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Socio-Economic Inequalities, Academic Failure, and Institutional Interventions: What CUNY Is Doing To Help Its High Risk Populations

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES, ACADEMIC FAILURE, AND INSTITUTIONAL INTERVENTIONS: WHAT CUNY IS DOING TO HELP ITS HIGH RISK POPULATIONS

by

CYNTHIA CONSTANT

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Socio-Economic Inequalities, Academic Failure, and Institutional Interventions: What CUNY Is Doing To Help Its High Risk Populations

by

Cynthia Constant

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There is a lack of adequate research of the City University of New York’s (CUNY) school-based programs and services that are designed to aid and empower students in achieving academic success. These programs serve an urban based student population. A substantial number of these students are of low income and from historically underrepresented cultural and ethnic backgrounds. A significant portion of these students also attend a community college like Kingsborough Community College (KBCC) in the CUNY system. For most of this student population academic success is not easily obtained. This study examines the rationale behind student failure, as well as, the structural practices, programs and services that aim to facilitate students’ academic progress. Essentially in section I, we analyze: the possible academic and non-academic reasons a student would be unsuccessful in their academic career, the societal impacts of both the lack of college level education and the obtainment of a college education (on the individual, the family, and society as a whole). The implications of failure and what that means to and for the student is not often examined by the institution. In section II, we will consider two questions: what is KBCC doing (currently) to address student needs? And should KBCC be made accountable for the failures of their student population? We examine various campus based programs and services (i.e. New Start Program, COPE, ASAP, and SEEK/College Discovery) at KBCC that have been established to specifically aid these struggling and underrepresented student populations. Through the development of a program analysis protocol, I will evaluate central information regarding these programs and services and their relevance to the overall success of the student; how do these programs/services work? What are their practices, methods of self-evaluation, and possible reports of success (if there are any)? Furthermore, this study will seek to propose the future design of a qualitative interview with student and staff participants that purposes to assess the aforementioned student based issues.
Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................ iv
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................................. v
List of Figures and Tables ....................................................................................................................... vii
Section I: ................................................................................................................................................ 1
   Introduction .......................................................................................................................................... 1
   Nonacademic Factors and academic success ....................................................................................... 1
   Benefits of higher education .............................................................................................................. 2
   Social Capital, social mobility, and education ..................................................................................... 3
   Parents, poverty, higher education, and the family outcomes ............................................................. 7
   Self-efficacy: it’s all in the family ......................................................................................................... 11
   Student support services at Colleges: What’s the purpose? ............................................................... 13
Section II: ............................................................................................................................................... 19
   Introduction .......................................................................................................................................... 19
   Case Study ........................................................................................................................................... 20
   The importance of college based student services/programs .............................................................. 21
   Facts and Figures of CUNY schools ..................................................................................................... 26
      CUNY wide fall 2014 enrollment patterns ..................................................................................... 26
      At KBCC: enrollment patterns of fall 2014 ................................................................................... 27
      At Community Colleges retention rates in Feb. of 2012 ............................................................... 27
      At senior Colleges retention rates in Feb. of 2012 ......................................................................... 27
   Four Student centered programs ....................................................................................................... 27
      New Start program ............................................................................................................................ 27
      ASAP ............................................................................................................................................... 29
      College Discovery/SEEK .................................................................................................................. 30
      Cope ............................................................................................................................................... 31
   Program Evaluation ............................................................................................................................ 32
   Discussion ............................................................................................................................................ 39
   Suggestions for Future study: the New Start program will be used as a model ................................ 42
      Purpose of Study ............................................................................................................................... 42
Structure of study ........................................................................................................................................ 44
Procedures/Recruitment of students ........................................................................................................ 45
Outline of sample Surveys: Figures and questionnaires created by author .............................................. 46
  Figure 1: Incoming New Start student survey ......................................................................................... 46
  Figure 2: Current New Start student survey ......................................................................................... 47
  Figure 3: New Start alumni survey ...................................................................................................... 48
Conclusion .................................................................................................................................................. 49
References .............................................................................................................................................. 52
List of Figures and Tables

Table 1: Review of program goals and services ............................................................................. 33
Table 2: Program targeted demographic and problem ........................................................................ 35
Table 3: Program aid and support ................................................................................................... 36
Table 4: Program assessment of success .......................................................................................... 38

Figure 1: Incoming New Start student survey ................................................................................. 46
Figure 2: Current New Start student survey .................................................................................... 47
Figure 3: New Start alumni survey .................................................................................................. 48
Section I:

The convoluted story behind academic failure

Introduction

Navigating through America’s multifaceted social structures can be increasingly and significantly more intricate and difficult for certain segments of the American population. These portions of the American population often face difficulties in society that are both the result of and exacerbated by poverty. In order to complete a college degree successfully, there is a specific knowledge that an individual must have. Individuals in impoverished situations often do not have access to the formal academic knowledge base and processes. The often lengthy, demanding and arduous process of acquiring a college education can be negatively affected by consequences of poverty. There are numerous compounding academic and non-academic factors that can contribute to an individual's need to drop or reduce their college course load (i.e.: internal/external personal, familial [micro and macro social dimensions], financial, and social structural impediments). These factors would not only increase the overall length of time the average student takes to complete their degree, but for many, it may cause complete academy failure.

Nonacademic Factors and academic success

Studies have found that non-academic factors do have a significant effect on academic achievement (Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004). The internal non-academic factors include and are not limited to the level of commitment a student has to the obtainment of a degree, the level of self-confidence a student has, the level of academic skills that a student has acquired (i.e.: time management, study skills, critical thinking ability and so on), level of academic and
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

social integration into the institution (Lotkowski et al., 2004), and the struggle of drugs addiction (Bok, 2015). Furthermore, external factors can have significant impact on the ability of the student to successfully complete their degree at any academic level (i.e.: associates, baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral pursuits).

Oftentimes, a student has the cognitive abilities and intellect necessary to accomplish their academic goals; nevertheless, external complications often arise in an individual's life that are beyond their control. The external demands of personal life can present themselves in many forms including medical illnesses (personal/familial), loss of employment, conflicts between work and school schedules, the dissolving of familial connections, which can impact financial support and socio economic status, and the general emotional state of a family, inability to choose course of study, inability to successfully complete course of study (academic under preparedness due to deficiencies in k=12 education system), and so on (Bok, 2015). Regardless of the multi-dimensional factors that contribute to the academic failures of a student, there should be programs in place to aid the students in holistically combating some of their issues. It is difficult to ignore the connections between academic success and greater social trends, (i.e.: the connection between socio-economic status and college graduation rates and so on).

Benefits of higher education

There are both tangible and intangible benefits to having a college level education. Financially, a college education would optimally broaden the social dimensions of an individual's life. With a college level education, an individual can increase their annual income significantly. The median annual income of college graduates is 54,000 dollars (data from 2010), the median annual income for an individual without a college degrees is $32,600 (Bok, 2015).
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

The amount of jobs that require a college degree are steadily increasing. It is stated that by the 2018 63% of jobs will require college degrees (Bok, 2015).

An increase in college graduation rates may significantly benefit the economy in multiple ways. Increase in human capital (achieved by changing the skills, capabilities, and knowledge base of an individual that causes them to function differently) (Coleman, 1988). The individual can become more productive in society in many ways (i.e.: economic contributions, social and familial contributions, and so on) (Coleman, 1988). An increase in pay grade/financial capital may result and contribute to an increase in consumerism (which ultimately directly supports the economy) and an increase in taxes contributions which may be used to support social services that often benefit the entirety of society.

Essentially, the supply of college graduates (or lack thereof) can either contribute to economic inequalities or boost economic growth which can directly impact communities (Bok, 2015; Goldrick-Rab, Harris, Mazzeo, & Kienzl, 2009). The collective financial contributions of any population can directly and indirectly impact neighborhood resources. Thus, the acquisition and maintenance of resources in both micro (immediate family/household) and macro (neighborhood/community) levels is affected by socioeconomic status (Lareau, 2003). The resources that make up a neighborhood are based on the amount of resources that the population can generate. Resources such as parks, schools, churches, recreation centers, quality schools, health centers, quality hospitals and so on.

Social Capital, social mobility, and education

Income inequalities stem from the lack of social capital. The absence of a college education can and often results in the increase in income inequalities which manifest into social
inequalities which greatly impact lifestyles and health habits. Financial advancements often positively impact the potential for increased socio-economic status which influences nutritional health by allowing for the purchase of quality food and the affordability of quality healthcare which contributes to the overall quality of life for an individual and their family (Bok, 2015). To a greater degree, the health of millions of individuals in any nation characterize and determine the collective health of that nation. Additionally, obtaining an education can indirectly decrease the likelihood of individuals’ being unemployed, being on welfare and so on (Bok, 2015).

