Developing Access through Effective Leadership: A School-University-Community Partnership between GRPS and GVSU

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Chapter One: Project Outline

Problem Statement

Access to higher education is limited for some students. Mostly, this has been a problem for low-socioeconimic status (low-SES) students and underrepresented racial minority (URMs) students (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013). One response to this problem has been the creation of open-access colleges, which are colleges that allow students access regardless of GPA, entrance exam scores, or sometimes a GED or diploma. The unfortunate truth, however, is that open-access colleges have an overrepresentation of first-generation, low-SES, and URM students (Atwell, et al., 2006; Conley, 2013; Long & Boatman, 2013). Accordingly, many students who attend open-access colleges are placed in remedial education courses (Conley, 2013; Stanley, 2010). While open-access colleges and remedial courses do provide a service to learners with academic deficiencies, these are still barriers to student persistence. As Crisp and Delgado (2014) wrote, "less than 50% of the students who are referred to remediation actually complete the entire course sequence. Moreover, about 30% of students who were referred to remediation do not enroll in any courses" (p. 100). Boroch, Deborah, Hope, Smith, Johnstone, and Nixon (2010) also point out the flaw in open-access colleges citing that 70% of open-access students claim a desire to receive a bachelor's degree, yet only 35% actually transfer to a 4-year institution, and only 10% attain a bachelor's degree. While open-access colleges provide an imperative service, that service is still not meeting the needs of America's most underrepresented students.

There are a number of contributing factors for why more first-generation, low-SES, and URM students are attending more open-access colleges. Meyer, St. John, Chankseliani, and Uribe (2013) pinpoint three contributing factors: the overuse of the oligarchic model of college access, the failure of the social-democratic model in which taxpayers fund underrepresented

students, and the inequity of the neo-liberal model which relies too heavily on the private sectors' funds. While Meyer, et. al's three factors focus heavily on issues of financial aid, one must consider that tuition rates at community colleges are more economically feasible. Comparing Grand Rapids Community College's tuition ($108 per credit hour for a resident) to Grand Valley State University's tuition ($462 per credit hour for a resident) is a regional affirmation that community college is more affordable (Grand Rapids Community College, 2015; Grand Valley State University, 2015a). The issue of financial access to higher education thus coincides with access for URMs in that URMs "often [experience] high levels of illiteracy, undereducation, and overt or covert discrimination" (Meerman, 2009, p. 6). Moreover, Meerman (2009) asserts URMs "remain 'the poorest of the poor'" (p. 6). Indeed, both low-SES students and URM students have limited access to a bachelor's degree for two systemic reasons: undereducation and limited access to funds. While these two barriers are not easy to fix, one step toward a solution could be a stronger coalition between secondary and post-secondary institutions.

Rationale

Undereducation and limited access to funds to pay for higher education is a national problem. Examining undereducation, Bettinger and Long (2009) wrote that much of an open-access college's student body is placed into remedial education courses. They explained, "for many students, the remediation placement exam taken when first arriving on campus has become the key academic gate-keeper to postsecondary study" (Bettinger & Long, 2009, p. 737). Patton (2015) gave a few examples of exams at UC Berkeley, Grand Rapids Community College and the University System of Georgia. He wrote that "students are required to take a placement test that decides whether or not the student must enroll in remedial education courses" (p. 3). Indeed,

entrance exams not only provide a basis for judgement at elite universities, they are also legitimized through open-access colleges as the decision-maker for whether or not a student should be enrolled in a remedial class. Moreover, what is disconcerting is that students who take remedial education courses have proven "less likely to succeed" (Conley, 2013, p. 57).

The number of students taking remedial education is problematic, and the high number of URM and low-SES students taking remedial education seems unjust. Research on URM students shows that they are more likely not to go to college, or are more likely to take remedial courses (Atwell, et al., 2006; Conley, 2014; Long & Boatman, 2013). Moreover, low-SES students have a 50% chance of being placed into remedial literacy courses by fourth grade (Morris, et al., 2012). Literacy skills at fourth grade are important predictors of success; it has been well-documented that fourth grade marks the shift where learning to read becomes reading to learn (Allington & Johnston, 2002; Katzir, et al., 2009). Jerrim and Vignoles' (2015) research is more precise in connecting low-SES students to university attendance. They wrote that "the substantial gaps in university attendance by parental income observed in the USA can be largely explained by differences in the prior academic achievement of rich and poor young people in high school" (p. 904).

Three considerations make the aforementioned statistics disconcerting. First, URMS and low-SES students are not obtaining bachelor's degrees at the same rate as their middle class and White counterparts. Second, considering URM achievement, data projects the United States will become minority-majority by the year 2060 (United States Census Bureau, 2012). Third, Meerman's (2009) asserted that a vast number of URMs are also low-SES and "URM students are more likely to be male, older, first-generation immigrant, the first in their families to attend

college, and lower income" (Crisp & Nuñez, 2014, p. 297). Altogether, limited access to higher education affects URM students and low-SES students in profoundly similar ways.

Finances are another problem facing access to higher education. Not only the impact that finances have on a low-SES student's ability to gain access to higher education, but also the cost barrier to attend an institution of higher education. Indeed, Harris (2014) affirmed students consider financial aid to be "one of the greatest barriers to college success" (p. 100). In Jerrim and Vignoles' (2015) study there was "a strong unconditional association between household income and access to university" (p. 914). In considering the finances of URMs, "URM students who begin postsecondary education at a community college are more likely than White students to have characteristics and experiences that may serve as barriers to transfer or degree completion" (p. 297). For these reasons, many URM and low-SES students attend community colleges (Nuñez & Hernandez, 2011; Porchea, et al., 2010). The potential for URMs and low-SES students to complete their degree at a community college, or to continue to receive a bachelor's degree is still low. For that reason, the high price of college limits access to this particular group of students.

The weight of the issue of access to a bachelor's degree for low-SES and URM students is significant, specifically when considering "higher education and society place more value on liberal arts degrees…than technical or specialized degrees" (Mitchell, el al., 2014, p. 187). This is important to note in regards to the state of K-16 alignment. One must ask, are open-access colleges the proper intermediary between high school and a four-year degree? Or, do we need a stronger relationship across the K-16 continuum, thus providing better pathways for URM and low-SES students?

Background

Higher education started as, and continues to perpetuate, a foundation of prestige. "Higher education began as the basic European university model…" (Altbach, 2011, p. 16). By virtue of the fact that institutions were created for the wealthy, European elite, low-SES and URM students would be considered non-traditional (Altbach, 2011). The culture of tradition continues to persist throughout communities of higher education (Mitchell, et. al., 2014). Read, Archer, and Leathwood (2002) wrote, "[i]nstitutions that receive a large extent of 'non-traditional' students are subsequently constructed as 'substandard' and to some extent, therefore, 'inauthentic' institutions: the 'authenticity' of the 'normal' young middle-class student is maintained at the elite 'real' universities" (p. 268). The inner workings of prestige within higher education are defined by tradition and based upon a culture of hegemony.

