  
Obtained Doctoral degree / Do not know level of education completed by mother.

**What was the highest level of education completed by your father?**

8 or fewer years of formal education / Some high school but did not graduate /  
 Graduated from high school or received G.E.D. / Some college but did not receive a 4-  
 year (Bachelor's) degree / Graduated with Bachelor's degree / Obtained Master's Degree /  
 Obtained Doctoral degree / Do not know level of education completed by father.

**In which Pre-College Program were you enrolled?**

During 2010-2011 / During 2011-2012 / During 2012-2013 / During 2013-2014

**What is your current student enrollment status?**

Repeating Pre-college courses Yes / No  
 Enrolled in an Associate Degree Yes / No  
 Not enrolled in any programs at the university Yes / No

**Which one of the goals listed below best describes what you wanted to accomplish at this university?**

Complete Math 98 and 99 and English 98 and 99 Yes / No  
 Complete 1<sup>st</sup> semester of the Pre-college program Yes / No  
 Complete 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semesters of the Pre-college program Yes / No  
 Complete the Pre-college program and enroll in an associate degree at this university  
 Yes / No  
 Complete the Pre-college program and transfer to another university Yes / No  
 Earn an associate degree at this university Yes / No  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**If you received financial aid, please check the type of aid that applied to you. You may circle more than one.**

On-campus work / Government Scholarship / Private Company Scholarship/ Loan /  
 I received no financial aid / Other \_\_\_\_\_



**Which of the following were important for you in deciding to attend this university?**

**You may select more than one.**

It is close to home / Friends attend here / The University's reputation / It has the  
academic program I want / Family or relatives attended here / Other

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**College Persistence Questionnaire**  
**Student Experience Form, Version 3.0 (Short Form)**

Instructions: Students differ a great deal from one another in how they feel about their college experiences. This questionnaire asks you about your reactions to many aspects of your life here at this college. Please consider each of the questions carefully, and place an “x” for the answer that best represents your thoughts. There are no "right or wrong" answers, so mark your real impressions. There are only 31 questions, and it is very important that you answer all of them. This should take you about 30 minutes. Your answers will be treated as confidential information.

**Please indicate your response by putting an ‘X’ in the appropriate box to respond to the following items. Attempting all questions will help me better understand your college experience.**

Factor 1	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Academic Integration	5	4	3	2	1	0
1. During the first class session, many instructors presented students with a course overview which was followed.						
2. In general, I was satisfied with the quality of instruction received.						
3. I understood the thinking of my instructors when they lectured or asked questions in class.						
4. I believe the faculty was concerned about my intellectual growth.						
5. The instructors encouraged me and made me feel like I could succeed in the program.						
6. Feedback on assignments from the faculty was useful and helped me figure out how to improve.						

<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Financial Strain</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
7. It was difficult for me and my family to handle college tuition costs.						
8. It was a financial strain for me/parents to purchase course text books and essential supplies.						

<b>Factor 3</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Institutional Commitment</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
9. I was confident that this was the right university for me.						
10. I gave much thought to stopping my university education and transferring to another college, going to work, or leaving for other reasons.						
11. I believe I could earn a degree from this university.						

<b>Factor 4</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Academic Motivation</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
12. I often encountered course assignments that were actually enjoyable.						
13. Most of my studying was done within 24 hours of a test.						
14. I always proofread my assignments before submitting them.						

<b>Factor 5</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Scholastic Conscientiousness</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
15. I often missed class for reasons other than illness, or participation in school-related activities.						
16. I often arrived late for classes, meetings, and other college events.						
17. I often turned in assignments past the due date.						

<b>Factor 6</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Degree Commitment</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
18. My family was supportive of my pursuit of a college degree.						
19. My intention was strong to persist and obtain a degree, here or elsewhere.						
20. When I considered the benefits of having a college degree and the time, effort, and costs of earning it, the benefits outweigh the costs.						

