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A Qualitative Exploratory Study of the Contributions of Program Leaders to the Dual Enrollment Environment at Three Comprehensive Institutions of Higher Education in Georgia

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A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PROGRAM

LEADERS TO THE DUAL ENROLLMENT ENVIRONMENT AT THREE

COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN GEORGIA

By

AMANDA WOODFORD

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Dedicated to my lucky charm, my niece, and now my angel,

Amber Tamia Roberts.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the processes of dual enrollment program leaders as elements of the dual enrollment environment at three comprehensive four-year institutions of higher education in Georgia in 2017. This study addressed one research question: What processes/practices do program leaders contribute to the dual enrollment environment? The leaders of the dual enrollment programs selected for this study were individually interviewed to gain a better understanding of their daily processes and practices and the inner workings of their respective programs. The results showed commonalities between each of the participants which led to the identification of four themes: setting parental boundaries, supporting student development, orienting students, and seeking support. The researcher concluded that program leaders set boundaries with parents to promote independence and personal responsibility amongst students, use interactions with students to promote student development when first-year seminar courses are not available, serve as the primary source for orienting students to the campus, and seek support and clarification to improve the dual enrollment student experience. Keywords: dual enrollment, environment, program leaders

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Early access to college can be traced throughout the rich history of higher education in the United States from the founding of Harvard College where young men were trained for the sake of advancing learning (Thelin, 2011) to the more recent educational arrangement of dual enrollment. In the 1970's, concurrent and dual enrollment programs became the newest options for providing early access to college for academically advanced students where skipping grade levels, taking Advance Placement courses, and participating in special programs were once the only options widely available (Howley, Howley, Howley, & Duncan, 2013). Starting in the early 2000's, this particular "credit-based transition program" has continuously gained state-level support, policy, and funding to promote academic equality and access to college for most students, not just the academically gifted (Bailey & Karp, 2003).

The current study sought to examine the institutions and the processes of program leaders as elements of the dual enrollment environment at three comprehensive four-year institutions in Georgia. Specifically, this study gained insight into the day-to-day operations and governance of these dual enrollment programs by interviewing a designated representative from each university to determine program/student demographics, program structure, statistics/outcomes, and challenges these leaders face when implementing these programs. Analysis was conducted to identify common practices and experiences of the program leaders. The development of a fuller understanding of the dual enrollment environment, including the acts of program leaders, will contribute to the foundation on which best practices may be established.

Overview of Dual Enrollment

Starting with the first dual enrollment program at Syracuse University in 1972, secondary schools and institutions of higher education have collaborated to provide academically high

achieving high school students with college credit-bearing courses that also satisfied high school graduation requirements (e.g., Syracuse University, n.d.; Karp, 2012). The first dual enrollment program implemented an At High School program model where high school teachers were trained to teach college courses and students attended class at their high school within their regular school day. Today, secondary and postsecondary institutional collaborations typically design dual enrollment programs that implement one or more of the models that have since become mainstays: At High School (with trained high school teachers or with college instructors), Virtual Campus (online courses), and On College Campus (high school students take courses on the college campus). With the financial and political backing of state governments, dual enrollment programs today cater to the needs of high achieving students as well as students who are at or just below academically average.

In the 2010-2011 school year alone, over two million (approximately ten percent) of high school students across the United States of America participated in dual enrollment programs, allowing them to earn high school and college credit simultaneously (National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships, n.d.). Thanks to state-level programs, such as Georgia's Move On When Ready program (MOWR), a growing number of students are taking advantage of these government subsidized educational opportunities thereby reshaping the first-year experience. Because the broad term "first-year student" includes any student with less than 30 credits, regardless of age, enrollment status, and even the number of year these students have been enrolled at an institution (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005), dual enrollment students are often considered first year students. These students now represent a sizable portion of the first-year student population of schools across the nation, bringing with them unique challenges into the college classroom due to the legal and practical concerns surrounding their age, maturity, and

college readiness. Institutions with dual enrollment programs have taken on the challenge of meeting the needs of these students and their families without the guidance of researched-based best practices, resulting in a multiplicity of institutional approaches, both unique and common.