For an institution like UC Berkeley, it was important to be seen as both a prestigious university as well is a socially utilitarian university. In writing about remedial education at UC Berkeley, Stanely (2011) found that the remedial student demonstrated both academic rigor (because the curriculum was difficult enough to warrant remediation) while also demonstrating a service to the citizens of California. The presence of remediation, however, might cause one to wonder why remediation was necessary if students were receiving the same curriculum.

It was Coleman's (1966) report that surveyed schools across the United States. Not only did he report on the segregation of schools, but he also reported URMs were less likely to succeed than their White counterparts. Coleman's research, along with many others', led to the creation of a number of federal programs including Federal TRiO Programs, No Child Left Behind, and Race to the Top (Pitre & Pitre, 2009; Tepe, 2014). Ultimately, it was Race to the Top that expedited and incentivized the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) across the United States.

But as Tepe (2014) mentioned, CCSS is still not connecting the gap between K-12 schools and institutions of higher education.

What URM and low-SES students have been left with at present are lower chances to attend 4-year universities, and a low ability to succeed in community colleges (Altbach, 2011; Conley, 2013). For this reason, the aforementioned national programs still exist. Throughout Michigan, charter schools have begun to focus on college attendance; programs such as MCAN (the Michigan College Access Network) and AdviseMI provide advisors and resources for the sole purpose of sending students to college; and organizations such as Talent 2025 and KConnect are providing cradle-to-career work groups in hopes of bolstering access and the economy through better access to education and a more capable workforce (KConnect, 2016; Michigan College Access Network, 2016; Talent 2025, 2016). Throughout West Michigan, two organizations are providing support and scholarships to urban youth: The Kalamazoo Promise and Challenge Scholars (Challenge Scholars, 2016; Kalamazoo Promise, 2016). Another pilot program called Middle College exists through Wyoming Public Schools and Holland Public Schools (Holland Public Schools, n.d.; Wyoming Public Schools, 2015). Middle College programs provide an extra year of high school, thus providing an associate's degree upon graduation

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to propose a partnership between Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids Public Schools, and various Grand Rapids community stakeholders in which a pilot school houses a Kindergarten to 16th year education for cohorts of students. This project will:

1. Demonstrate the basic steps to creating a map of the key stakeholders for this project, and the way in which this project could be carried out.

2. Demonstrate an attempt to reinforce the pipeline by creating a smoother transition (specifically for URM majority schools) into higher education.

This project is unique in its attempt to bridge a gap between a four-year institution and a K-12 institution. Rather than using a community college as an intermediary, this project will attempt to directly connect a state university to a public school system within its community.

Objectives of the Project

The objectives of this project are as follows:

1. Identify and understand how to gather the stakeholders involved in its creation: the College of Education at GVSU, College Access Professionals, and various K-16 professionals who might be interested in this topic.
2. Participants will invest in a school that has the greatest potential to create a seamless K-16 educational center.
3. Participants will use the center as a K-12 school, as well as a hub for 13th and 14th grade general education courses before transitioning to the partner university to finish the last two years of a four-year degree program.
4. Participants will make the hub open to students inside the district, as well as select students outside of the district who live in the target community.
5. The 13th and 14th grades will be paid for by GRPS, GVSU, grants, and community investors

Definition of Terms

URMs – Underrepresented Racial Minorities

This refers to African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and mainland Puerto Ricans (Nuñez & Crisp, 2014; Chang, et al., 2016). These populations will be the focus of this project.

Low-SES students – Low Socioeconomic Status Students

The American Psychological Association (n.d.) defines low socioeconomic status as "commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group" (p. 1).

K-16 Continuum

The model that sees Kindergarten through the 4th year of college as a continuum. The model operates under the auspice that higher education is inasmuch a human right as K-12 education.

Key Stakeholders

Anyone who might be affected by a K-16 community partnership. This would be those throughout the K-16 continuum (K-12 and higher education teachers, professors, administrators, etc.). This would also be funders, which could be private funders, or grantees. It is also important to consider those who are benefiting from the services as stakeholders as well.

K-16 Partnerships

A partnership between K-12 Schools, Colleges and Universities, and the community at large.

CCSS – Common Core State Standards

These are federal standards created by a group of key stakeholders in the United States. Since the Constitution mentions nothing about education, the Supreme Court of the United States has declared that states have the right to decide on a curriculum (Tepe, 2014). However, with the implementation of Race to the Top, the adoption of CCSS has been monetarily incentivized. This

is created a quasi-national K-12 curriculum that attempts to build student capacity such that students are prepared for college. It is only quasi-national, however, because all 50 states have yet to claim CCSS as their state standards.

Remedial Education

Also referred to as *developmental* education, remedial education is used to bring students up to the basic standards of education that are necessary in higher education (Stanley, 2011).

Scope of the Project

This project will be built upon a basic framework for creating effective K-16 partnerships. Specifically, I will be focusing on K-16 partnerships between one target university (Grand Valley State University) and one target school district (Grand Rapids Public Schools) within their community (Grand Rapids, MI). This project will demonstrate the benefits of partnerships across the K-16 continuum, and what these partnerships can do to reinforce the efficacy of remedial education while also combatting the lack of diversity in higher bachelor's degree programs. Moreover, with the focus of collective impact within West Michigan, this project should act as a framework for understanding what key partnerships are important when considering limiting barriers to higher education.

This project will not address any specific partnerships outside of Grand Rapids, nor will this project identify a single solution to the very complex problems surrounding access, remedial education, and diversity in higher education. Moreover, while I do believe this project could be replicated in a very basic way, it will not provide an extensive blueprint for creating effective K-16 partnerships, nor will it provide a specific curriculum for that matter.

In accounting for factors outside of my control, financing a collaboration will be the largest. Although there is potential to find financial stability for this type of endeavor, this

project will not address exactly what those finances might look like. Stakeholder buy-in will also be a factor outside of my control, along with the availability of proper space to house this type of project.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

There are two ways to look at a student's continuation across the K-16 continuum: either a student persists to the next grade level, or an institution retains the student. Another manner of understanding this phenomenon is to understand access through the theories of development and leadership. Whereas students must develop in order to persist, administrators must lead well in order to retain students. As Owen (2012) wrote: "leadership development and human development are inextricably intertwined" (p. 18). This chapter will explore a number of student development and leadership theories and how they interact with access to, persistence through, and retention in college. Throughout this chapter, student development and leadership will be seen through an anti-deficit lens. The goal of understanding student development and leadership theories through an anti-deficit lens is to remove the blame from individual students, and instead focus on the systems within universities that might inhibit equitable student development.

Overall, the goal of this chapter is to use theory to understand more definitive pathways toward student success within the K-16 continuum. More specifically, the goal is to find pathways to success for low socioeconomic status (low-SES) and underrepresented racial minority (URM) students by removing the financial barriers as well as the barrier of undereducation.

Theoretical Framework

Student Development Theory

According to student development theory, students attend college at different stages across their developmental spectrum (Owen, 2012). Although this aspect of student development theory has not been a part of the theory's long history, it is currently one of the most important.