<b>Factor 7</b> <b>Social Integration</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b> <b>5</b>	<b>Agree</b> <b>4</b>	<b>Neutral</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Disagree</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b> <b>0</b>
<b>21. My sense of connectedness with faculty, students, and staff was strong.</b>						
<b>22. I was satisfied with my overall campus social life, that is college organizations, and extracurricular activities.</b>						
<b>23. I had much in common with students in this college.</b>						

<b>Factor 8</b> <b>Academic Efficacy</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b> <b>5</b>	<b>Agree</b> <b>4</b>	<b>Neutral</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Disagree</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b> <b>0</b>
<b>24. I felt overwhelmed by the academic workload</b>						
<b>25. I experienced much pressure when trying to meet assignment deadlines.</b>						
<b>26. My study techniques were effective.</b>						
<b>27. I believed that I could attain a 2.0 GPA.</b>						

<b>Factor 9 Academic Advising</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 5</b>	<b>Agree 4</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree 1</b>	<b>Not Applicable 0</b>
<b>28. It was easy to get answers to my questions about things related to my education here.</b>						
<b>29. I was satisfied with the academic advising received.</b>						
<b>30. Important information was communicated to students such as academic rules.</b>						
<b>31. If I had needs that were different from the majority of the other students this university met those needs.</b>						

**Comments**

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**Thank you kindly for taking the time to participate in this questionnaire! If you are interested in participating in the interview kindly email me at [Deborah.Chambers2@waldenu.edu](mailto:Deborah.Chambers2@waldenu.edu)**

## Appendix D: Letters of Permission from CPQ Designers

**Subject : RE: College Persistence Questionnaire- Version 1**


**Date :** Tue, Oct 30, 2012 03:11 PM CDT

**From :** [Bill Davidson <bill.davidson@angelo.edu>](mailto:bill.davidson@angelo.edu)

**To :** [Deborah Chambers <deborah.chambers2@waldenu.edu>](mailto:deborah.chambers2@waldenu.edu)

**Attachment :**  [image001.gif](#)



 [CPQ V-3 Short.docx](#)



Hi Deborah,

I am attaching the short version of the CPQ that may interest you. We have an article under editorial review that reports the results of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses of the items/scales.

I hope this helps.

Best wishes,  
Bill



Member, Texas Tech University System

**William B. Davidson, Ph.D.**

*Professor and Department Head*

*Department of Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work*

Angelo State University

ASU Station #10907

San Angelo, TX 76909-10907

Phone: (325) 486-6118 Fax: (325) 942-2290

[bill.davidson@angelo.edu](mailto:bill.davidson@angelo.edu)

### Appendix E: PCP Student Interview Protocol

1. How would you describe your overall college experience at this university?
2. Describe your experience in the PCP?

Follow up questions: What were your most challenging experiences?

Describe one thing that a faculty member, staff member, or an administrator said, or did that positively impacted your decision to persist in the PCP?

3. Reflect on a course which you enjoyed taking and elaborate on the reasons why?
4. How would you describe those factors which contributed to you not attending a particular course?
5. How would you describe your interactions with faculty?

Follow up questions: What was your interaction with faculty:

Within the classroom?

Outside the classroom?

What may have accounted for these types of interactions?

6. How would you describe your interactions with staff?
7. How would you describe your interactions with the administration?
8. Were you ever referred to the registrar? – Elaborate on this meeting.
9. Were you ever referred to the student services director? - Elaborate.
10. In your opinion what were the strengths of your academic advisement sessions?
11. What changes would you make to the academic advisement sessions?
12. How would you describe the PCPs orientation session? What would you have changed?



13. How would you describe your level of preparation for your classes?

Follow up question: What makes you say this?

What were your views on the class size?

14. What would you change in the PCP?

Follow up question: Elaborate on how this change might assist the PCP students' in their program completion and enrolling in a associate degree?

## Appendix F: Faculty Questionnaire Items

Instructions: Faculty members' teaching experiences of students enrolled in the Pre-college program (PCP), and their perceptions of their experiences may differ. This questionnaire seeks your opinion on many facets of the PCP namely its structure, course content, duration, institutional support services, program coordination, and the students. Please consider each question carefully, and share your perspectives/experiences. There are only 10 questions, and it is very important that you answer all of them. The questionnaire should take you about 30 minutes. Your answers will be treated as confidential information.

Select your status: Professor / Associate Professor / Assistant Professor/ Senior Lecturer/  
Lecturer.

Number of years teaching in your subject area \_\_\_\_\_ years.

Number of years employed at this institution? \_\_\_\_\_ years.