With the growing population of dually enrolled students, a new surge of research has emerged to provide a greater understanding of dual enrollment. Several researchers have found the aims, and therefore the target participants, of dual enrollment programs have shifted from providing additional rigor and content exposure for academically advanced students to providing a clear pathway to higher education for academically average students (e.g., Howley, Howley, Howley, & Duncan, 2013; Kanny, 2015; Pretlow & Wathington, 2014). The aim to increase access to higher education for all students is evident across the nation, with 47 states (and the District of Columbia) operating policies in support of dual and concurrent enrollment programs (Zinth, 2016). While in recent years dual enrollment programs have targeted a larger population than before, researchers found that some subpopulations may still be underrepresented (Pretlow & Wathington, 2014). Additionally, researchers have learned that students who participate in a dual enrollment program reap many benefits including improved high school performance, greater likelihood of college enrollment, less risk of remediation, higher first-year college GPA, and an early development of a "college student identity" (An, 2015; Cowan & Goldhaber, 2015; Karp, 2007; Roach, David, & Vargas, 2015; Young, Joyner, & Slate, 2013).

Despite the growing interest in dual enrollment, researchers point out that there is much we do not know. The U.S. Department of Education (2003) has urged researchers to investigate the number and types of students that participate in dual enrollment programs, state policies that influence program structures and practices, the common features of dual enrollment programs, and the effectiveness, transition, and persistence related outcomes of dual enrollment efforts.

While researchers have begun to examine some of these topics, little attention has been given to what happens once institutions accept dual enrollees. One such piece of literature explores how instructors of courses with dually enrolled students can maintain the level of rigor expected of a college course while providing both academic and non-cognitive support for underprepared students (Hughes & Edwards, 2012). However, few, if any, researchers have begun to explore the ways in which four-year colleges and universities design the dual enrollment experience once students have enrolled nor the ways in which dual enrollment program leaders contribute to the dual enrollment environment. Addressing this gap in the research could lead to the establishment of best practices, clarify our understanding of dual enrollee college choice and matriculation into the institution (or another four-year institution) after graduation, and develop standardized strategies for approaching the implementation of dual enrollment programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to describe the processes of dual enrollment program leaders as elements of the dual enrollment environment at three comprehensive four-year institutions of higher education in Georgia in 2017. One-on-one interviews with designated dual enrollment coordinators and/or directors were used to identify practices these leaders have put into place to support the dual enrollment students and how they contribute to the dual enrollment environment on the campuses of Kennesaw State University, Georgia Southern University, and the University of West Georgia. Specifically, the interviews explored the history, structure, outcomes, challenges, practices, policies, and procedures associated with the dual enrollment program at each of the institutions. The following research question guided this study:

1. What processes/practices do program leaders contribute to the dual enrollment environment?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is its contribution to what we know about the value of dual enrollment programs. By exploring how program leaders govern the structure of these programs in ways that promote student success, this study begins to understand the dual enrollment experience as both an environment that influences student success (Renn & Reason, 2013) and structured college transition. While researchers have explored many aspects of dual enrollment participation, there has been a distinct lack of research on the environment of dual enrollment programs (e.g., special programs, support personnel, processes that address the developmental needs specific to the young population, etc.). Although researchers often come to conflicting conclusions or disagree on the extent to which some outcomes hold true, recent studies have begun to flesh out the outcomes and benefits of participation in dual enrollment programs. However, there is no empirical research that identifies the best practices that program leaders may implement to help students reap the benefits of participation. This study provided an initial look at otherwise unreported institutional practices that support student success.

By identifying current trends in the practices of current dual enrollment program leaders, the findings of this study set the stage for dual enrollment program directors to intentionally design meaningful and effective dual enrollment programs and emphasize the practices that better meet the needs of dually enrolled students, encourage their success, and facilitate their college transition. Additionally, these findings can be viewed as one of the first steps towards identifying best practices in implementing dual enrollment programs at the institutional level. This step towards understanding the role of program leaders in the structuring of the dual

enrollment environment and how that environment impacts students in their college transition is surely significant to the national movement towards creating clear and efficient college pathways for all students.