Historically, student development theory contested its contemporary beliefs. Evans, Forney, and Guido (2009) wrote: early theorists believed "students… are basically similar" (p. 5) and that they did not differ much from students in the past. This early theory was written in the late 1950s. Indeed, this was a time when White males were the dominant demographic of those attending college (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). Over the years, however, the idea that all students are the same has been carefully dismantled by various subcategories of student development theory (Atkinson, et. al., 1979; Black & Stone, 2005; Cass, 1979; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Cross, 1971; hooks, 1981; Schlossberg, et. al., 1995; Torres, 2003).

A foundational break from the 1950s notion of student development theory (ie. all students are the same) came from Chickering and Reisser (1993). Chickering and Reisser synthesized various student development theories concerning race, gender, ethnicity, and privilege into a multi-ethnic understanding. Ultimately they theorized there are seven vectors of student development: "achieving competence, managing emotions, developing autonomy, establishing identity, freeing interpersonal relationships, clarifying purpose, and developing integrity" (Higbee, et al., 2005, p. 6). Not only is a student's personal success established through gaining knowledge (achieving competence), but there are six other vectors that factor into that same success.

What must be understood about student development vis-à-vis college access and persistence for URM and low-SES students is that not all students arrive at an institution of higher education at a predestined stage of development. Many systemic issues contribute to a student's sense of identity. The immediate issue this project attempts to ameliorate, however, is the vector of achieving competence. The manner in which student affairs professionals ameliorate this disservice is closely tied to the manner in which they assist students in their

development through leadership. However, current trends in leadership have struggled to push student development to the forefront due to the university's existence within a capitalistic society.

Literature Review

Leadership Trends and Their Effects on Access

Theories in leadership are expansive. In an informal research study, Middlehurst (2008) found 25,784 books on the topic of leadership alone. In other words, there are a number of opinions and theories on effective leadership. For the purpose of this project, leadership will be examined through the purview of how it relates to student development, retention, and persistence.

A number of articles that performed literature reviews on leadership in higher education showed a lack of focus on student development (Bryman, 2007; Middlehurst, 2008; Middlehurst, 2013). Middlehurst (2013) came close to mentioning student development by referring to "the student experience" (p. 286). However, this was more of a reference to student development through the capitalistic lens of the different buildings and departments to which students have access. While Middlehurst's example of the student experience does consider "changing student needs and expectations" (p. 286), it is difficult not to consider how those needs and expectations have been met in practice. Gardner (2005) would argue the university leader's response to the student experience has been to create a "resort-like existence at school" (p. 103). Indeed, Gardner reports the resort-like existence is derived from the lens that views students as customers. Indeed, Middlehurst (2005) reports this idea of student-as-customer to be true in discussing new university partnerships with "long-term business benefits of attracting students and graduates into a customer relationship" (p. 287). While it would be naïve to believe

universities can thrive as institutions that are outside of a capitalistic marketplace, viewing students as customers creates a culture that is counterproductive to the goals of student development. Indeed, Kovbasyuk and Rimmington (2015) consider the consumer approach to higher education a system of oppression. They wrote, "this is the banking model of education, which entails depositing knowledge into the minds of students. It is at odds with the notion of individuality, identity, and education of the whole person" (p. 7). Sadly, the consumer approach to higher education is not going away. Fryar (2012) acknowledged the trend of privatization in higher education while also attempting to define what it means for the institution. Ultimately, privatization can mean "declines in government funding… increased reliance on tuition for institutional revenue… increased reliance on private sources of revenue… and increases in competition for resources and students" (para. 7). In other words, privatization will fully thrust higher education into a competitive marketplace, one that sees students as customers, or even commodities.

So how does privatization intersect with access, persistence, and retention for low-SES and URM students? Chapter one already discussed the effects of undereducation throughout the K-16 pipeline, as well as the financial burden of going to college. Privatization could potentially exacerbate both of these issues, and have a negative effect on student development. More specifically, it will have negative effects on access, remedial education, persistence, and retention.

Access. Scherer and Ansen (2014) wrote there are two definitions regarding access to higher education: (1) access to higher education is purely open, and (2) access to higher education is not open when students do not succeed. The framework through which this project operates is under the second definition. To say that "64% of recent high school graduates enter

higher education" is a triumph is one matter (Roksa, 2008, p. 58). Another matter, however, is the consideration that only 26.4% of Michigan students in 2014 are projected to receive a bachelor's degree or higher, or that 23.9% of Michigan students are projected to start college, but will not receive a degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Part and parcel to the issue of college access is the effectiveness of academic inputs and outputs; inputs being what students learn, and outputs being how students perform (Horn & Mackey, 2011). Students receive input from their teachers, administrators, and parents. They demonstrate outputs through informal and formal assessment. For low-SES and URM students, their inputs and outputs are underwhelming compared to their White, high-SES counterparts (Delpit, 2012; Farmer-Hinton, 2008; Kozol, 2005; Niskey, 2007; Roksa, 2008). Farmer-Hinton (2008) affirmed "students of color are disproportionately placed in lower-tracked classes or underfunded schools with limited access to quality teachers, advanced courses, and small classes, leaving students minimally prepared for college" (p. 73). One of the greatest fallacies in American higher education is the myth of meritocracy. One archaic method that many institutions of higher education use in their admissions process is test scores. Test scores, however, are a systemic way to limit both racial and economic diversity within 4-year institutions. Roksa (2008) wrote that, "systems that place greater emphasis on test scores are likely to disproportionately affect students from racial minority groups" (Roksa, 2008, p. 62). Regarding socioeconomic status, "high SES students have approximately 2.5 times the odds of enrolling in 4-year institutions as their less privileged counterparts" (Roksa, 2008, p. 69). According to Niskey (2007), that statistic has not changed since "the opportunity for a low-income child to obtain a bachelor's degree has not changed in three decades: By age 24 in 1970, it was 6 percent, and in 2002 it remained 6 percent (p. 62).

Test scores represent only one of the archaic ways colleges and universities privilege high-SES, White students. Despite contention around the issue of affirmative action, selective colleges and universities still give preference to legacy students, or students whose parents attended the same college before them (Mandery, 2014). Legacy students are, as Mandery (2014) wrote, another form of higher education's meritocratic practices. When low-SES and URM students have historically been underrepresented in institutions of higher education, legacy does not provide much favor to them. Moreover, many 4-year institutions employ the use of early decision for college selection, an onboarding technique that has caused "enrollments of white students and out-of-state students [to] increase significantly" (Antecol & Smith, 2012, p. 220).

Four-year institutions have shown two trends regarding principles of access: (1) increased practices of privatization, and (2) onboarding practices that privilege wealthy students due to increased privatization. As a result of these two trends, differentiated college systems have been integral in providing avenues for los-SES and URM students to attend college (Roksa, 2008). However, many students onboarded through open-access colleges have been met with mandatory remedial education courses.

Remediation. Either through 4-year universities, or through a stratification system that utilizes community colleges, remedial courses are used to backfill instruction needed before students enroll in for-credit courses. Higbee, et. al. (2005) have argued remedial education began as a service to students and their development. While this project does not contest the service remedial education provides, remedial courses continue to be a caveat to open-access.