PCP taught course(s) and their code (s):

\_\_\_\_\_/ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_/ \_\_\_\_\_

Year and semester in which you taught the PCP courses. Kindly circle where applicable.

2010 to 2011 – Semester 1 or Semester 2 or Summer

2011 to 2012 – Semester 1 or Semester 2 or Summer

2012 to 2013 – Semester 1 or Semester 2 or Summer

2013 to 2014 – Semester 1 or Semester 2 or Summer

Approximate number of PCP students in your class in any semester? \_\_\_\_\_

How were you aware of the PCP students in your class?

\_\_\_\_\_

## **1. The overview and mission of the Pre-college program (PCP)**

### **Overview of Pre-College Programme**

The Pre-College programme at this University is about challenge, discovery, and new friends. The programme aims to prepare talented students and young adults to function and be successful in a college environment.

The Pre-College Matriculation Programme is designed to provide personal and professional development to college bound students in an effort to overcome barriers, which impede their pursuit of higher education and persistence. Prospective students normally have three options:

A student interested in pursuing an associate degree programme, with the appropriate entry requirements, is accepted directly into the degree programme.

A student who does not meet matriculation criteria for entry to the associate degree programme may be accepted to a Certificate programme.

The student remains unclassified and may be advised to register in the Continuing Education Department in an attempt to raise their entry requirements.

The Pre-College Matriculation Programme at this university targets the students' in-group and seeks to regularize their registration, and provide an education designed to have them matriculate to the Associate Degree programmes. The Pre-College Programme is designed to enhance the student's creative skills, introduce them to courses in a particular field of interest thereby allowing them to experience the challenges, and triumphs that exist at this dynamic college environment. Courses are taught by the same faculty who teach in the University's associate and undergraduate degree programmes. Students may receive a maximum of twelve (12) college credits for the successful completion of the one-year programme.

### **Programme Objectives**

The programme will provide college-bound students from the local community with academic counseling and support, career guidance, personal development seminars, instruction in academic areas, and college preparation workshops to:

1. Strengthen students' skills in math, science, history, grammar, writing, and computers, or other selected areas;
2. Expose students to careers in business, technology, and science;
3. Promote and increase student interest in reading in content areas;
4. Strengthen interpersonal skills;
5. Provide classroom instruction in academic areas and introduce students to skill-building in mathematics, writing, and other subjects;
6. Encourage interaction with college faculty and students.

Upon successful completion the programme will provide students with the requisite matriculation requirements for entry to an associate degree programme offered at this University (Pre-College Matriculation Programme fall 2010, p.2-3).

1. From your perspective in which areas has the PCP successfully attained its objectives?

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2. As a faculty member who taught PCP students, describe your most challenging experience.

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3. Describe the PCPs' strengths.

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4. Describe the PCPs' shortcomings.

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5. What recommendations would you make to address these shortcomings?

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6. High school graduates seeking the PCP matriculation during the years 2010 to 2012 needed a composite math and English score of 120-139. What is your opinion of the PCP students' matriculation criteria as they relate to the PCP students' academic performance?

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7. Upon reflection, did you feel you were prepared or equipped to teach the PCP students? What helped or influenced your ability?

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8. What institutional support or information may have assisted in your interaction with the PCP students and enhanced your course delivery?

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9. High levels of PCP students' non-completion program rates were reported for the 2010 to 2012 cohorts and this resulted in low associate degree matriculation numbers. What are your perspectives of those factors which influenced the PCP students' low success rates?

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10. What recommendations would you suggest to the university's administration in an attempt to enhance the PCP's effectiveness and improve the PCP students' matriculation rates to an associate degree?

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**Thank you kindly for your support in completing this questionnaire!**

## Appendix G: Registrar's Questionnaire

Instructions: As registrar, you have a holistic picture of students' performance with regard to their entrance examination scores, their semester results, and attainment of the University's stipulated program matriculation requirements. You would have coordinated the university's entrance examination for the 2011 to 2012 student intake and had knowledge of these entrance examination results. You would have received semester results from faculty, and may have interacted with faculty, and students throughout the academic year.