Limitations and Generalizability

This study furthers the current understanding of the dual enrollment experience by examining the contributions of program leaders as an element of the dual enrollment environment and helps fill an area of dual enrollment implementation research that is missing: the role of program leaders in the success of dually enrolled students. The exploratory basic qualitative study method implemented in this study is particularly useful for gaining a better understanding of phenomena that is not well researched, however the findings from these studies and the conclusions they support cannot be viewed as definitive. This study, like all other small qualitative studies, is not intended to generalize the findings to suit institutions other than those included in the study (Creswell, 2014). Still, it is possible to generalize some of the results of this study, such as the contributions of program leaders to the dual enrollment environment, to similar institutions. According to Merriam and Simpson (2000, p. 111), generalizability of exploratory qualitative studies is "related to what each user us trying to learn from the study." That is, consumers of this study may find the conclusions useful for their interests. For example, a program coordinator at a mid-sized institution in Florida may use the findings of this study to support his or her case for implementing a new policy for the institution's dual enrollment program because the conclusions made in this study are generalizable to his/her institution.

Organization of the Thesis

The following chapter, Chapter 2, provides an overview of current research on dual enrollment and the first-year experience and defines the theoretical framework that shapes this

study. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology, including the research design, research question, and process for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the research results and analysis of data collected in the study. Chapter 5 discusses the findings of this study and offers recommendations for future research and implementations for policy and practice concerning dual enrollment programs.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Historically, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs that grant college-level credit to students in high school were only available to students at schools that had the ability to support these programs (Bailey & Karp, 2003). With the increasing focus on college access and completion nationally through the Complete College America initiative and in the State of Georgia through Complete College Georgia, dual enrollment programs have become a popular pathway for high school students to satisfy high school requirements while earning college credits. Although dual enrollment is often referred to as "concurrent enrollment," credits students earn in dual enrollment programs satisfy both high school and college requirements, unlike concurrent enrollment which requires students to take college courses on top of their requirements for high school so they are concurrently enrolled at the high school and the college/university (Karp, Calcagno, Hughes, Jeong, & Bailey, 2007; Pretlow & Wathington, 2014; Allen, 2010). Dual enrollment allows students to complete high school requirements while earning college credits and does not require students to take any courses above and beyond these requirements so it is more seamless and potentially more desirable for many students, but especially for those who may otherwise be at risk of not matriculating for a variety of reasons (Karp & Hughes, 2008). Changes in the national and state policies have resulted in the strategic use of dual enrollment, while the increasing participation in these programs has resulted in the need to examine dual enrollment as a college transition experience.

Dual Enrollment Program Overview

History of dual enrollment. Permitting students to pursue higher education early is a practice that has been documented throughout the history of higher education. Early accounts

attest to the matriculation of boys in their early adolescence who, when faced with the lack of formal primary and secondary systems of education, attended the United States' first colleges in pursuit of access to more rigorous academic exposure (Thelin, 2004). As the standardization of secondary education became more widespread across the United States (U.S.) in the mid to late 1800's (Goldin & Katz, 2009), colleges and universities began to set stricter entry requirements that included successful completion of secondary education (Thelin, 2004). Students who showed advanced academic skills were put on an accelerated college track by way of quickly completing high school requirements, for example grade-skipping, before their college matriculation (Swiatek, 1993). However, with the exception of special programs, the pathway from high school to college remained disjointed (Goldin & Katz, 2009; Arnold, 2015).

Secondary and higher education developed independently, and to a large extent, these two bodies continue to exist without much formal collaboration. The Soviet Union's 1957 launch of Sputnik I motivated the U.S. government to strengthen its national education system and produce mathematicians and scientists who would develop the technology needed to keep the U.S. at the forefront of advanced warfare (Wissehr, Concannon, & Barrow, 2011). In turn, government officials encouraged secondary and collegiate partnerships (Arnold, 2015) with initiatives like Race to the Top. In 1965, the Higher Education Act (HEA) provided institutions of higher education with funding for additional educational resources and financial assistance for lower and middle-class families (Higher Education Act of 1965, 1965; The Pell Institute, 2003) and started to shift inequitable educational opportunities by financially supporting education for the low and middle classes. This led to the development of credit-based transition programs (Arnold, 2015). One such program, College Board's Advanced Placement (AP), credits the findings of two studies for its development and subsequent 1952 launch of the AP program. The

first of the studies urged high schools and colleges to recognize their connecting roles in a common goal and recommended that high schools provide students with the opportunity to engage in college-level work and that colleges recognize students who had proven they had done so via achievement exams (The College Board, 2003). By the 1970's, the growing partnership between secondary institutions and institutions of higher education resulted in the first concurrent enrollment programs (Arnold, 2015).