Firstly, social capital is entrenched in and is an attribute in the structure of the relations between individuals and also amongst individuals but it is not the individuals themselves (Coleman, 1988). Secondly, social capital appears to be dependent on the changes in the relations among persons that facilitate change (Coleman, 1988). Thus, one can posit that human capital is the fundamental basis of social capital. The skills (human capital) that an individual has attained now is seen as part of a network amongst others with either similar or different skill sets or knowledge. The more diverse the knowledge and skill-set within a social network, community, or family the greater the level of social capital that family/community has.

Another definition of social capital is a set of social resources that are ingrained in networks and relationships (Mahmood, 2015). These assets can include socially acceptable values and norms which are reflected in behaviors during socializing and interaction amongst individuals of the society, firm, or any organization (Mahmood, 2015).

The main goal of social capital is to progress and improved functionality (Coleman, 1988). Social capital can be utilized as resources to attain goals and interests (Coleman, 1988). At any point in a group set, individuals rely on each other to gain access to and through an
assortment of constructs in a system. Social capital can viewed as resources that aid in facilitating change or maneuvering through various social structures in any given society (Coleman, 1988).

Schools in general can act as a gateway to social and economic access and ascension. Access to college or postsecondary education can increase the opportunities available to at risk/low income students. Colleges can offer students access to certain programs that are set up to aid these student populations in succeeding and excelling in academics.

Exchanging resources through an open line of trust, expectation, and reciprocity is essential to the proper workings of any social capital structure (Coleman, 1988). Combining resources in order to achieve system level changes on an individual basis (Coleman, 1988). For example, attaining a college education can increase the human capital of an individual or the persons developed skill-set and improved knowledge base. This change in human capital (if enough members of a given group acquires similar levels of human capital) can contribute to the systematic changes in the values and structures of a group or community. Information can be the tool individuals use to attain social capital.

One method that this systemic change can occur or come about is through the exchange of information. Information can be attained through social relations that originally were maintained for other purposes in order to facilitate action (Coleman, 1988). The lack of information sharing and social capital attainment can restrict or constrains others due to normative behaviors (Coleman, 1988). One of the changes that can occur with the changes of social capital is the investment in the future generations.
Social capital can be used to create human capital in the next generations (Coleman, 1988). Often the human capital of child can be determined by the human capital of the parents. Although the parents human capital is low, if their social capital (access to information or resources) is high then the child is not significantly impacted (Coleman, 1988). In these situations the social capital of the entire family is high. Conversely, if the social capital (connections and access to outside structures or change engendering information) and the human capital of the parents are low then the child is affected greatly (Coleman, 1988). This can be mitigated if the child has access to outside sources of information or an outside sources of greater human capital (Coleman, 1988). Additionally, if the human capital of the parents is high but the connections between child and parent in hindered or nonexistent in any form or fashion then the child does not benefit from the social capital of the parents (Coleman, 1988). For example: if the parents have information regarding college enrollment, if they are unable to pass that information to their children then it is a detriment to the child's future outcome. A lack of meaningful interactions with parents can contribute to a lack of the child's access to social capital (Coleman, 1988).

The most significant overarching impact that access to college education has on a community is the ability to diversify that communities resources which will intrinsically increase their collective social capital (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006). Social diversity or any diversity of any kind can and often does benefit any group of individuals. Diversity allows for the facilitating of new ideas, new resources, and so on. When a group of people become segregated, it cuts them off from potential growth and evolution of that group and their environments.

There are communities that are segregated based on socio economic status and their inability to afford access to other more affluent and diverse communities. These segregated
communities are often made up of minority populations. For example: oftentimes minority populations that have been socioeconomically segregated and "locked" into their resources poor neighborhoods of concentrated poverty only associate with groups similar to themselves who are also "resource poor". This lack of diverse social capital/resources makes a community homogenized (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006). This lack of access and availability to resource-rich networks is what characterizes a resource-poor community. Conversely, a resources-rich community/networks are characterized by the level of diversity of its members with social advantages who share those advantages, resources, and expertise (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

Gaining access to resource-rich networks can improve any resource-poor groups ability to diversify their social grouping (Espenshade, Hale, & Chung, 2005; Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006). The ability of any social faction to be heterogeneous in their network attainment or access of resources, the impact of the lack or presence of social capital can be felt both in the macro levels and micro levels. Social capital or the lack thereof can begin to impact an individual's life trajectory from very early in life. Children are greatly impacted by the ways that they are raised (i.e.: Parenting styles). Parenting styles may be more likely to be impacted and change based on socio economic status which may affect the overall structure and future of one's family.

**Parents, poverty, higher education, and the family outcomes**

The access to higher education impacts the access to greater income levels which changes the access to social capital. In this regard, parenting style and education are often linked, resulting in an increase in the ability of parents to enhance their childrearing techniques. In the long term trajectory, parents that obtain a college education can indirectly and positively
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

influence their children's likelihood of obtaining a college education as well (Bok, 2015). The disparity between low income and high income families can be observed in this manner as well.

The institution/college can have a great influence on the success and failures of their student populations. Quality education can be considered as an equalizer of social capital which can aid racial minorities in improving their social mobility (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006). Counselors and teachers/professors can provide minority students with access to resource-rich networks. Those advisors and professors can bypass structural barriers that usually impede students’ attainment of social capital. Advisors can also obtain access to those resources on behalf of the students (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006). Schools are meant to afford every capable member of society the access to a better, and healthier lifestyle. The institution’s goal should always be to generate and maintain an environment that is both encouraging and tangibly beneficial to the student. Oftentimes, the tangible aid is access to diverse resources.

Intergenerational inequalities are powered by both race and class, even though races and class are not the same. Nonetheless, race and class, when combined, have a significantly greater impact of the lives of the affected individuals (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013). These aforementioned factors are greatly visible even in the connections between education levels and parenting styles of both the rich and poor class families.

The educational backgrounds of parents within the lower and upper classes are not at all similar. The middle class population is often well educated and has a wider knowledge base (Lareau, 2003). These parents have more ability to think critically about every aspect of life, and may have an expanded vocabulary (Lareau, 2003). Enhanced parenting techniques are also linked with the increased cognitive development of children (Lareau, 2003). A college level
education may provide a multitude of opportunities for these families that poor families would not be exposed to. For the middle class, education is a means of gaining access to better jobs/careers and superior and more affluent lives. A quality education which begins at the elementary school level and last throughout college is often crucial in obtaining and maintaining a higher socio-economic status. These qualities obtained by receiving a college education can be viewed in the ways that the social class (rich and poor) raise their children.

The middle class parents, regardless of race, practice the parenting technique of concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2003). This type of child rearing approach is focused on the parents actively fostering and assessing their children’s talents, opinions, and skills. Parents that practice concerted cultivation believe that it is their duty and obligation as parents to foster and cultivate the activities that their children are participate in and are exposed to. Parents that practice concerted cultivation, make a conscious effort to stimulate their children’s physical, cognitive, emotional and social development (Lareau, 2003). The parents are not afraid and feel assured in their abilities to intervene for their children when it comes to any aspect of life, this can encourage the feeling of parental/social support in children.

The concerted cultivation parenting styles are geared towards building stronger critical thinking, independent, confident individuals (Lareau, 2003). Parents enroll their children into several activities at a time. The child may show an interest in a particular area and the parent will take it upon themselves to facilitate the child’s development and success in that specific interest (Lareau, 2003). These children are involved in after school activities such as baseball, basketball, tennis, football, music lessons, dancing, tutoring, and many other things that may be of interest to them. The parents also encourage their children to take part in a lot of skill building and enhancing activities (Lareau, 2003). These children though over booked at times will in the end
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

have been exposed to countless amount of life altering stimulus rich experiences. This would aid in their development physically, mentally, emotionally, and especially socially. These children will most likely be successful in life and their careers because they learned to foster certain attributes in themselves as well as others because of such an affluent schedule some of their children may be more prone to developing strong and rigorous work ethics as well as learning ethics because of this, these children when they grow older may learn to raise their children in the same manner, fostering and demanding excellence (Lareau, 2003). All of the aforementioned qualities and opportunities are optimal for the completion of college education.

There is a major differences in the parenting styles of the rich/wealthy and the poor/working class communities. These differences in parenting may significantly contribute and account for the differences in achievement possibilities of their children. The poor and working class populations employ a vastly different parenting techniques.