It is with this background that the following questions on the Pre-college program (PCP) are formulated. This questionnaire seeks your opinions on several aspects of the PCP, for example, its structure, course content, duration, institutional support services, and the students. Please consider each question carefully, and share your perspectives, or experiences. There are only eight questions, and it is very important that you answer all of them. This process should take you about 30 minutes. Your answers will be treated as confidential information.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years employed at this institution? \_\_\_\_\_ years.

### **1. The overview and mission of the Pre-college program (PCP)**

#### **Overview of Pre-College Programme**

The Pre-College programme at this University is about challenge, discovery, and new friends. The programme aims to prepare talented students and young adults to function and be successful in a college environment.

The Pre-College Matriculation Programme is designed to provide personal and professional development to college bound students in an effort to overcome barriers, which impede their pursuit of higher education and persistence. Prospective students normally have three options:

A student interested in pursuing an associate degree programme, with the appropriate entry requirements, is accepted directly into the degree programme.

A student who does not meet matriculation criteria for entry to the associate degree programme may be accepted to a Certificate programme.

Student remains unclassified and may be advised to register in the Continuing Education Department in an attempt to raise their entry requirements.

The Pre-College Matriculation Programme at this university seeks to regularize the students' registration and provide an education designed to have them matriculate to the Associate Degree programmes. The Pre-College Programme is designed to enhance the student's creative skills, introduce them to courses in a particular field of interest thereby allowing them to experience the challenges and triumphs that exist at this dynamic college environment. Courses are taught by the same faculty who teach in the University's associate and undergraduate degree programmes. Students may receive a maximum of twelve (12) college credits for the successful completion of the one-year programme.

### **Programme Objectives**

The programme will provide college-bound students from the local community with academic counseling, and support, career guidance, personal development seminars, instruction in academic areas, and college preparation workshops to:

1. Strengthen students' skills in math, science, history, grammar, writing, and computers, or other selected areas;
2. Expose students to careers in business, technology, and science;
3. Promote and increase students' interest in reading in content areas;
4. Strengthen interpersonal skills;
5. Provide classroom instruction in academic areas and introduce students to skill-building in mathematics, writing and other subjects;
6. Encourage interaction with college faculty and students.

Upon successful completion, the programme will provide students with the requisite matriculation requirements for entry to an associate degree programme offered at this University (Pre-College Matriculation Programme fall 2010, p.2-3).

1. In your opinion which of the PCPs' objectives were successfully attained?

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2. What may have influenced the students' attainment of all the PCPs' objectives?

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3. What were the PCPs' students' biggest challenges, and how did these challenges influence the PCP students' program completion?

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4. How is the PCP assisting the PCP students?

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5. What is, or are the PCP's weakness(es)?

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6. High school graduates seeking matriculation during 2010 to 2012 required a composite math and English score of 120-139 to matriculate to the PCP. Explain the PCP students' matriculation criteria and its ability to predict student success?

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7. High non-completion program rates were reported for the 2010 to 2012 PCP student cohorts which resulted in low associate degree matriculation numbers. What are your assessments of those factors which influenced the PCP students' low completion, and matriculation rates?

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8. What recommendations, if any, would you suggest to enhance the PCP's effectiveness and improve the PCP students' matriculation rates?

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**Thank you kindly for participating in this questionnaire!**

## Appendix H: Data Use Agreement

This Data Use Agreement (“Agreement”), effective as of February 7, 2013 (“Effective Date”), is entered into by and between Deborah Ann Chambers (“Data Recipient”) and The Caribbean University (“Data Provider”). The purpose of this Agreement is to provide Data Recipient with access to a Limited Data Set (“LDS”) for use in research in accord with the HIPAA and FERPA Regulations.