In a historical study of University of California (UC) Berkeley's background of remedial education, Stanley (2010) explained remediation was a way to show both prestige and utility in higher education; prestige in the rigor of the curriculum, and utility in the service to the state's

citizens. UC Berkeley's attitude toward the remedial student was more of what Higbee, et al. (2005) described as a medical model approach, or an approach that "focused on a 'remedy' or 'cure' rather than a more holistic approach to students' intellectual development" (p. 9). This approach, however, is one that sees students in need of remedial education as a deficit rather than the holistic student described under student development theory. The medical model approach is also the most commonly-used approach. In reexamining testing, Higbee, et. al. wrote, "much of the assessment that occurs in developmental education programs is related to admissions, testing and placement, and student success rates" (p. 11). To reiterate Bettinger and Long (2009), "for many students, the remediation placement exam taken when first arriving on campus has become the key academic gate-keeper to postsecondary study" (p. 737).

To ameliorate the critical issue of remedial education, practices must continue to evolve and grow. Many institutions of higher education have started to provide concurrent remedial courses, or immersion courses that provide a hybrid for-credit/remedial course (Grubb & Cox, 2005; Higbee, et. al., 2005). Other models follow the advice of Grubb and Cox (2005) in that "good teaching, in developmental education as elsewhere in the college, must be a collective process" (p. 94). One example of collective process from Baber, Fletcher, and Graham (2015) is the *Together We Achieve* program, which "included connecting students with faculty mentors who are committed to student learning and success" (101). More importantly, the *Together We Achieve* model used efficiency (a quality typically utilized for marketization purposes in higher education) as a means to build human capital (Baber, et. al., 2015). And counter to current trends in leadership, the *Together We Achieve* program was created when "senior administrative leaders took a proactive approach toward redeveloping institutional practices" (p. 101). Not only did the *Together We Achieve* program repurpose the use of efficiency through the lens of student

development, it also changed current trends in leadership theory. Rather than viewing students as commodities, *Together We Achieve* leadership saw the return on investment in human capital that can happen through transformational education. Part of the success of *Together We Achieve* was the aspect of building a community (Baber, et. al., 2015).

Student Success

In both K-12 education and higher education, student success is a nebulous term. There are many outcomes that warrant the label of student success. These labels are dictated by administrators, curriculum developers, teachers, parents, the community, the government, and—most importantly—by students themselves. Amidst the nebulousness of student success, there are also various elements of inputs that dictate success or failure. Grubb and Cox (2005) wrote there are at least four elements that contribute to classroom success: 1) instructors with diverse approaches to pedagogy, 2) students with diverse preparation levels, 3) curricular content, and 4) institutional setting. Ultimately, Grubb and Cox assert, "when these four elements are in alignment with one another, classrooms are more likely to run smoothly and effectively" (p. 94). Currently, the alignment of instructors, students, curriculum, and institution within the K-16 curriculum is not established in a way that promotes success.

Student Success in K-12 Schools: The Whole Student v. Graduation and Assessment. Student success in K-12 education has been defined many different ways. While Cornelius-White and Harbaugh (2009) have said student success is represented by the development of the whole student, they also affirm "achievement is frequently defined as solely test scores" (p. 106). External factors, such as global competition, have caused states to believe success is "raising their graduation requirements" (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010, p. 1).

Overall, both graduation and test scores factor into another measurement of success: academic persistence into an institution of higher education.

From a student development theory lens, the most important factor of success in education is the development of the whole student (Evans, et. al., 2009). Through this lens, student support is dependent upon developmental needs. From the perspective of Grubb and Cox's (2005) four elements of success and failure, a number of recent changes in national policies surrounding K-12 education have changed the landscape of those four elements. The most influential factor that has affected the curricular component of K-12 education has been The Common Core State Standards. These standards were implemented through Race to the Top institution as an attempt to create a national curriculum (Tepe, 2014). The overall goal of the Common Core States Standards was to create a streamlined curriculum that would connect the 12th year of high school to the 13th year in an institution of higher education (Conley, 2011). The CCSS curriculum, which was created with the assistance of "teachers, school administrators, and national experts… [were developed] in order to provide a clear and consistent framework that prepares students with the knowledge and skills necessary for college and careers" (p. 1). The standards were also built using the proficiency model, one that prefers students learn according to their proficiency rather than to a set timeline (Conley, 2013). If implemented correctly, the proficiency model would address the varying curricular needs of students (Johnson, 2014). Unfortunately, the politicization, implementation, and corporatization of CCSS evoked a number of different responses from educators (Speciale, 2015). Concomitantly: varied levels of buy-in across institutions of higher education have caused problems in the streamline process of CCSS.

Why the disconnect? The aforementioned research has shown privatization trends in higher education. With less funding from the government, and a larger focus on a highly

marketized system of education, competition for students has driven college curriculum more than governmental mandates that only affect K-12 education. The aforementioned research has also shown that low-SES and URM students have been affected most by the admissions policies of institutions of higher education. This is especially true when success continues to be defined by a student's test scores; test scores that have been proven to systemically disadvantage low-SES and URM students (Roksa, 2008). Therefore, students who did not succeed—under global and national standards—are expected to either receive a GED, or attend an open access college. Either way, those students will have to relearn what K-12 schools were expected to teach in the first place.

Student Success in Higher Education: The Whole Student, Persistence, and Graduation. The definition of student success in higher education (much like success in K-12 schools) depends on whoever is providing said definition. Braxton, Doyle, Hartley, and McLendon (2013) have asserted "retention and degree completion serve as markers of college success" (p. 1). There is, however, a more extensive list of success as it is currently defined in higher education: "academic attainment… acquisition of general education, development of academic competence… development of cognitive skills… occupational attainment, preparation for adulthood and citizenship, personal accomplishment… and personal development" (p. 1). At the center of the aforementioned factors of success is student persistence. If a student does not persist, then there will be no graduation, no academic attainment, and the institution of higher education will have a limited impact upon the development of the student. Yet, what exists at the root of student persistence is student development (Evans, et. al., 2009).

Much of the research around student success in higher education points to the problems regarding the transition in the first year of college (DeNicco, et. al, 2015; Stewart, et. al, 2015).

The transitional period between high school and college is directly connected to student development. The imperative question is whether or not leadership in higher education is focusing on each factor of success that affects the whole student through development. Arguably, those who are forgotten are those who are receiving remedial education, and those who are receiving remedial education are more often than not URM and low-SES students (Braxton, et. al., 2013; Stewart, et. al., 2015).

Transformational Leadership: From Marketization to Student Development

Much of the leadership theories implemented in postsecondary institutions have proven to be a more managerial style of leadership. Indeed, this type of leadership has caused increased marketization, which in turn leads to limited access for URM and low-SES students (Bryman, 2007; Middlehurst, 2008; Middlehurst, 2013). In recent research concerning school-university-community partnerships, transformational leadership has been an important model to follow when creating change within an institution. For example, the creators of the Adelante school-university-community partnership wrote "the goal of transformational leadership is to build capacity and to improve conditions for those being led and for the organization" (Alemán, et. al., 2013, p. 23). Indeed, most practices of transformation leadership demonstrate a personal interest in those who are following (Basham, 2012; Warrick, 2011).