Poor/working class parents usually do not have a college level education. For the poor class, education is an essential factor in social mobility. Nonetheless, it is mostly unattainable for a significant portion of the lower class population because of economic difficulties. Financially, most members of the lower class society cannot afford to get a college education. They must work to support themselves and their families. Higher education would potentially be of great assistance and could allow for the upward mobility needed to change social-economic statuses. Furthermore, an education could mean reinvestment into the poor communities which would change the quality of the neighborhoods (Lareau, 2003). Furthermore, a college education can indirectly increase the likelihood of college graduates becoming involved with the political and social processes (voting, party affiliations, rallying and so on) (Bok, 2015). A college education provides an individual with the tools that they need in order make informed decisions by
exposing them to a variety of topics and information that both challenge and empower them. Such acquisition of intellect and enhanced cognitive ability are made possible if the students are properly educated beginning in kindergarten and lasting throughout high school.

The poor/working class parenting style called the accomplishment of natural growth (Lareau, 2003). This child rearing technique basically gives the parents a sense of accomplishment because they were able to sustain the child through difficult economic and social times (Lareau, 2003). These parents allow their children to develop naturally. The child does not have organized activities nor do they have exposure to stimulus enhancing activities (Lareau, 2003). The children are generally scheduled to operate in and around their homes. These children partake in informal child play with their peers and family (Lareau, 2003). The autonomy (in regards to personal time) is given to the children, not the parents; this also allows the children to be responsible for their own lives while they are out of the house. This sort of childrearing techniques coupled with a lack financial ability contribute to a child's lack of structured cognitive and social foundations which, in the long term, impact their college readiness.

**Self-efficacy: it's all in the family**

The family domain greatly influences how and what an individual approaches challenges and life struggles. Familial influences can determine the overall ways an individual perceives and relates to society. The attachments made at the home level can greatly impact the lives of the children. Strong parental attachment can be a significant determining factor in the ways an individual perceived the world in relation to themselves (Bayer, 1968; Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline, & Russell, 1994). There are 6 categories or forms of perceived social support that may be derived from others: Guidance (i.e.: a parent providing advice and information), Reliable
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

Alliance/tangible aid, Attachment, which is an expression of caring or aid, Reassurance of worth, which is expressed through the valuing or devaluing of an individual’s abilities and personal qualities by a parent or close relation, Social Integration which is mutual interest, concerns, and belonging to similar social groups, and lastly, Opportunity to provide nurturance or be a source of support for others (Bayer, 1968; Cutrona et al., 1994; Watson, 2012).

Strong parent-child attachment can lead to a stronger/greater sense of perceived social support. When there is a greater sense of perceived social support, there will most likely be a greater level of self-efficacy belief (Linnenbrink, 2002; Lopez & Melendez, 2000). High self-efficacy can lead to a strong willingness for students to explore their close environments and beyond. High self-efficacy can significantly positively impact an individual’s ability to achieve valued goals such as academic success. These perceived social supports can be translated into goal achievement in academia. Students with high self-efficacy have been shown to be more successful in academia (Cutrona et al., 1994). Conversely, low self-efficacy due to weak connections of perceived social support often higher anxiety and fear and a lack of willingness or ability to explore environments and achieve goals (Cutrona et al., 1994). Parental social support often ranks higher on the scale of importance than peer and relationship support (particularly for college age students); this also impacts the potential for academic success.

The parent-child relationship continues to be a strong influencing factor in the lifespan of an individual (Cutrona et al., 1994). It may be safe to assume that as a child matures, the nature and impact of the parent-child attachment/support changes based on life positioning/stages. Nonetheless, it was found that out of the 6 provisions of perceived social support, reassurance of worth was a significant determining factor in academic success (Cutrona et al., 1994).
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

The interaction between parent and child is very crucial to the developmental process of the child. Parents transfer a variety of information, instructions and cultural social constructions (beliefs) to their children. Through this communication process parent and child may develop a bond that will act as a facilitator of growth. Parenting techniques are a personal choice and they can dictate not only how children learn but also how they function within society as adults (Lareau, 2003). Furthermore, parent/child bonds are potentially affected by parenting styles which are impacted by socio-economic status.

Student support services at Colleges: What’s the purpose?

Fewer than half of all high school graduates are senior college ready in math, reading and writing skills. Conversely, more than half of high school students are ready for community college (Bok, 2015; Greene & Foster, 2003). Raising graduation rates at community colleges would also appear to have the same positive impact on the economy as would the same amount of time at a four year college (Bok, 2015; Greene & Foster, 2003).

A significant amount of students who are entering both senior and community colleges require remediation prior to beginning their college level course loads. Nonetheless, fewer than half of the students in remedial courses complete remediation successfully (Bok, 2015). Unfortunately, upon repeated failure of remedial courses, students are dismissed from school. This is where certain programs intervene in an attempt to aid and support the students. Additionally, pressures to obtain a post-secondary degree amidst academic failures can also originate from external sources. For example; frequently, family and friends intentionally and unintentionally pressure students to prematurely return to school.
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

Students often have misconceptions of what college will cost or what the college experience is truly like. High school counselors are tasked with the daunting responsibility of informing all graduating high school seniors about their college options. Unfortunately, the counselor to student ratio is extremely imbalanced, with the students outnumbering counselors significantly (Bok, 2015). High school counselors are overworked and under-staffed. In order to increase the specialty of the college prep counseling major financial contributions would have to be offered from congress or state governments (Bok, 2015). This counselor support system is also crucial in the college setting.

Economically disadvantaged students often require helpful human relationships and integrative social networks and support services to succeed (Donlevy, 2000). This is the point where the counselors/advisors, student communities come in. these non-academic support systems can supplement the academic supports that the students are receiving. These students have experienced personal, emotional, and family difficulties beyond the scope or singular capabilities of the educational institution (Donlevy, 2000). Advisors/counselors, professors can bridge the gap between the academic portion of a students' life and the non-academic issues a student faces.

Financial readiness is often a deciding factor in whether a student attends college and the choice of college. This may also be the difference between a student attending a private or public college (such as New York University and CUNY Brooklyn College, respectively). Over the years college tuition has raised steadily and significantly. Nonetheless, students from low income families often are not encouraged to go to college, Additionally, most low income students properly informed of the true costs of tuition as well the kinds of financial aid available to them (Bok, 2015). Often, the adults in these students’ lives have not attended college so they do not
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

and cannot offer information to the student (Bok, 2015). Often, students state that one of the top reasons for them dropping out of college is the cost of tuition. Oftentimes older students have no other forms of financial support, the younger students' parents cannot afford the tuition, and the students that are working often state that they cannot work full time and continue with their college course loads (Bok, 2015).

There are significant factors within an individual's life that would increase or decrease the likelihood that they would be successful at almost all dimensions of life (Shockley, In Press). School, in its entirety is both influencing and being influenced by other aspects of life. Let us consider the work/life model which dictates that the requirements of one domain or section of an individual's life interferes negatively or positively with the other domains (Shockley, In Press). For example, if home/family/personal life becomes hectic and unmanageable, then the work domain will probably be negatively impacted; however, this relationship also may be true in the reverse. If we would understand school to be a separate but equal domain as work, then we can better understand the possible issues that can cause students to drop out or fail their courses.

The typical community college students is low income. The average community college student often faces the aforementioned factors that can lead to failure to successfully complete an associate's degree (Noel, Forsyth, & Kelley, 1987; Panos & Astin, 1968). The average community college student requires 6 years to graduate (Noel et al., 1987). The aforementioned factors make goal retention and career attainment extremely difficult and vastly improbable. Students may not return to finish their degree or may return much later in life (if their life circumstances permit). Oftentimes, such affected students prematurely or forcibly return to academia. Nonetheless, there are college based programs that can aid in combating some of personal, social, and financial issues that a student may possibly face.
The City University of New York (CUNY) has developed certain programs that are designed to aid this struggling population of students. One such program is called the New Start program. The New Start program was established in 1985 and instituted at Kingsborough Community College (KBCC) (Kingsborough community college: Dreams begin here; the office of career development, new start, scholarship opportunities, and experiential learning.2015). This program had as its stated goal to aid students who had experienced academic difficulty at the senior college level (students who were dismissed from their senior colleges on academic grounds). Students in the New Start program are offered specialized counseling, as well as focused academic advisement. The New Start Counselors provide students with individualized assistance during their time at KBCC and provide transfer counseling upon graduation (Kingsborough community college: Dreams begin here; the office of career development, new start, scholarship opportunities, and experiential learning.2015). Although it is strongly advised that the students consult with their New Start counselor every semester, it is not obligatory for them to do so. These specialized support systems are designed to assist the students in their attempts at overcoming previous difficulties. Furthermore, the New Start Program supports students in their efforts at achieving academic success at Kingsborough Community College.