1. Definitions. Unless otherwise specified in this Agreement, all capitalized terms used in this Agreement not otherwise defined have the meaning established for purposes of the “HIPAA Regulations” codified at Title 45 parts 160 through 164 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations, as amended from time to time.
2. Preparation of the LDS. Data Provider shall prepare and furnish to Data Recipient a LDS in accord with any applicable HIPAA or FERPA Regulations.
3. Data Fields in the LDS. No direct identifiers such as names may be included in the Limited Data Set (LDS). In preparing the LDS, Data Provider shall include the **data fields specified as follows**, which are the minimum necessary to accomplish the research (list all data to be provided): 1. The Caribbean University’s entrance examination scores for the fall 2010 to fall 2014 pre-college student intakes. 2. The number of students from the 2010 to 2014 Pre-college program who attained matriculation status to an associate degree. 3. The number of Pre-college students from the 2010 to 2014 program cohorts who are still enrolled in the Pre-college program.
4. Responsibilities of Data Recipient. Data Recipient agrees to:
  - a. Use or disclose the LDS only as permitted by this Agreement or as required by law;
  - b. Use appropriate safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the LDS other than as permitted by this Agreement or required by law;
  - c. Report to Data Provider any use or disclosure of the LDS of which it becomes aware that is not permitted by this Agreement or required by law;
  - d. Require any of its subcontractors or agents that receive or have access to the LDS to agree to the same restrictions and conditions on the use and/or disclosure of the LDS that apply to Data Recipient under this Agreement; and
  - e. Not use the information in the LDS to identify or contact the individuals who are data subjects.

5. Permitted Uses and Disclosures of the LDS. Data Recipient may use and/or disclose the LDS for its Research activities only.
6. Term and Termination.
  - a. Term. The term of this Agreement shall commence as of the Effective Date and shall continue for so long as Data Recipient retains the LDS, unless sooner terminated as set forth in this Agreement.
  - b. Termination by Data Recipient. Data Recipient may terminate this agreement at any time by notifying the Data Provider and returning or destroying the LDS.
  - c. Termination by Data Provider. Data Provider may terminate this agreement at any time by providing thirty (30) days prior written notice to Data Recipient.
  - d. For Breach. Data Provider shall provide written notice to Data Recipient within ten (10) days of any determination that Data Recipient has breached a material term of this Agreement. Data Provider shall afford Data Recipient an opportunity to cure said alleged material breach upon mutually agreeable terms. Failure to agree on mutually agreeable terms for cure within thirty (30) days shall be grounds for the immediate termination of this Agreement by Data Provider.
  - e. Effect of Termination. Sections 1, 4, 5, 6(e) and 7 of this Agreement shall survive any termination of this Agreement under subsections c or d.
7. Miscellaneous.
  - a. Change in Law. The parties agree to negotiate in good faith to amend this Agreement to comport with changes in federal law that materially alter either or both parties' obligations under this Agreement. Provided however, that if the parties are unable to agree to mutually acceptable amendment(s) by the compliance date of the change in applicable law or regulations, either Party may terminate this Agreement as provided in section 6.
  - b. Construction of Terms. The terms of this Agreement shall be construed to give effect to applicable federal interpretative guidance regarding the HIPAA Regulations.
  - c. No Third Party Beneficiaries. Nothing in this Agreement shall confer upon any person other than the parties and their respective successors or assigns, any rights, remedies, obligations, or liabilities whatsoever.

- d. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.
- e. Headings. The headings and other captions in this Agreement are for convenience and reference only and shall not be used in interpreting, construing or enforcing any of the provisions of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each of the undersigned has caused this Agreement to be duly executed in its name and on its behalf.

**DATA PROVIDER**

**DATA RECIPIENT**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: Deborah Ann Chambers

Print Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Title: Walden University

\_\_\_\_\_ Doctoral Student

## Appendix I: PCP students' responses to CPQ

**Student Experience Form, Version 3.0 (Short Form)**

## Data analysis Factor 1 Academic Integration

<b>Factor 1</b> <b>Academic Integration</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b> <b>5</b>	<b>Agree</b> <b>4</b>	<b>Neutral</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Disagree</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b> <b>1</b>	<b>No Response</b> <b>0</b>
1. During the first class session, many instructors presented students with a course overview which was followed.	Stds. 4,5 (22.22%)	Stds. 2, 3,7,8 (44.44%)		Std 9 (11.11%)		Stds. 1,6 (22.22%)
2. In general, I was satisfied with the quality of instruction received.	Stds. 9 (11.11%)	Stds. 3,4,5 (33.33%)	Stds. 2 (11.11%)			Stds. 1,7,6,8 (44.44%)
3. I understood the thinking of my instructors when they lectured or asked questions in class.	Stds. 4 (11.11%)	Stds. 8 (11.11%)	Stds. 3, 5 (22.22%)	Stds. 2, 9 (22.22%)		Stds. 1,6,7 (33.33%)
4. I believe the faculty was concerned about my intellectual growth.		Stds. 8 (11.11%)	Stds. 3,5 (22.22%)	Stds. 2,4,9 (33.33%)		Stds. 1,6,7 (33.33%)
5. The instructors encouraged me and made me feel like I could succeed in the program.	Stds. 9 (11.11%)	Stds. 3,7,8 (33.33%)		Stds. 2,5 (22.22%)	Stds. 4 (11.11%)	Stds. 1,6 (22.22%)
6. Feedback on assignments from the faculty was useful and helped me figure out how to improve.		Stds. 5,8 (22.22%)	Stds. 3 (11.11%)	Stds. 2,4,9 (33.33%)		Stds. 1,6,7 (33.33%)
Total # students responding	3	6	3	4	1	