In focusing on the needs of the followers, leaders in institutions of higher education must examine those who are actually able to follow. For this reason, transformational leadership is important for its attention to effective change within an institution (Warrick, 2011). More specifically, Warrick wrote that "a transformational leader is of a visionary leader with new ways of thinking about strategy, structure, and people as well as about change, innovation, and having an entrepreneurial perspective" (para. 14). Regarding access for URM and low-SES students,

institutions of higher education are in need of a transformational leader who can make effective change in access.

The same is also true for K-12 institutions. New strategies of providing access for URM and low-SES learners are necessary. A transformational leader would be an asset in a school-university partnership; as Basham (2012) wrote, "[l]eaders who encourage and support transformation leadership share power, are willing to learn from others, and are sensitive to each team member's needs for achievement and growth" (p. 344). In considering students as stakeholders (ie. Teammates), K-12 educators and administrators must be aware of their students' needs. Moreover, they must be willing to partner with the institutions that are providing the highest level of education (universities) such that their curricula create student proficiency opportunities that may lead to a bachelor's degree or beyond.

The Proficiency Model

Under the auspices that a vast majority of URM and low-SES learners are entering remedial education, it is important to explore different models that can ameliorate this issue. In considering the root cause of these issues, one must understand that the two predictors of college success are "types of courses students take in high school and how well they perform" (Long & Boatman, 2013, p. 77).

One model that has stood out throughout the literature review has been the proficiency model of education. Patton (2015) wrote "[w]hile there is no single solution to create equal access and abolish remedial education, there does seem to be an educational model that reflects the top-down learning that researchers have asked for… one such model as the proficiency model" (p. 5). Through researching 90 effective schools, Johnson, Uline, and Perez (2014) found many of the schools were implementing proficiency models; they wrote: "this means (1)

educators plan lessons so that all students are likely to achieve a depth of understanding about a specific concept or idea and (2) educators are objective-driven as they strive to help every student achieve mastery (p. 48). Indeed, the proficiency model requires hands-on instruction from educators such that each lesson is executed in an equitable way. Mostly, this type of instruction was accomplished through an instructor's ability to demand more than a simple rote answer from her or his student.

Assuming each K-12 educator is properly able to provide a proficiency approach to education such that all students have mastered the skills necessary to graduate from the 12th grade, the issue of undereducation will still persist without a curriculum that is aligned with first-year success at a college or university. Conley (2013) affirmed the proficiency approach cannot succeed without a university-school partnership as a successful curriculum is "to be developed and defined by high school and college instructors working together" (p. 60). Regarding best practices, the university-school partnership has been invaluable regarding student success in obtaining proficiencies (Benson, 2001). Indeed, Benson supported school-community partnerships in writing that "If there is no academic link between a higher education institution and a public school, there is no sustainable partnership. Developing an integrated pre K-16 problem-solving curriculum must be a primary focus" (para. 20). Ultimately, the proficiency model cannot succeed if students' proficiencies are aligned with first-year success at a postsecondary institution. Thus the school-university partnership is paramount in the success of all students, including URM and low-SES students.

The University-School-Community Partnership

Current literature on university, K-12 school, and community partnerships emphasize a focus on developing the student (Alemán, et. al, 2013; Burbank & Hunter, 2008; Oliva, 2008).

Much of the research surrounding partnerships within and without the K-16 continuum was created in response to the disconnect between K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. More specifically, research has addressed the necessity for K-16 partnerships as a means to bolster access for URM and low-SES students (Alemán, et. al, 2013; Burbank & Hunter, 2008; Hoyle & Kutka, 2008; Oliva, 2008). A number of articles have seen the value in creating communities outside and inside each partnership. The Adelante program, in particular, was intentional in how it engaged parents of each student involved (Alemán, et. al, 2013). This is a better approach than Advanced Placement (AP) courses and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs that provide college credit in K-12 schools to select students who have passed certain meritocratic standards. And while other researchers have seen the value in a unified state plan (Hoyle & Kutka, 2008), the politics are less practical in some states than in others. Specifically in Michigan, there is no structure to sustain a state-unified plan much to the likes of a state like California (Stanley, 2010).

In considering K-16 and community partnerships, it is important to identify key stakeholders within the project. One task of this project is to use the expertise found in both leadership and student development theories to gather key stakeholders. The goal in gathering these key stakeholders is to leverage resources in a manner that provides better access and persistence for URM and low-SES students. In other words, this project will extend best practices to decentralize a 4-year institution's focus on marketization and provide root-cause financial and educative support to K-12 schools and their underrepresented students. This type of collaboration is important as improving American schools (and, by proxy, American society) "requires significant serious, sustained, mutually respectful collaboration between academics and practitioners" (Benson, et. al., 2000, p. 24).

There is a definitive reason why K-12 and postsecondary institutions operate as the agents of change in this project. Not only are these two institutions providing the basic human right of education, but they are also considered to be central hubs of local and systemic change. Benson, Harkavy, and Perez (2000) discussed the type of systemic change public schools can bring writing that they "serve as the catalytic hub of community change and innovation" (p. 27). Similarly, Harkavy, Hartley, Hodges, and Weeks (2013) assert that "[u]niversities are simultaneously the preeminent local (they are embedded in their communities) and national and global (they operate with an increasingly interactive worldwide network) institutions" (p. 528). In creating systemic change, it is important that there is a local and global entity operating at a community level (Harkavy, et. al, 2013). By partnering public schools with universities and communities, systemic change for URM and low-SES can happen.

Summary

Undereducation and high tuition rates affect URM and low-SES students' access to 4-year institutions (Bettinger & Long, 2009). Through a student development lens, K-12 and postsecondary personnel must focus on the development on the whole student (Higbee, et. al., 2005; Owen, 2012). The whole student is imperative in that all students enter college at different levels of personal development (Owen, 2012). As current research in university leadership stands, there has been limited focus on the development of the student (Bryman, 2007; Middlehurst, 2008; Middlehurst, 2013). Rather, most postsecondary leadership has been focused on the marketization of colleges and universities (Gardner, 2005). When looking at marketization and its effect on access, it has been proven that it has a negative effect on access for URM and low-SES students (Antecol & Smith, 2012; Mandery, 2014). Moreover, URM and low-SES students have limited access to an equitable education and, by proxy, do not perform as well on

the standardized tests that are used to screen potential college candidates (Roksa, 2008). For this reason, a number of URM and low-SES students are attending open-access colleges and are forced to take remedial education courses (Higbee, et al., 2005). This does not reflect negatively on community colleges since they are providing a necessary service to undereducated and underrepresented students, but rather reflects on the inability of K-12 and postsecondary institutions to work together (Tepe, 2014). While the goal of K-12 and postsecondary institutions should be to develop students, student success has been limited to performance (Higbee, et al., 2005). Furthermore, student performance has been compartmentalized into categories such as performance on standardized tests, graduation, and retention across the K-16 continuum (Braxton, Doyle, Hartley, & McLendon, 2013; McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). This literature reviews calls for a change in leadership ideology from top-down leadership to transformational leadership. By using the transformational leadership theory, K-12 and post-secondary leaders are encouraged to focus more on student development rather than increased marketization (Alemán, et al., 2013; Bryman, 2007; Middlehurst, 2008; Middlehurst, 2013). The transformational leader should be interested in implementing a model of education that seeks to create student proficiency rather than stratifying student success (Alemán, et al., 2013; Patton, 2015). In using a proficiency model, however, it would be important for K-12 and postsecondary institutions to create partnerships between themselves and their communities (Conley, 2013). There are a number of communities who have created these types of partnerships (Alemán, et al., 2013; Benson, et. al., 2000). A number of them have been successful, but a partnership between the community, K-12 school district, and university have been the key to their success (Harkavy, et. al, 2013).