The purpose of this research is to figure out if the Accelerated Study in Associates Program (ASAP), College Discovery, College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE): Graduation Success Initiative (GSI), and the New Start program is overall beneficial for the participating students. Although the New Start program is not a compulsory program, students may feel pressured to sign up for admission into the program immediately after being dismissed from their senior colleges. Whether this pressure is from internal or external sources it can significantly impact their academic trajectory. However, often the extenuating circumstances that
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

contribute to these students being unsuccessful in their academic career are not yet addressed and remain unchanging. In order for these students to be able to benefit entirely from the provided academic support systems, they must be in a mental and social space where success is possible. In order to be able to determine how and what resources are needed to better assist the New Start students, the extenuating circumstances that negatively impact their lives must be better outlined and addressed.

If there was a specific combination of support provided for a particular student (at Kingsborough) that greatly contributed to their success at Kingsborough, then it is essential to note that a comparable arrangement of support at the senior college level could academically benefit the student. These support systems should address social factors include family interferences such as problems with child-rearing, deaths, illnesses, births, availability of support and so on.

Nonetheless, in order to accomplish these tasks a significant amount of funding needed. Both administrative staff and faculty are taxed with increased workloads to accommodate the community college student populations. In the near future (next 5 years), an increase in staff, faculty, quality facilities, and better quality tracking abilities/systems are needed. Some of the suggestions made in the literature for the general college freshman population can be applied to the transfer population. Furthermore, the New Start students should have a mandatory introductory course that are geared towards understanding the available majors/courses of study, career development opportunities, job placement opportunities, and community building skills.

Graduation rates of college students can be raised by a net of 1.3% without additional cost, even by shifting money from educational budget to student services can help (Bok, 2015).
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

Nonetheless, community colleges receive less than 1/3 of the federal state government aid. Even though community college enrollment has increased by more than 2 million students between 2000 and 2006 (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2009).

The issues outlined in this paper are as valid in this current year of 2016 as they were in the year 2000, and will remain valid issues in the year 2030. Programs like the ASAP, CD, COPE, and New Start program seem to be significant in aiding the progress of the high risk and low income student populations within the CUNY system. Having such programs would greatly benefit these struggling student populations. When one or two students are failing or discontinuing their education, there may be no cause for alarm. When hundreds of students are failing and discontinuing their education it is reason to pay attention to the trends. Nonetheless, when there are thousands of students of mostly ethnic background are not successfully completing their college education at all, then, something must be done. The question still remains: What are these aforementioned programs doing to help these at risk populations? And are they successful?
Section II

Institutional Interventions: attempting to Increase graduation and retention rates through calculated student service approaches.

Introduction

The relationship between Student and Institution or college can be a positive, and enriching experience. Conversely, this same relationship can also be complicated, tumultuous, and unrewarding. The institution is a place where students can gain access to an education which can translate into better life outcomes and possibilities (i.e.: an increase in social capital). For the high risk, low income students gaining access to institutions of higher learning can prove to be complicated at best. Additionally, once access has been obtained students face an entirely new and unique set of issues that those in more affluent colleges may not have to face.

Because higher education institutions undertake the lofty goals of educating the members of its society, they must find ways to cater to all of the populations that are represented at their campuses. They must address the academic issues and difficulties that students encounter in their degree earning process. Additionally, they must address the non-academic issues as well. For at risk and low income student populations, those issues include access to information, level of quality of communication and relationship with counselors/advisors and peers, the urban community college experience, underfunding of community colleges and so on. In their attempt to combat some of these issues that students face. CUNY has developed a number of programs in order to assist it's at risk students in successfully completing their education.

The City University of New York (CUNY) is an intricate system of public colleges that were established in 1847(CUNY: Mission and history,2016). CUNY enrolls over 500,000 students per semester throughout the 5 boroughs. This urban university has 12 senior colleges (4
year colleges), 7 Community colleges (2 year colleges), and 6 graduate and professional colleges. CUNY was created by Townsend Harris as a free-of-cost institution. The original name was The Free Academy who's goal and mission was to extend the opportunities of obtaining an education to the students that were also students of the New York City public school systems (CUNY: Mission and history.2016). The demographics of focus were poor, working class, and immigrant populations (CUNY: Mission and history.2016). CUNY was also free to all students (CUNY: Mission and history.2016). Later on The Free Academy was renamed The City University of New York (CUNY: Mission and history.2016).

Case Study

This paper seeks to briefly analyze and evaluate some of the programs offered by CUNY. A case study of four programs at Kingsborough Community College. The programs in the case study are the Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP), College Discovery (CD), College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE): Graduation Success Initiative (GSI), and The New Start Program. These programs were selected based on their overall missions and program goals. They each aim to help their students graduate and overcome the issues that could impede academic success. Furthermore, these programs are currently some of the most prominent (in terms of popularity) programs offered at CUNY. The information regarding each program was obtained both from the main CUNY website as well as each program's homepages which are located on the KBCC website.

Once the information was collected, charts were created in order to better organize the findings. The charts were then combined to make a singular chart of all the programs to concisely outline the services and goals of each program. Combining the charts also serve as a tool that enhances the ability to compare the programs to each other.
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

Each program is designed to improve the retention and graduation rates of their student populations. Thus, the questions remain; what are the programs doing to combat the academic and non-academic issues that students face? And are they providing services that utilize methods that have been proven effective in aiding struggling student populations?

Each program was evaluated based on a number of analytical categories such as:

1. The primary goal of the program: what the program aims to accomplish.
2. The programs' service goals: the various services that the program aims to provide the student.
3. The targeted demographic that the program aims to assist: who are the student populations that need assistance. Who are the programs tailoring their services to?
4. The Problems that each program aims to address.
5. The ways in which each program sets out to combat the student academic and non-academic issues.

The importance of college based student services/programs

The goals of the university is to offer aid to the specific population of high risk/low income, high failure rate students. In order for the university to effectively help these populations they must address issues of community, racial, social isolation, lack of social capital, lack of institutional support and various other problems. Based on the analytical demographics outlined in the charts come of the programs that are offered by CUNY colleges are on the right track to effectively helping their intended student populations. It may be too early in the lifespan of some of these programs to expect full effectiveness.
What makes a good school based support services/programs of any kind? Regardless of the nuances of the program in order to better and holistically address the academic needs of the students colleges must issue programs that address both the academic and non-academic factors that hinder academic success (Habley, 2004). Nonetheless, some programs cater to a specific demographic which in turn can make them somewhat too specific. Significant specificity within a program can render that program largely ineffective to the general student population (Arnott & Hoover, 2007). Nonetheless, it is these support services that certain students rely on to fulfill their desire to achieve academic success. The majority of the university-based support services are geared towards the improvement of graduation and retention rates.

There are various things that programs and services providers can do to better serve their populations and achieve their program goals. Such programs must rely heavily on the staff, administration, counselor/advisors, and faculty that interact daily with the students. These employees are the essential parts of any school-based program or service. These consistent interactions and relationships between student, staff, faculty, and advisors must be fostered and healthily maintained in order for any kind of success to be made possible (Arnott & Hoover, 2007).

Unfortunately, most programs misuse or underutilize their advisement capabilities. Quality advisement can and often does play a significant role in the probability of student retention (Habley, 2004). The concept of quality advisement varies by institution, office, and by program goals. Regardless of the specific definitions of "quality" that an institution or program has, it must find ways to service the student accordingly. Having access to a quality institutional support can impact the probability of student academic success (negatively or positively).
Studies have suggested that the quality of interaction that a student has with concerned people on campus plays a part in their perceptions of the campus environment (Habley, 2004). Furthermore, studies suggest that programs and courses that include mentoring and support groups in their designs (i.e.: faculty-student mentoring, peer tutoring, academic counseling, and advisement programs) aid in improving retention rates [and future graduation rates] (Habley, 2004). Students essentially wish to be involved in building a community on their campus. Students wish to feel included in their educational process. Counselors, faculty, and administrative staff can aid in providing support for the students.

Counselors and advisors play a significant and intricate role in the ability a student has in navigating the academic careers. Counselors are institutional change agents who can share knowledge of norms and resources about college life (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006). Counselors can also provide the students with access to these resources and networks that would provide the students with access to on campus and off campus adults (both academic and non-academic resources) (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006). These networks afford the student, particularly of low-income backgrounds, with the ability to significantly diversify their social capital (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006). Students that do not have such access to support systems ultimately are at significant risk of increased probability of academic failure. Students that are in urban colleges are often at higher risk of poor quality counseling experiences.