In 1972, Syracuse University created the first known example of a dual enrollment program when administrators from Central New York High School sought to collaborate with Syracuse to develop a program designed to challenge students who had already completed high school requirements and were no longer taking their senior course work seriously. As a result, Syracuse began designing college credit bearing courses that were taught by trained high school teachers at the high school within the regular school day. This college-readiness dual enrollment program became Project Advance (Syracuse University, n.d.). Throughout the late 20th century, concurrent and dual enrollment programs that provided early access to college for academically high achieving students grew in popularity. Within the first few years of the 21st century, new programs emerged and broadened student access to early college entry.

Since 2002, the Early College High School (ECHS) Initiative has sought to provide a clear pathway to college for students typically at risk for difficult college transitions, including students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, students that are the first in their families to seek higher education (first-generation), English language learners, ethnically minority students, students who are expected to academically underachieve, and students who are otherwise underrepresented in higher education (Jobs For the Future, n.d.; Lewis & Anglada). ECHS students were, and still are, given the opportunity to earn a high school diploma while

simultaneously earning an associate degree, two years of college credits, and/or a bachelor's degree at no cost (Jobs For the Future, n.d.; Lewis & Anglada, n.d.). This fundamental change in the target population meant dual enrollment programs could serve as a college readiness and transition strategy for a much larger population of students (Karp, 2012). With this change came stronger partnerships between high schools and colleges as well as state support (Arnold, 2015).

Policies and legislation. A confluence of educational legislation set the stage for the creation and growth of dual enrollment programs. Most notably, the 1958 National Defense Education Act, the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the 1965 Higher Education Act and its reauthorizations reflect the U.S. government's move towards improving the quality of education and providing access to all students (e.g., Hunt, 2016; The Pell Institute, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2010; United States Senate, n.d.; Jolly, 2009). An examination of the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act reveals a testing culture that has negatively impacted students' readiness, their ability to adjust to college rigor and expectations, and, as a result, their success in college (e.g., Trolian & Fouts, 2011; Wernert, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2007). In response to the failures of NCLB and the declining global rank of the U.S. education system, the Obama administration announced the 2020 College Completion Goal aimed at making the U.S. the most educated country once again by graduating ten million students from institutions of higher education and creating and supporting college pathways that will allow all American citizens to complete a minimum of one year of higher education or advance training (Kanter, Ochoa, Nassif, & Chong, 2011). This goal sparked an increase in state support of dual enrollment programs.

Astin's I-E-O Model

      The remainder of this chapter has been organized around Alexander Astin's Input-Environment-Outputs (I-E-O) model (Astin, 2010). According to Renn and Reason (2013), Astin's I-E-O Model is a "framework for understanding how college affects students" (p. xi). As shown in Figure 1, the model considers the effects inputs (i.e., student characteristics, personal qualities, and traits) have on both the environment and outputs. This model also examines the impact the environment has on outputs; in other words, how the experiences students have impact the skills and abilities (often referred to as outcomes) students should be learning.

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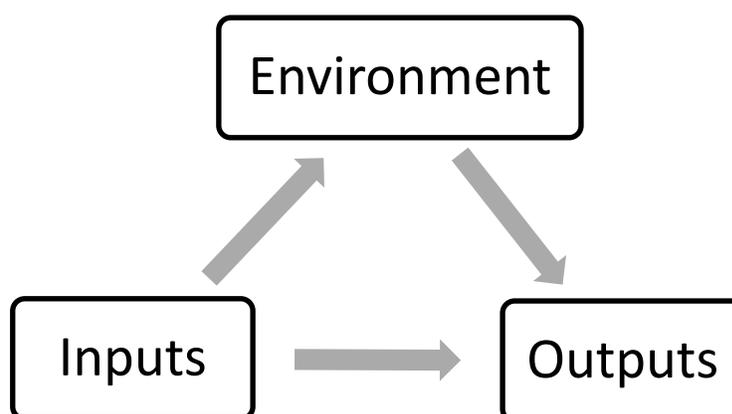
Figure 1. Astin's Input-Environment-Output (IEO) Model describes the relationship between input (what students come with), environment (the student experience; physical and abstract elements of environments), and output (what students leave with) (Renn & Resason, 2013).