Conclusion

There are a number of issues surrounding the academic and social engagement of URM and low-SES students between both K-12 and postsecondary institutions. To change how URM and low-SES students are engaged, there must be a change in how these two target institutions are leading and collaborating. Through a theoretical lens of student development and transformational leadership, it seems likely that K-12 and postsecondary institutions can create systemic change for URM and low-SES students. Indeed, creating effective partnerships that address both how to create proficiency in K-12 learners and how to create a formal definition of proficiency across the K-16 curriculum can ameliorate the limited access, retention, and graduation of URM and low-SES students from 4-year universities. In the next chapter, this project will create a plan that addresses what a university-school-community partnership would look like in the city of Grand Rapids. Through this partnership, the project will attempt to create higher rates of access, retention, and graduation for URM and low-SES students.

Chapter 3: Project Description

Undereducation, the high cost of tuition, and the privatization of higher education are all creating a difficult landscape for low socioeconomic status (low-SES) and underrepresented racial minority (URM) students to enter into, persist through, and graduate from 4-year universities (Bettinger & Long, 2009; Meerman, 2009; Roksa, 2008). In considering the undereducation of students, the cause is twofold: (1) there is inequality in educational attainment between various schools and (2) despite the best efforts of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), K-12 and postsecondary institutions' curricula are not aligned (Kozol, 2005; Tepe, 2014). For these two reasons, many low-SES and URM learners are entering open-access institutions, and a vast majority of them are forced to take not-for-credit remedial classes.

Concomitantly, colleges and universities are becoming more privatized (Fryar, 2012). Privatization is part of the reason why postsecondary education is becoming less affordable. More importantly, privatization is creating unequal access to higher education for low-SES and URM students compared to their White, middle-class counterparts. Indeed, not only is postsecondary education become increasingly unaffordable, its affordability through privatization is also a financial and systemic barrier for low-SES and URM students.

In an attempt to ameliorate this problem on a local level in Grand Rapids, this chapter will introduce a potential school-university-community partnership between Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) and Grand Valley State University (GVSU). First it will detail the current components of school-university partnerships between GRPS and other postsecondary institutions. Next, it will detail a partnership between GRPS and GVSU that will address the issues of undereducation, rising tuition costs, and privatization through a school-university-community partnership. The goal of this partnership is to create an intentional pipeline within the

K-16 curriculum, such that more URM and low-SES students will have greater opportunities to receive a 4-year degree.

Program Demographics

GRPS is the fifth-largest district in the state of Michigan; it serves "nearly 17,000 students with 2,700 employees, including 1,400 dedicated teachers" (Grand Rapids Public Schools, 2016, para. 1). Of those nearly 17,000 students, 6,008 are estimated to be Latino, 5,301 are estimated to be Black, and 1,056 are estimated to be two or more races (MI School Data, 2016a). Moreover, 12,359 are estimated to be economically disadvantaged (MI School Data, 2016b).

In 2015, Grand Valley State University—a university with campuses located in Grand Rapids' west side and in Allendale Township (among other locations)—enrolled 21,889 undergraduate students. Of those 21,889 students, 18,075 were White, 1,140 were Black, and 1,050 were Latino. In considering retention, GVSU exceeds expectations. In 2013, 2014, and 2015, GVSU retained more than 95% of enrolled Black students (Grand Valley State University, 2015c). Despite seeing declines in the retention of Latino students, GVSU did not see retention sink below 91%. GVSU also retained at least 90% of students across all levels of students within the expected family contribution (EFL) continuum (Grand Valley State University, 2015b). However, a vast majority of GVSU's 2015 student population (48.2%) entered the university with a $10,000+ EFL designation.

While retention across URM and low-SES demographics within GVSU exceeds, the number of URM and low-SES students that are represented within GVSU pales in comparison to their White, middle-class counterparts (Grand Valley State University, 2015b). Considering that 11,000 URM students, and 12,000 low-SES students attend the school district in which GVSU

has developed its second-largest campus, it is fair to say that GVSU must be more intentional about the populations to which the institution is reaching out. Indeed, with more intentionality, GVSU could provide veritable opportunities for URM and low-SES students through the success they have had in retaining these two populations of students.

Current Partnerships

GRPS has a number of partnerships with colleges, universities, and community programs. Their larger partnerships throughout the community are with Challenge Scholars (through the Grand Rapids Community Foundation), Kent School Services Network (KSSN), and various TRiO programs such as Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound. While the two TRiO programs are housed through Grand Valley State University (GVSU) and Grand Rapids Community College, they are federal grants whose dollars cannot be used as a recruiting tool for the postsecondary institution that is acting as the fiduciary.

Current institutional relationships between GRPS and GVSU are realized through visits from admissions advisors to recruit students and visits from financial aid advisors to provide FAFSA support; an early college program offered through the Kent Intermediate School District (KISD); summer camps provided through GVSU along with many of the community resources such as TRiO programs, the YMCA, and The Hispanic Center of Western Michigan; and through community grants such as Groundswell and various other programs offered through the College of Education (Grand Valley State University, 2014). As well, GVSU offers a number of professional development experiences that teachers and administrators can attend. Vice versa, GRPS has been a site for GVSU's students to receive on-site observational experience as well as a site for GVSU's future teachers to receive student-teacher training through the College of Education. The relationship between GRPS and GVSU has always been a form of symbiotic

mutualism, yet there continues to be a disconnect between the preparation a K-12 student receives, and the preparation needed to be accepted and successful at GVSU. This project attempts to ameliorate this issue through a program that removes the GRPS and GVSU curricula from their silos and aligns them through school-university-community partnerships.

The current manner through which students are able to achieve college credit through GRPS is through Advanced Placement (AP) classes, their International Baccalaureate (IB) school, and through dual-enrollment. AP classes are fast-paced high school classes that can potentially provide college credit if a student passes a cumulative exam and receives an adequate score (typically a 3 or better). The IB program is similar to both the AP program and the middle college program referenced in chapter one. While examinations are still attached to whether or not a student receives college credit for participating in an IB school, IB schools provide a more system-wide curricular structure that is also more inclusive for underrepresented students than its AP counterpart (Hoyle & Kutka, 2008). Dual-enrollment provides a student the opportunity to enroll in a college course, which will offer both high school credit and college credit upon completion of the course. However, the lowest grade point average (GPA) that participating colleges in the Greater Grand Rapids area accept is a 2.5.