The urban community has been plagued with high rates of poverty due to historical actions and structural processes that have created racially and socially homogenous communities (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006). Often low funding is a significant issue for certain college which impact how much a program receives and which programs receive funding. Funding impacts how support staff (including counselors) are hired which impacts counselor to student
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

ratios, which in turn significantly impact the quality of counseling sessions (Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006).

These urban communities are home to many urban based colleges. Within the urban college setting, there are subsets of urban colleges; the residential and commuter colleges. Residential colleges can be defined as colleges that have a predominant number of their student population living on campus (Clark, 2006). The commuter colleges are defined as being schools whose enrollment comprises primarily of non-residential students (Clark, 2006; Garland & Jacoby, 2004). Urban commuter colleges are unique in that they inhabit a wide array of spaces (Clark, 2006). These spaces and places can range from the traditional campus setting containing ivy vine laden buildings, quad and open spaces to rented spaces/floors of modern buildings. The options are seemingly endless. These spaces can often contribute greatly to the overall culture and structure of the campus life. Access to these spaces and places within a commuter college setting is often significantly altered.

Commuter colleges often lack well-defined structured social communities (Student departure in commuter colleges and universities.2004). A lack of distinct social communities often hinders the ability, access to, and opportunity that a student has to interact with faculty and peers outside of the classroom setting (Student departure in commuter colleges and universities.2004). Commuter students also have a unique challenge in traveling to the campus grounds. Because commuter students do not live on campus and often live several miles away from the college, they have to have access to reliable forms of transportation. For commuter college students, the act of traveling itself is a prominent feature of the commuter student experience (Clark, 2006; Garland & Jacoby, 2004). In order for these students to have full access to the facilities and services offered on campus, the offices must be open for extended periods of
time and the classes must be offered at later and often odd times (Clark, 2006). The experiences that a student has when traveling to and from school (i.e.; whether the ride is long, short, dangerous, and peaceful, the amount of transfers one must make on the metro, etc.) can have significant impact on whether the student chooses to remain at that particular college.

These colleges are extraordinary in that they not only have distinctive cultures and location but they also service a unique set of students (Clark, 2006). Urban commuter college students, unlike residential students, have diverse living arrangements. These challenges are not at all limited to academic progress and access to social structures within the campus walls. Commuter students have struggles that relate to the multiple life roles that they have (i.e.: parenting, full-time employment, community roles etc.) (Gianoutsos & Rosser, 2014; Tinto, 1993). The non-academic portions of the student’s life can impact the academic careers of any individual student. These responsibilities often make it difficult for students to integrate into the social support systems, which hinder the student’s ability to develop a sense of belonging to and in the institution (Gianoutsos & Rosser, 2014). These same extenuating circumstances play a part in a students' decision to depart from their college; conversely, the greater the perceived academic integration (by the student) the greater the likelihood the student will stay (Student departure in commuter colleges and universities.2004; Tinto, 1993).

A possible remedy for students isolation and alienation from college communities and (i.e.: social and academic communities) is to afford students the access to learning communities. The likelihood of student departure decreases as the student’s participation in learning communities increases (Student departure in commuter colleges and universities.2004). Both senior and Community colleges offer students access to learning communities.
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

Although students enrolled in 2-year colleges intend to transfer to senior colleges (Student departure in commuter colleges and universities, 2004; Tinto, 1993), during the time that they are attending the junior/community college they need to be able to participate in as many campus-based communities as possible. Commuter colleges like those in the CUNY system often face these unique challenges in retaining and graduating their students.

There are a few factors to consider regarding the typical community college student. The typical community college students are low income. The average community college student often faces the aforementioned factors that can lead to failure to successfully complete an associate's degree (Noel et al., 1987; Panos & Astin, 1968). The average community college student requires 6 years to graduate (Noel et al., 1987). The aforementioned factors make goal retention and career attainment extremely difficult and vastly improbable. Students may not return to finish their degree or may return much later in life (if their life circumstances permit). Oftentimes, such affected students prematurely or forcibly return to academia. Nonetheless, there are college based programs that can aid in combating some of the personal, social, and financial issues that a student may possibly face.

Facts and Figures of CUNY schools

CUNY wide fall 2014 enrollment patterns

The overall enrollment at community colleges was 99,958 students, with that: 28.5% were blacks, 39.7 percent Hispanic, 16% white, 15.9 percent Asian, and .4% American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN). Out of the above demographics: 49% were first generation college students, 48.8% had household incomes of less than 20,000 dollars, 12.2 percent were married, 30.1 percent worked more than 20 hours per week, and 65.6% received PELL grants (FAFSA) (Office of institutional research: Student profile/demographic information, 2016).
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

**At KBCC: enrollment patterns of fall 2014**

In 5,676 students enrolled at KBCC: 32% of student population is black, 35.3 percent are white, 14.9% are Asian, 17.7 percent are Hispanic, and .2 % are AI/AN (Office of institutional research: Student profile/demographic information.2016).

**At Community Colleges retention rates in Feb. of 2012**

Out of 15,780 students that were tracked: 65.4% is still enrolled after 1 year, 42 percent were enrolled after 2 years, and only 6.2% were awarded an associate's degree after 2 years (Office of institutional research: Retention & graduation.2016).

**At senior Colleges retention rates in Feb. of 2012**

A cohort of 4,721 students were tracked for retention and graduation: 61.7% remained enrolled after 1 year, 34.4 percent remained enrolled after 2 years, and 13.3% earned an associate's degree after 2 years (Office of institutional research: Retention & graduation.2016).

**Four Student centered programs**

The City University of New York (CUNY) has developed certain programs that are designed to aid this struggling population of students. These programs are designed to aid the aforementioned student populations; students that are low-income, underrepresented, and commuter students. The programs being analyzed are the Accelerated Study in Associates Program (ASAP), College Discovery (CD), College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE) especially the Graduation Success Initiative (GSI), and the New Start program.

**New Start program**

The New Start program was established in 1985 and instituted at Kingsborough Community College (KBCC) (Kingsborough community college: Dreams begin here; the office of career development, new start, scholarship opportunities, and experiential learning. 2015).
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

This program had as its stated goal to aid students who had experienced academic difficulty at the senior college level (students who were dismissed from their senior colleges on academic grounds) (Kingsborough community college: Dreams begin here; the office of career development, new start, scholarship opportunities, and experiential learning. 2015). Students in the New Start program are offered specialized counseling, as well as focused academic advisement. The New Start Counselors provide students with individualized assistance during their time at KBCC and provide transfer counseling upon graduation (Kingsborough community college: Dreams begin here; the office of career development, new start, scholarship opportunities, and experiential learning. 2015). Although it is strongly advised that the students consult with their New Start counselor every semester, it is not obligatory for them to do so. These specialized support systems are designed to assist the students in their attempts at overcoming previous difficulties. Furthermore, the New Start Program supports students in their efforts at achieving academic success at Kingsborough Community College.

In 2007 the New Start program boasted of 63% retention rates (CUNY Newswire, 2007). The New Start program has 24 participating colleges: 11 City University of New York (CUNY) colleges, 4 State University of New York (SUNY), 9 private colleges. As of 2007 the New Start program enrolled 12,000 students since its inception in 1985 (CUNY Newswire, 2007). The New Start program can only be found at Kingsborough Community College, and is the only program of its kind in the country. Furthermore, 13% of the total college enrollment of KBCC are New Start students (CUNY Newswire, 2007). The New Start program was not designed to be a personal counseling substitute, it is purposed to be a sort of forgiveness program. Even so, the New Start program can be used in conjunction with other offices and services that would holistically aid their student population. Furthermore, the affiliated senior colleges should also
provide the New Start students with added support. Suffice to say that if the issues that impeded
the successful completion of a four-year degree persist; then there is a significantly greater
chance that the students may be unsuccessful in their transition back into a senior college (upon
completion of the New Start program). There are various ways that the issues of student issues
can be addressed but the decentralization of education in America makes it difficult for the
community college/senior colleges to coordinate the requirements of their courses (Bok, 2015);
As well as the optimizing of administrative approaches to student services.

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education in America makes it difficult for the community college/senior colleges to coordinate
the requirements of their courses (Bok, 2015); As well as the optimizing of administrative
approaches to student services.