## Data analysis Factor 2 Financial Strain

<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Response</b>
<b>Financial Strain</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
7. It was difficult for me and my family to handle college tuition costs.	Stds. 9 (11.11%)			Stds. 7 (11.11%)	Stds. 5 (11.11%)	Stds. 1,2,3,4,6,8 (66.7%)
8. It was a financial strain for me/parents to purchase course text books and essential supplies.	Stds. 2 (11.11%)	Stds. 5 (11.11%)		Stds. 3,8 (22.22%)		Stds. 1,4,6,7,9 (55.6%)
Total # students responding	2	1	0	3	1	

## Data analysis Factor 3 Institutional Commitment

<b>Factor 3</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Response</b>
<b>Institutional Commitment</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
9. I was confident that this was the right university for me.		Stds. 9 (11.11%)			Stds. 3,5 (22.22%)	Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,8 (66.7%)
10. I gave much thought to stopping my university education and transferring to another college, going to work, or leaving for other reasons.	Stds. 1 (11.11%)		Stds. 5,8 (22.22%)			Stds. 2,4,6,7,9 (55.6%)
11. I believe I could earn a degree from this university.	Stds. 2,5 (22.22%)	Stds. 7,8 (22.22%)			Stds. 3 (11.11%)	Stds. 1,4,6,9 (44.44%)
Total # students responding	3	3	2	0	2	

## Data analysis Factor 4 Academic Motivation

<b>Factor 4</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Response</b>
<b>Academic Motivation</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
12. I often encountered course assignments that were actually enjoyable.		Stds. 5,7 (22.22%)			Stds. 9 (11.1%)	Stds. 1,2,3,4,6,8 (66.7%)
13. Most of my studying was done within 24 hours of a test.			Stds. 5 (11.1%)			Stds. 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9 (88.9%)
14. I always proofread my assignments before submitting them.	Stds. 2 (11.1%)	Stds. 3,8 (22.2%)			Stds. 5 (11.1%)	Stds. 1,4,6,7,9 (55.6%)
Total # students responding	2	4	1	0	2	

## Data analysis Factor 5 Scholastic Conscientiousness

<b>Factor 5</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Response</b>
<b>Scholastic Conscientiousness</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
15. I often missed class for reasons other than illness, or participation in school-related activities.		Stds. 9 (11.1%)	Stds. 5 (11.1%)	Stds. 7 (11.1%)		Stds. 1,2,3,4,6,8 (66.7%)
16. I often arrived late for classes, meetings, and other college events.			Stds. 3 (11.1%)	Stds. 2 (11.1%)	Stds. 5 (11.1%)	Stds. 1,4,6,7,8,9 (66.7%)
17. I often turned in assignments past the due date.				Stds. 3,8 (22.2%)		Stds. 1,2,4,5,6,7,9 (77.8%)
Total # students responding	0	1	2	4	1	

## Data Analysis Factor 6: Degree Commitment

<b>Factor 6 Degree Commitment</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 5</b>	<b>Agree 4</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree 1</b>	<b>No Response 0</b>
18. My family was supportive of my pursuit of a college degree.	Stds. 3 (11.1%)	Stds. 7 (11.1%)			Stds. 9 (11.1%)	Stds. 1,2,4,5,6,8 (66.7%)
19. My intention was strong to persist and obtain a degree, here or elsewhere.	Stds. 2,5 (22.2%)	Stds. 3 (11.1%)				Stds. 1,4,6,7,8,9 (66.7%)
20. When I considered the benefits of having a college degree and the time, effort, and costs of earning it, the benefits outweigh the costs.		Stds. 5,8 (22.2%)	Stds. 3 (11.1%)			Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,9 (66.7%)
Total # students responding	3	4	1	0	1	