While there are a number of efforts to encourage students at GRPS to go to college—and to create a college-going culture for that matter—the one partnership in GRPS that could be considered a goodwill attempt to ameliorate the issue of undereducation and the misalignment of K-12 and postsecondary curricula is the Fast Track program offered by Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC). The Fast Track program is an accelerated program for students who were placed into remedial courses upon taking the Accuplacer test (Grand Rapids Community College, n.d.b). Fast Track is provided through a partnership between GRCC and

GRPS with the goal providing avenues for students to circumvent remedial courses by the time they start community college in the fall. Currently, GVSU does not offer a similar program.

Stakeholders

Between GVSU and GRPS, there are a number of stakeholders. For both institutions, state, federal, and local dollars assist in the funding of both GVSU and GRPS (Grand Rapids Public Schools, 2015; Grand Valley State University, 2015d). It can be inferred that taxpayers at the state, local, and federal level are stakeholders for this school-university-community partnership. It can be assumed, however, that local stakeholders will be moreover affected by this partnership (see Appendix A). GVSU also receives finances from private sources. Since 81% of GVSU's operating budget is comprised of tuition dollars, GVSU students (and the parents and guardians who are expected to contribute to a student's tuition) are considered stakeholders. Moreover, GVSU receives various contributions from alumnus and private donors. As such, alumnus and private donors will be considered stakeholders in the school-university-community partnership.

Within each institution, a partnership between GRPS and GVSU must be approved by school leadership. Indeed, the GRPS school board, superintendent, and administration will be stakeholders in this endeavor. Within GVSU, the board, president, and administration will be stakeholders. This collaboration will also be of special interest to GVSU's division of Inclusion and Equity as well as their Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs, both of which have their own investments in initiatives that attract and retain URM and low-SES students. As well, a number of professors, teachers, and students will be affected by a partnership between GRPS and GVSU.

While the goal of this project is to implement it with limited costs, there are still expected to be costs attached to this type of project. It is for this reason that a relationship that was once

between a school and university begins to include the community. While it would be important to find grants that could potentially fund this type of project, there are various community resources that could be leveraged. The City of Grand Rapids would be an important source to help lobby financing this type of project. As well, there are a number of stakeholders within the community who would be interested in reinforcing a pipeline of skilled students—specifically URM and low-SES students. For that reason, The Right Place, The Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, and the diversity offices of various businesses could be various financial stakeholders within this project.

Program Components

In Michigan, the state requirements for graduation are 4 credits of English language arts, 4 credits of math, 1 credit of physical education and health, 3 credits of science, 3 credits of social studies, 1 credit of visual, performing and applied arts, and 2 credits of a world language (Michigan Department of Education, 2014). To receive credit "students must successfully demonstrate mastery of subject area content expectations or guidelines for the credit" (Michigan Department of Education, 2014, p. 5). The state mandates each district determines what is considered to be mastery.

While the law is written in a way that allows a student to earn credit upon proving proficiency on an assessment, many schools interpret a single credit as a year of a class plus a passing grade on a final exam. For that reason, the majority of students take 13 years to graduate after their first day of kindergarten. Literature has shown, however, that students learn across different timelines based on a milieu of influences in their life (Conley, 2013; Delpit, 2012). In other words, some students will earn proficiency faster or slower than other students. Moreover, each school district has the ability to choose its own curriculum. This, then, would be the area

through which GVSU would partner with GRPS to develop and implement a curricular bridge between the 12th grade and the 13th grade.

Creating a school-university partnership to develop and implement a curriculum, then, is the first part of the project. With the criticism that a K-12 proficiency model is useless unless it connects to first-year success at a postsecondary institution, it is critically important that the two institutions are creating a curriculum together (Tepe, 2014). Best practices in other institutions that offer an early college program show that a dean should act as a liaison between GRPS and GVSU (See Appendix B). This dean would work within the GVSU target school, but would also have a strong connection with the education office at GVSU. The dean should have experience in management and curricular development, and should also be someone who can navigate two different groups of stakeholders. In performing her or his job, the dean must be able to listen to the advisors' insights while also providing feedback regarding what GVSU expects from first-year students in order to be successful.

The second part of the project to provide a pipeline for URM and low-SES students in GRPS. The second way will look much like the middle college experience through schools such as Wyoming High School and Holland High School. The difference, however, will be that GVSU classes will be taught in the 12th and 13th years. This is made possible considering Michigan school districts are allowed to count college credit as a part of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (Michigan Department of Education, 2014). By the 13th year, students will take classes both at their high school and at the downtown Grand Valley campus. This will create both an easier transition and a support system (through the cohort) that will help to keep the cohort intact. By the 14th year, students will have the freedom to choose their own classes, but their cohort will meet on a regular basis to continue support. For many, the 15th year could

potentially be the final year of their college education—since the 12th year will act as both the senior year in high school and the freshman year of college (See Appendix C). However, some students may have to continue on to a 16th year in order to finish their course of study.

Project Implementation

To implement a program like this, all key stakeholders must be both willing and able to provide this service. The superintendent and board of education at GRPS along with the president, Division of Inclusion and Equity, Admissions, Financial Aid, the Student Academic Success Center, University Development, the College of Education, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at GVSU must all agree with the project. The best route to take would be to receive approval from both the president and the superintendent of schools. With the support of each institutions' leader, the project will have a much better chance to be implemented. Once leadership has approved this project, then a committee of stakeholders must be formed. This committee will engage teachers, professors, and administrators who will be willing and able to contribute to the success of this project.

Since the project's goal is to accept and retain more URM and low-SES learners from GRPS into GVSU, GRPS teachers and advisors must be involved, as well as the Admissions office and the Division of Inclusion and Equity at GVSU. To create a streamlined curriculum, it would be important to have the GRPS curriculum developers, as well as representatives from GVSU's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Education, and Student Academic Success Center to provide expertise around best practices and a narrative regarding what students must master to succeed in their first year of college.

In planning for GVSU classes that will be provided at a target GRPS school, it is important to have College of Liberal Arts and Sciences graduate students and adjunct professors

act as on-site professors for the 12th and 13th years. Because this project will be an added expense, it would be helpful to include University Development in the process as a means to raise funds, engaging local businesses who are interested in a more diverse workforce.

Once the project is solidified, students will be selected during their freshman year in high school. A student's GPA and formal application will be the two deciding factors for the first cohort. Upon acceptance into the program, each student will be provided an overview of the program's expectations and will sign the form, which demonstrates they read and understood it. This form will not represent a binding contract, as students will still be able to change schools or apply to another institution (see Appendix D). Upon reaching the 12th grade, students will receive instruction from graduate students who have been trained in the implementation of the co-created curriculum. Students will also take two off-site classes at GVSU during their 12th year. Adjunct professors will teach the 13th year, which is the year that will be split between on-site classes at a designated GRPS school and classes at the GVSU downtown campus. Throughout the 12th and 13th year, students will be expected to meet with an advisor from the Student Academic Success Center, and a graduate student will conduct cohort meetings during the cohort's 14th year of school. Both the 12th year and the 13th year will be free to the cohort of students. The last two to three years must be paid for by each student, however scholarships and FAFSA will still be available.