**ASAP**

The Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) was established in the fall of 2007
as a comprehensive program heard towards aiding students in obtaining their associates degrees
(Evaluation of accelerated study in associate programs (ASAP) for developmental education
students.2016). As of 2015 ASAP launched a pilot program entitled ACE (Accelerate, Complete,
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

Engage) at John Jay College, which is focused on helping students at senior college (ASAP: Accelerated study in associate program.2016). ASAP is designed to help students obtain their associates degrees as quickly as possible. ASAP boasts in helping students to overcome their stressors and meet their various responsibilities by providing students with social, academic, and financial support (ASAP: Accelerated study in associate program.2016; ASAP: Accelerated study in associate programs.2016). These provided services include but are not limited to cohort by major, smaller class sizes, and so on. Since 2007 ASAP has had 9 cohorts across 7 participating CUNY colleges. As of fall 2015 ASAP has admitted over 12,000 students across the participating CUNY colleges (ASAP: Accelerated study in associate programs.2016).

As of 2010 ASAP has reached a 61% graduation rate (ASAP: Accelerated study in associate program.2016; Evaluation of accelerated study in associate programs (ASAP) for developmental education students.2016). The 2007 cohort saw a 55% graduation rate compared to the 16% national graduation rate. Students without developmental needs saw a 53% graduation rate within 3 years (ASAP: Accelerated study in associate program.2016; Evaluation of accelerated study in associate programs (ASAP) for developmental education students.2016). Students with developmental needs had a 48% graduation rate compared to the 21% of students in comparison groups.

College Discovery/SEEK

The College Discovery (CD) program was established in 1965 (SEEK & college discovery.2016). The program was initiated as a 5 year experiment that was geared to prove that all students needed was an opportunity to attend college (SEEK & college discovery.2016). The program founders argued that it was not fair for the CUNY to exclude certain students (due to CUNY’s existing admissions criteria) from attempting to successfully achieve a college of degree
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

(SEEK & college discovery.2016). The CD program was established CUNY wide in 1969, officially establishing CD in all CUNY colleges (SEEK & college discovery.2016). CUNY wide availability of CD supports the establishment and maintenance of connections between CUNY community and senior colleges in order to better aid the students upon their transfer to another CUNY school (SEEK & college discovery.2016). Since its inception, CD has enrolled 230,000 students. Students that otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend college (SEEK & college discovery.2016). The CD programs aim is to provide equality of education to students that would normally not have access to quality education. (Financial or academic reasons) Currently, the program exceeds retention and graduation rates for regular students who are not in any programs (SEEK & college discovery.2016).

*College discovery (fall 2014)*

Total of 330 students enrolled for College Discovery. 111 black students enrolled, 77 white students enrolled, 90 Hispanic students enrolled, 51 Asian students enrolled, and 1 American Indian/Alaska Natives (Office of institutional research: SEEK/college discovery.2016).

*College Discovery (fall 2012)*

Out of a CUNY wide survey of a cohort of 1507 students in the fall of 2012: After 1 year 70.7% of students are still enrolled. After 2 years 47% of students were enrolled. Out of the 47% retained, only 5.4 percent of those students actually graduate (Office of institutional research: SEEK/college discovery.2016).

*Cope*

The COPE program was established in 1993 (The college opportunity to prepare for employment (COPE).2016). COPE functions as an umbrella program that provides students with services that both help with academic and nonacademic issues. Academic services include
the COPE Graduation Success Initiative (GSI) which a program within the COPE spectrum that is a structured academic and personal support program that is designed to promote and enhance student learning, academic retention, and graduation (The college opportunity to prepare for employment (COPE).2016). Upon entering this program students are en-route to graduating within 1 year (The college opportunity to prepare for employment (COPE).2016). This program offers a number of services and incentives that are geared towards the academic success of the students by attempting to overcome both the academic and nonacademic factors that often hinder academic success.

These programs aim to accomplish similar tasks. They set out to provide at risk students with resources and aid that will encourage and facilitate academic success. The following section will examine the specific type of support/resources offered to students, and the success of these offerings.

**Program Evaluation**

The aforementioned programs have been well-known services in the CUNY system since the mid 1960’s until the present. These programs were essentially created or adopted to aid certain populations of the CUNY students. ASAP, CD, and COPE are operational CUNY wide. The New Start program is the only program out of the 4 programs that is specific and exclusive to Kingsborough Community College. These programs boast extensive services. This evaluation considers the information made available through their various websites to determine what exactly they are offering the students and how is it helping.

Table 1 reviews each programs’ primary and service goals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP)</th>
<th>College Discovery (CD) [CUNY Higher Ed Opportunity Program]</th>
<th>College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE): Graduation Success Initiative (GSI)</th>
<th>New Start Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary goals of the program</strong></td>
<td>• Accelerate graduation for qualifying students.</td>
<td>• To help students graduate within 1 year</td>
<td>• To provide students with an opportunity to continue their education post dismissal from a four year CUNY college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Graduate 50% of students within 3 years or less.</td>
<td>• Help students enter the workforce which leads to economic self-satisfaction.</td>
<td>• Encourage academic success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Obtain the highest retention and graduation rates with students going on to Bachelor's and more.</td>
<td>• Increase Graduation rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What is the program’s service goal?</strong></th>
<th>To eliminate the stressors that would cause a student to not complete an Associate's degree.</th>
<th>To provide financial, academic and counseling support by offering stipends that aid with books etc. and additional semester bonus funds for graduating.</th>
<th>Help students stays on track by providing academic advisement/support.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 1: Review of program goals and services
This table consist of aggregate information retrieved from both the programs' links on the KBCC website, and the program links on the CUNY.edu website. (Table was created by the author)

There are a few points or key pieces of information to consider in the above table. Firstly, all of the programs aim to increase graduation rates of their student populations. Secondly, although they employ different vernacular in their descriptions, each program suggests that the developmental and personal growth of the students is also one of their priorities. Interestingly enough, the new start program does not boast a quick and expected graduation time. All of the programs state (in their own words) that connecting students to proper services in order to help
them to overcome certain obstacles that would normally prevent them from graduating is one of their goals.

Table 2 presents the targeted student populations and the issues that may impact the student’s academic progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted student population</th>
<th>College Discovery (CD) [CUNY Higher Ed Opportunity Program]</th>
<th>College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE): Graduation Success Initiative (GSI)</th>
<th>New Start Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Students that are struggling academically or financially.</td>
<td>Students who have the potential to succeed, but lack educational foundational and economic resources to achieve their goals</td>
<td>• Lower income. Disadvantaged/high risk students.</td>
<td>Students that have been dismissed from a 4 year college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students that require 1 or 2 developmental courses.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Students with family income below the federal government guidelines (below poverty line)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low income, high risk students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is/are the “problem(s)” that this program is trying to address?</td>
<td>They are attempting to aid low income students: academically and financially underrepresented, disadvantaged and underprepared students to graduate with an Associate’s degree. (this is more demographic than problem oriented)</td>
<td>Students under preparedness for the workforce.</td>
<td>Prevent academic stagnation and failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low student retention, low student graduation rates, student failures.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Financial aid provided to students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial insecurities that may prevent students from successfully completing their degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Academic supports provided to students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student academic under preparedness.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal issues that the student may have that would also prevent successful completion of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

Table 2: Program targeted demographic and problem
This table consist of aggregate information retrieved from both the programs' links on the KBCC website, and the program links on the CUNY.edu website. (Table was created by the author)

All of the programs target slightly different subgroups in the same student population. They all cater to at-risk students (students of low-income backgrounds who are at a high risk of failure). The New Start program is the only program that directly and almost exclusively focuses on academic failure and not on nonacademic or income related issues that students may have. ASAP also advertises to students that are struggling academically rather than financially. The New Start program’s initial problem is the student being dismissed from their senior colleges. All of the programs attempt to deal with both academic and nonacademic factors. The question is how do they specifically seek to help students overcome these issues?

Table 3 indicates the type of aid and support that each program offers to their student populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP)</th>
<th>College Discovery (CD) [CUNY Higher Ed Opportunity Program]</th>
<th>College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE): Graduation Success Initiative (GSI)</th>
<th>New Start Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How is this program setting out to combat or address the factors that impede academic progress?</strong> (i.e.: aid, resources, and support systems/structures)</td>
<td><strong>Providing a range of financial, academic and personal supports.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Comprehensive and personalized academic advisement</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Career counseling</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Tutoring</strong></td>
<td><strong>Counseling: students assigned advisor/counseling at the onset.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Students are offered supplemental instructions (tutoring)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provides students with targeted academic advisement designed to help them overcome previous difficulties &amp; work</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Graduation incentive ($500)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>book vouchers</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>tutors</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>registration assistance</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Provides referrals to job placement, job prep, internship opportunities, and work study.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Offers students with clothing for</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Program aid and support
This table consists of aggregate information retrieved from both the programs' links on the KBCC website, and the program links on the CUNY.edu website. (Table was created by the author)

As shown in table 3, 3 out of 4 of the programs listed in the table offer the student both academic and financial support. The ASAP, CD, and COPE programs offer the student more than academic counseling (which in its own right is a seemingly good standard of support, but may be insufficient for a number of students). These programs address some of the major problem areas (that were listed in section I of this paper) that students struggle with. These areas of difficulty include:

1) **Financial Insecurities**: The ASAP program offers book vouchers, stipends, and tuition or fee waivers, all of which contribute significantly to student retention. If the student cannot fund their academic career they cannot continue their enrollment. Also, sometimes the student's current mode of financing their tuition (government financial aid, scholarship etc.) is not insufficient and may not help with book/textbook purchases and school supplies. In these cases book vouchers and stipends come in handy. It is worth mentioning the job placement goals of the COPE
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

program, as well as their 500 dollar student graduation bonus (which serves as an incentive for increased student graduation rates).