## Data Analysis Factor 7: Social Integration

<b>Factor 7</b> <b>Social Integration</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b> <b>5</b>	<b>Agree</b> <b>4</b>	<b>Neutral</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Disagree</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b> <b>1</b>	<b>No Response</b> <b>0</b>
21. My sense of connectedness with faculty, students, and staff was strong.	Stds. 5 (11.1%)		Stds. 4 (11.1%)	Stds. 3 (11.1%)		Stds. 1,2,6,7,8,9 (66.7%)
22. I was satisfied with my overall campus social life, that is college organizations, and extracurricular activities.	Stds. 2 (11.1%)	Stds. 5 (11.1%)	Stds. 9 (11.1%)			Stds. 1,3,4,6,7,8 (66.7%)
23. I had much in common with students in this college.		Stds. 7 (11.1%)	Stds. 3,5,8 (33.3%)			Stds. 1,2,4,6,9 (55.6%)
Total # students responding	2	2	5	1	0	

## Data Analysis Factor 8: Academic Efficacy

<b>Factor 8 Academic Efficacy</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 5</b>	<b>Agree 4</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree 1</b>	<b>No Response 0</b>
24. I felt overwhelmed by the academic workload			Stds. 5  (11.1%)			Stds. 1,2,3,4,6,7,8, 9  (88.9%)
25. I experienced much pressure when trying to meet assignment deadlines.			Stds. 5  (11.1%)	Stds. 8  (11.1%)		Stds. 1,2,3,4,6,7,9  (77.8%)
26. My study techniques were effective.		Stds. 2,5,7,8  (44.44%)	Stds. 3  (11.11%)			Stds. 1,4,6,9  (44.44%)
27. I believed that I could attain a 2.0 GPA.	Stds. 5,9  (22.2%)	Stds. 3  (11.1%)				Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,8  (66.7%)
Total # students responding	2	5	2	1	0	

## Data Analysis Factor 9: Academic Advising

<b>Factor 9</b> <b>Academic Advising</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b> <b>5</b>	<b>Agree</b> <b>4</b>	<b>Neutral</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Disagree</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b> <b>1</b>	<b>No Response</b> <b>0</b>
28. It was easy to get answers to my questions about things related to my education here.			Stds. 3,5 (22.2%)			Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,8,9 (77.8%)
29. I was satisfied with the academic advising received.		Stds. 2 (11.1%)	Stds. 5 (11.1%)			Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,8,9 (77.8%)
30. Important information was communicated to students such as academic rules.		Stds. 3,9 (22.2%)		Stds. 5 (11.1%)		Stds. 1,2,4,6,7,8 (66.7%)
31. If I had needs that were different from the majority of the other students this university met those needs.		Stds. 7,8 (22.2%)		Stds. 3,5 (22.2%)		Stds. 1,2,4,6,9 (55.6%)
Total # students responding	0	5	2	3	0	

## Appendix Table A1: Logic Model Indicators Development Flow Chart

**Table A1**

<b>Four focus areas</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Technical Assistance needed</b>
	What are PCP students' perspectives of the PCP's faculty and institutional support services in leveraging their ability to matriculate to an associate degree?	College Persistence Questionnaire for PCP students and interview	Deputy Registrar to forward CPQ to the PCP students via Survey Monkey.
	What are the PCP faculty members' perspectives of the PCP's attainment of its objectives?	Faculty Questionnaire	Creation Survey Monkey questionnaire
	What are the PCP faculty members' perspectives of the PCP's course content, structure, duration, and program coordination?	Faculty Questionnaire	Creation Survey Monkey questionnaire
	What are the registrar's perspectives of the PCP in meeting its objectives?	Registrar's Questionnaire Numbers of PCP students matriculating to an associate degree	Creation Survey Monkey questionnaire
	What are the registrar's opinions of the factors influenced the PCP students' ability to matriculate to an associate degree?	Registrar's questionnaire	Creation Survey Monkey questionnaire

*Logic Model Indicators Development Flow Chart*