Project Evaluation

This program will be evaluated in two ways. The first way is to take yearly metrics on curricular success rates. These metrics will be gauged by both grade-point-average as well as student assessment scores (ie. The number of students who are demonstrating proficiency). It is

important that student success at the K-8 level is closely monitored, as elementary education will create the building blocks for mastery at the high school level.

The second way the program will be evaluated is measuring student success metrics within the cohort of students who will be participating in the K-16 partnership program. More specifically, the evaluation will gather data regarding student retention and graduation within the K-16 pipeline. Some of this data will be difficult to gather until the first cohort graduates, but retention will be measured on a yearly basis. As well, success within the cohort will be measured based on both grade-point-average and assessment data.

Project Conclusion

It is important to understand that a program like the one described in this project will have different stakeholders, and the implementation will need to change depending on the community of focus. As well, the politics surrounding education varies from state to state. A project that connects a school with a large population of URM and low-SES students to a university with a small representation of URM and low-SES students is a way to be intentional in attracting and admitting underrepresented populations to the university. Within a legal system that has made it illegal to provide any type of reparations to underrepresented populations, intentionality must be the creative process through which URM and low-SES students receive avenues to succeed. For many of them, success is represented by a bachelor's degree.

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Appendix A

Below is a mapping tool that can be used to understand who is a stakeholder in a partnership. Stakeholder influence levels are rated on a scale of low-medium-high. A stakeholder's influence is measured based on said stakeholder's potential to contribute, legitimacy, willingness to engage, influence on the project, and necessity of involvement. The names below represent the various people who are considered to be stakeholders in this project. The very bottom shows someone who is not a stakeholder for comparison.

Stakeholder Map: GRPS/GVSU

Stakeholder	Contribution	Legitimacy	Willingness to Engage	Influence	Necessity of Involvement	Comments
GRPS Superintendent	High	High	Medium	High	High	Important Stakeholder
GVSU President	High	High	Medium	High	High	Important Stakeholder
GVSU VP of Inclusion and Equity	High	High	Medium	High	High	Important Stakeholder
GRPS Board	High	High	Medium	High	High	Important Stakeholders
Target-School Principal	High	High	High	Medium	High	Important Stakeholder
Local Taxpayers	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Semi-important Stakeholders
Corporate Partners	High	High	Medium	High	Medium	Important Stakeholders
GRPS Teacher	High	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Stakeholder
Local Bartender	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Not a Stakeholder

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Appendix B

Below is a sample job description for the dean acting as the liaison between GRPS and GVSU.

POSITON	***Dean, University Bridge Program***
Qualifications	**Education:** Must have a BA in Education, Curriculum Development, or Higher Education. Master's preferred. **Experience:** Experience managing systems, providing development opportunities, and developing curricula. **Knowledge and Skills:** Familiar with Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point, culturally sensitive, self-motivated, hard-working, reliable, punctual, attentive, excellent communication skills, problem solving skills, must have transportation to work throughout West Michigan.
General Description	Support, align, and co-create a curriculum within a K-16 partnership between GVSU and GRPS. The Dean of the University Bridge Program will consult with stakeholders to create a sustainable curriculum, train teachers, and communicate the effectiveness of the University Bridge Program.
RESPONSIBILITIES	
Co-Create Curriculum	• Develop a planning and evaluation team within the K-16 curriculum that will use best practices to create a curriculum that is aligned from Kindergarten to the 16th grade • Effectively implement the curriculum through instructor training and evaluation • Take measurements of the curriculum's effectiveness and present it to the planning and evaluation team.
Design and Implement Training Programs	• Using the curriculum as a base, design and implement teacher trainings that consistently improve the effectiveness of the co-created curriculum • Receive and integrate input from teachers and advisors regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program. • Connect instructors to other institutions that are providing similar services to public school students.
Relationship Management	• Support the interests of all stakeholders, but most importantly, support the interests of the students. • Make continuing attempts to build capacity and increase effectiveness through community relationships • Be a liaison of support between the GRPS and GVSU staff involved in creating the curriculum
Other	• Support efforts to build stronger bridges for URM and low-SES learners to earn a 4-year college degree • Report progress to stakeholders along with potential for improvement.

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Appendix C

Below is a list of classes that students will be expected to take, where they will be able to take these classes, and during what years they will be expected to take each class.

Year	Class Types		Location
9th Grade	English 1 Algebra 1 Biology Civics/Economics PE/Health Foreign Language		GRPS High School
10th Grade	English 2 Geometry Chemistry US History Art Credit Foreign Language		GRPS High School
11th Grade	English 3 Algebra 2 Science (Chem 2, Physics, Anatomy, etc.) Social Studies (Gov, European History, etc.) Technology Elective Choice		GRPS High School
12th Grade	WRT 150 CHM 102 LIB 100 GVSU Elective GVSU Elective	MTH 122 ART 101 CJ 101 GVSU Elective GVSU Elective	GRPS High School Community College GVSU Downtown
13th Grade	<u>GRPS Classes</u> BIO 104 AAA 201 SWS class Foreign Language 101	<u>GVSU Classes</u> BIO 104 Lab SWS Class Foreign Language 102 GVSU Elective GVSU Elective	GRPS High School GVSU Downtown Campus
14th Grade	Courses determined by area of study Attend monthly cohort meetings		GVSU
15th Grade	Courses determined by area of study		GVSU
16th Grade (If Needed)	Courses determined by area of study		GVSU

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Appendix D

Sample Letter of Agreement for Students

Dear Parent of Guardian:

Thank you for your interest in the Grand Rapids Public Schools/Grand Valley State University Early Bachelors Program. We are excited that you and your child have a desire to be a part of this new and innovative program. We ask that you take a few moments to look over the program expectations with your student, and that you sign below to confirm that you have read and agree with what is outlined in this letter.

The Early Bachelor's Program is a program offered through a partnership between GRPS and GVSU. The program accepts rising 9th grade students who have demonstrated proficiency in the curriculum that was created between GRPS and GVSU.

Through the partnership, students will be provided a high school curriculum that is aligned with GVSU in a way that prepares students for their first year of college. Acceptance into this program does not guarantee admission into GVSU, although a student remaining in good standing will have the opportunity to continue her or his education at GVSU.

The program is free to join, and is free through the 13th grade (the first two years of college). Each student within the cohort will be expected to pay full GVSU tuition for the last two years of college (under the assumption that each student will complete her or his bachelor's degree by the 15th year). Each student will still be eligible for FAFSA and scholarships during their 14th, 15th, and potentially 16th years of college.

While remaining in good standing through the program does qualify a student to continue classes at GVSU, acceptance into this program is not a binding contract to attend GVSU. At any point in time, a student may apply to attend, or transfer to another college or university without penalty. If a student decides to attend a different college or university, she or he can request her or his official transcript from the registrar's office.

Throughout the Early Bachelor's Program, participants will be asked to remain within their cohort through the 13th year, and continue attending cohort support meetings through the 14th year. It is the hope that, with community support, the cohort will retain through the program and reach graduation.

We thank you again for your interest in this program, and we look forward to your child's participation in this program.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at XXX-XXX-XXXX. We will be happy to answer any questions, or respond to any concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,

XXXX XXXXXX