2) Travel/commuting: The ASAP program offers Metro-Cards to all of its students. Since KBCC is a commuter college, all of its students commute to and from campus. Often the cost of traveling may be an obstacle for the students’. Sometimes it may be the case that students cannot afford the cost of travel. If the majority of the costs of college is mitigated, the potential retention of the student can be increased.

3) Academic under-preparedness: The ASAP, CD, and COPE programs offer their students supplemental instructions/tutoring. Higher quality and greater availability of tutoring can benefit the students. This can make the difference between passing and failing.

4) Student Isolation: ASAP program seems to be the only program that offers consolidated/blocked classes. As mentioned in section 1 of this paper, blocked course schedules creates cohorts, cohorts can engender a sense of community building which can encourage student success. When students perceive that they are in a community, they can feel a greater sense of belonging and a decreased sense of isolation (Habley, 2004; Tinto, 1993). This increased belonging encourages the student to further integrate themselves into the campus culture. Student communities can provide everyone involved with an opportunity to gain access to various resources in the student-generated resource pools.

5) Advisement/counseling: Assigned advisors were also discussed in the previous section of this paper. Advisors (instructors/professors) are generally the gatekeepers to resources that the student would normally not have access to (as mentioned in the previous sections of this reading). Furthermore, having an assigned advisor (as is the case for ASAP) can help build
familiarity and trust between advisor and student and thus build the student's trust and commitment to completing the program. Also, the student knows where and who to turn to when help is needed.

Table 4 illustrates each programs method of success appraisal. Certain programs have specific and calculated methods of success appraisal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology for assessing program goal attainment</th>
<th>Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP)</th>
<th>College Discovery (CD) [CUNY Higher Ed Opportunity Program]</th>
<th>College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE): Graduation Success Initiative (GSI)</th>
<th>New Start Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- This program has had an evaluating cohort since 2007 (12500+ students) of various academic levels and has seen a tripling of the national graduation rates for community college.</td>
<td>Not Explicitly stated</td>
<td>Not Explicitly stated</td>
<td>Not Explicitly stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program methodology for tracking student success rate</td>
<td>- The MDRC study</td>
<td>Not Explicitly stated</td>
<td>Not Explicitly stated</td>
<td>Not Explicitly stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- CUNY quasi-experimental group design study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cost-benefit analysis by CBCSE</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: Program assessment of success**

*This table consist of aggregate information retrieved from both the programs' links on the KBCC website, and the program links on the CUNY.edu website. (Table was created by the author)*

ASAP is the only program that has this level of transparency. Whether this transparency is a method of advertisement or is simply a part of their core belief is to be determined. Nonetheless, ASAP has made their evaluation protocols available to the public (on their website). ASAP affirms that they have been scrupulously assessed and evaluated by more than one source. ASAP also affirms that it is dedicated to utilizing data [and research] as means to
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

continuous program improvement. This data is generated and obtained from ongoing internal analysis by: 1) CUNY employed a quasi-experimental constructed comparison group design 2) An experimental design, random assignment study led by MDRC, which spanned over five years and 3) A cost-benefit analysis led by Professor Henry Levin and the Center for Benefit-Cost Studies in Education (CBCSE) at Teachers College (ASAP: Accelerated study in associate programs. 2016).

It can only be presumed that there is ongoing tracking of student populations for the other 3 programs (CD, COPE, and New Start)). None of the other programs have any information readily available to the public on their websites regarding methods of evaluating goal attainment or other standards. Even though there are no statements posted on the program websites, there must be some sort of evaluation protocol simply because the programs are reporting certain facts and figures/measures of growth and success that cannot be derived without some form of data collection and evaluation.

Discussion

All of the programs offer some sort of comprehensive package or attempt at holistic aid. The programs that stand out are the ASAP and the College Discovery programs: ASAP provides students with block course schedule which allows for students to build student based communities. Blocked learning schedules increase cohort commitment and facilitates and supports the formulation of student based learning communities (peer to peer networks) (Habley, 2004; Tinto, 1993). Furthermore, this blocked course schedule means smaller class sizes, and major cohort progression, essentially, students’ progress through their course load together. ASAP also offers students assigned advisors, students are paired with advisors that are responsible for their academic counseling, and connecting them to the proper services that they
need. ASAP provides students with comprehensive and personalized advisement which includes Career counseling. ASAP students also enjoy the access to tutoring services, tuition waivers, fees and book vouchers, monthly Metro cards, and special support to for students who wish to transfer to 4 year or transition into the workforce (Evaluation of accelerated study in associate programs (ASAP) for developmental education students.2016; ASAP: Accelerated study in associate program.2016; ASAP: Accelerated study in associate programs.2016). The student to professor ratio is lower which means more one on one time can be spent with the students. More possibility for individualized attention. Furthermore, a cohort course schedule can help in community building. The ASAP package is very specialized and interesting, which merits further consideration for future research.

College Discovery also offers a detailed package. CD mandates that both freshmen and transfer students meet with an advisor regularly (SEEK & college discovery.2016). The counselors are responsible for: Providing advisement, during which, they supply students with academic plans, Helping students to establish their academic aspirations and identify the skills needed to attain those goals, Assisting students to develop a plan of action to reach their academic goals, Facilitating the removal of personal or academic problems that are interfering with the students' attainment of their degree, Conduct college survival skills workshops, Provide referrals for tutoring and other services, and Assist students with the preparation for future employment endeavors (SEEK & college discovery.2016).

The supplemental instructions (tutoring) offered to CD students addresses various academic challenges that students may face. Firstly, tutoring exposes students to new technique, development of skills, and different methods of learning e.g. (critical inquiry, reading strategies, etc.). Secondly, supplementary instructions provided by CD helps students to apply and
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

understand various concepts learned in class in order to assists students in understanding homework, term papers and other assignments (SEEK & college discovery.2016). These instructional sections are offered in group and individual (one on one) form as needed. Lastly, supplemental instructions provides students with aid in developmental and some introductory courses; offers students with CAT-W (writing), RAT (reading), and remedial math workshops in preparation for exams, Provides computer assisted Supplemental Instruction, and assists ESL students with ease of access and progression through college by connecting them with multilingual staff (Spanish, French- Creole, Russian, and Chinese) (SEEK & college discovery.2016).

As mentioned in section I of this paper, the higher the education level of an individual the greater their chances of enhancing their socioeconomic status (social capital). Furthermore, the increase in social mobility encompass traits that are intergenerational that can be effective tools used to remove entire families from communities that are socially and financially isolated. Students that live in these isolated communities can find it difficult to gain access to quality colleges and even more difficult to graduate. These students face both academic and nonacademic factors that often impede their academic progress. Over the years colleges have employed multiple programs that purpose to help combat some of these major struggles that students face in their academic journeys. Future studies should be conducted to better gauge how students view and interpret their life struggles as well as the program services that they are receiving. The New Start program will be the case study because not very much is known about its inner workings and its student populations other than their prior failures.
Suggestions for Future study: the New Start program will be used as a model

Purpose of Study

Not much is actually known about programs like the New Start program. Some of the potential questions/concerns regarding the New Start program are: firstly, whether or not this kind of blanket support is beneficial to the student’s long term educational trajectory. Secondly, can this sort of program be duplicated in a four year /senior college level in order to offer continued academic and personal support to the New Start population? Additionally, could this sort of program be improved in such a way that would more holistically aid the New Start population?

The purpose of this research is to figure out if programs like the New Start program is beneficial for the participating students. Although the New Start program is not a compulsory program, students may feel pressured to sign up for admission into this program immediately after being dismissed from their senior colleges. Whether this pressure is from internal or external sources can significantly impact their academic progress. Such pressures can include personal desire to complete ones education, pressure from parents to complete ones education and so on. Often the extenuating circumstances that caused these students to be unsuccessful in their academic career are not yet addressed and are unchanging; such circumstances include parenthood, caring for ill family or self, working full time and so on. When these extenuation circumstances are combined with internal and external pressures, the student may repeat the same pattern of failure. In order for these students to be able to benefit entirely from the provided support systems in the New Start program, they must be in a place where success is possible; essentially, their circumstances must be significantly evaluated and addressed. In order to be able to determine how and what resources are needed to better assist and support the New Start
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

population, the extenuating circumstances that significantly impact their lives must be better outlined and addressed.

These survey questions are intended to gain a better understanding of the students understanding of the program, what the students believes that the program is meant to accomplish, and what they expect of the program. If the program does not align with the student’s expectations, then it may not prove successful for that particular student. At the least, the student may struggle with their progress in the program. One program cannot solve all of the issues for all of the students.

Furthermore, these surveys are meant to gauge and better understand the students' expectation of themselves, the student's reason(s) for joining the program, the students current non-academic life circumstances, the student's perceptions and interpretations of their failures/short falls, the students future and current and goals. Essentially, the desire here is to better understand the student perspective and thus arrange the program to better suit the student needs. Because any program services target slightly specific and different sub-culture of the student body, they must cater more accurately without either compromising the programs goals and services or alienating certain student populations that may actually need the program's services. The aforementioned measures will be different and may be not applicable to certain students in various ways based on their degree of progress within a given program.

Lastly, The New Start program was not designed to be a personal counseling substitute, it is purposed to be a sort of forgiveness program. Even so, the New Start program can be used in conjunction with other offices and services that would holistically aid their student population. Furthermore, the affiliated senior colleges should also provide the New Start students with added
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

support. Suffice to say that if the issues that impeded the successful completion of a four year degree persist; then there is a significantly greater chance that the students may be unsuccessful in their transition back into a senior college (upon completion of the New Start program). There are various ways that the issues of student issues can be addressed but the decentralization of education in America makes it difficult for the community college/senior colleges to coordinate the requirements of their courses (Bok, 2015); As well as the optimizing of administrative approaches to student services.

If there was a specific combination of support provided for a particular student (at Kingsborough) that greatly contributed to their success at Kingsborough, then it is essential to note that a comparable arrangement of support at the senior college level could academically benefit the student. These support systems should address social factors include family interferences such as problems with child-rearing, deaths, illnesses, births, availability of support and so on.

Structure of study

In order to determine what those circumstances are, an anonymous survey can be taken in the form of a questionnaire. The targeted segment of the New Start population are the incoming New Start students, the current New Start students, and the New Start alumni. The participants will be chosen randomly. A total number of participants will be 9 students, 3 from each subpopulation. Each group having its own set of questions. Although this methodology can be somewhat restrictive in the type of information and the depth of information that it can collect, it can be utilized to get a baseline information. The surveys can be supplemented with one-to-one or group interviews.
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

**Procedures/Recruitment of students**

The incoming students can be recruited during the pre-enrollment portion of their admissions process. During this portion of the admissions process, the students are seated with an advisor for approximately 15 minutes in order to go through their files; during this time the questionnaire may be given to the student. Furthermore, a disclaimer can be issued to the student outlining the intentions and purposes of the survey.

The current students can be reached in two ways: Firstly, the academic advisors that they see can issue the surveys during the 30 minute appointments that they periodically have with the students. Secondly, I will ask the advisors that teach certain courses (that New Start students take) to hand out the survey to their students. The alumni may be reach either via email or when they return to our offices for career and job placement help.

*The following pages offer sample student surveys for all three of the suggested New Start populations. These would be distributed to the students randomly (as much as the staff and faculty can manage). Each survey is its own set and is targeted at a specific group of New Start students.*
Outline of sample Surveys: Figures and questionnaires created by author

Figure 1: Incoming New Start student survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why were you dismissed from your school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think caused you to not to succeed in passing your courses?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were there any specific reasons that contributed to you failing your classes? Yes / No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, what were those reasons?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are you signing up for the New Start program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe that your extenuating circumstances would interfere with your progress in the New Start program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the New Start program would be sufficient to help you succeed academically? Yes / No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If no, please elaborate:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kind of aid do you want or expect to receive from the New Start program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kind of aid or support do you think you need?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2: Current New Start student survey

Why were you dismissed from your school?

What caused you not to pass your regular and/or remedial courses?

Were there any other specific reasons that contributed to you failing your classes? Yes / No
If yes, what were those reasons?

What are your goals in signing up for the New Start program?

What kind of aid do you really think you need to succeed academically?

What kind of aid did you hope or expect to receive from the New Start program?

Is there anything that you think might interfere with your progress in the New Start program? Yes / No
If yes, please elaborate:
Figure 3: New Start alumni survey

Why do you think you dismissed from your school?

What caused you not to pass your courses or placement exams?

Were there any other specific reasons that contributed to you not passing your classes? Yes / No
If yes, what were those reasons?

What kind of aid did you hope or expect to receive from the New Start program?

Do you believe that your extenuating circumstances would interfere with your progress in the New Start program?

Did the New Start program provide you with adequate help/support?

How was the transition from Kingsborough Community College to a four year senior college?

What were the circumstances that made your transition unique?

Do you believe that you would have benefited from further support from your four year institution? Yes / No
If so, how?

What are some of the support systems would you have wanted to see in your four year college?
Conclusion

It is evident that both academic and non-academic factors matter with regards to scholastic success. In order to combat these factors, programs and services like the ASAP and CD programs are in fact needed. In order to accomplish these tasks, a significant amount of funding needed. Both administrative staff and faculty are taxed with increased workloads to accommodate the community college student populations. In the near future (next 5 years), an increase in staff, faculty, quality facilities, and better quality tracking abilities/systems are needed. Some of the suggestions made in the literature for the general college freshman population can be applied to the transfer population, Furthermore, the New Start students should have a mandatory introductory course that is geared towards understanding the available majors/courses of study, career development opportunities, job placement opportunities, and community building skills.

Graduation rates of college students can be raised by a net of 1.3% without additional cost, even by shifting money from the educational budget to student services can help (Bok, 2015). Nonetheless, community colleges receive less than 1/3 of the federal state government aid. Even though community college enrollment has increased by more than 2 million students between 2000 and 2006 (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2009).

The issues outlined in this paper are as valid in this current year of 2015 as they were in the year 2000, and will remain valid issues in the year 2050. Programs like the New Start program should be adopted throughout CUNY. Having such programs would greatly benefit these struggling student populations. The ASAP model/approach has proven to be the most successful (thus far) and comprehensive out of the 4 evaluated programs. College Discovery also deserves a notable mention for its broad amount of services offered. Is CD not as prominent and
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

successful due to a lack of sufficient funding or is it because of the age, origin, structure, and culture of the program itself? Although ASAP and CD seem similar in the services that they provide, nonetheless, there is a difference between the two even if the difference is slight.

The mission(s) of any given college can contain a myriad of goals (primary, secondary, and service goals). These goals outline what the purpose and direction(s) the institution wishes to go. It is interesting to see that over the past years, the two goals that are steadily and quickly increasing in importance are retention and graduation of student populations. These goals engender programs that are significantly focused on improving the graduation and retention rates of their affiliated colleges.

As much as institutions have a desire to graduate and retain a high number of students if they do not approach the issue with great care and significant intent, they will not succeed. No matter what the goals, missions, or intents of the programs/services are (whether it is to satisfy program funders that have great expectations of success), service to the students should come first.

When one or two students are failing or discontinuing their education, there may be no cause for alarm. When hundreds of students are failing and discontinuing their education it is a reason to pay attention to the trends. Nonetheless, when there are thousands of students of the mostly ethnic background are not successfully completing their college education at all, then, something must be done. There is considerable good that a college degree imparts on the life of the student as an individual (human capital) and a member of society (social capital). The institution is meant to be a place of access. It is meant to afford students the opportunity to make connections with those people and resources that are outside of their social and economic bubble.
Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

No one program can and will wholly address every issue for every student. Nonetheless, these programs that are in existence can provide the greatest variety of possible aid that students may need. This is increasingly made feasible as the years pass and program initiatives focus on more than just anecdotal ideals. Research is becoming more and more reliable in program development. All of the analyzed programs offered a set of services that they perceived as being beneficial to the students. More recently we see an increase of program initiatives being supported by research. Does that make these programs more effective? Should we look at the results/numbers and take them at face value? It is evident that the number of years that it is relevant to the community it serves, nor does it determine how effective it is at achieving its intended goals.
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Inequalities, Higher Education, and Program Solutions

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