      With respect to the aim of this study (i.e., to describe the processes and practices of dual enrollment program leaders as elements of the dual enrollment environment at select institutions in Georgia), it is important to gain a clear understating of the student inputs that impact the dual enrollment environment and the outputs programs like these achieve. This study seeks to better understand dual enrollment programs as a college learning environment as a step towards defining the best practices that promote the desired outputs.

      Inputs: Understanding the characteristics of dual enrollment students. Astin's model accounts for hard-to-measure input such as personality, disposition, personal values,

family life, and personal identities (Astin, 2010; Renn & Resason, 2013) having some impact on environment and outputs. Current literature provides a better understanding of some of the more tangible inputs of dually enrolled students (e.g., GPA, gender, race, and socioeconomic status). These inputs (whatever students bring to the college experience) effect the student's perception of the environment and the outputs of the college and dual enrollment experience.

Program Participation. In the 2010-2011 school year, dual enrollment participants, often referred to as "dually enrolled" and "dual enrollees," made up about ten percent of the American high school population (National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships, n.d.). The new approach of using dual enrollment as a strategy for creating college pathways for all students has resulted in more diversity in race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and academic achievement of dual enrollees (Kanny, 2015). While this new diverse population includes academically average students and students who are usually underrepresented on U.S. college campuses, some research suggests that most dually enrolled students are academic high achievers who are academically motivated and thoughtfully engaged in their learning (An, 2013; Kanny, 2015; Ozmun, 2013). Those dually enrolled students whose academic achievements are at or slightly below average and/or have a desire to attain a trade often elect to participate in a Career-Technical Education (CTE) dual enrollment program (Karp & Hughes, 2008). Despite efforts to lessen the college attainment gap, some researchers have found that current dual enrollment programs may be missing the target (e.g., Pretlow & Wathington, 2014; Taylor, 2015; Cowan & Goldhaber, 2015).

Although much of the policy and legislation governing dual enrollment programs has sought to increase college attainment for a large and diverse population of students, these efforts may not equally benefit all participants nor have a large impact on the reduction of inequalities in

college access and completion (Taylor J. L., 2015; Cowan & Goldhaber, 2015). For example, while the recent boom in participation in dual enrollment programs has resulted in larger numbers of participants in all eligible populations, the dominant beneficiary of dual enrollment programs is the white female subgroup (Pretlow & Wathington, 2014). A recent study found a four to eight percentage point gap in college matriculation and completion between the overall average credits taken from all dually enrolled students studied and the minority and low socioeconomic status dual enrollment students (Taylor J. L., 2015). Another study found that low achieving dually enrolled students matriculate at higher rates than their non-dually enrolled counterparts but are also more likely to drop out of high school, obtain a GED, or fail to complete a secondary diploma in four years (Cowan & Goldhaber, 2015). Prior to overcoming the potential inequalities in dual enrollment programs, students may also have to face challenges in the process of electing to participate in a dual enrollment program.

In addition to transportation and scheduling challenges associated with the On College Campus program model, students must decide if they are mentally prepared to be successful in a dual enrollment program and if their participation in the program would properly advance their educational careers. One study found that students who participated in a dual enrollment program were academically motivated, but only expressed modest levels of confidence in their academic writing and very limited confidence in their ability to be successful in college, despite having reported earning high overall grades; for example, mostly A's (Ozmun, 2013). While students who lack academic self-confidence may be less likely to seek out and participate in dual enrollment programs, those who do participate may experience gains in self-efficacy (Ozmun, 2013). Another concern for students and their families is whether the credits earned in dual enrollment courses are transferable to institutions of higher education other than from the

institution from which they obtained the credits, and whether those credits will count toward general education or major requirements. In some instances, ill-informed students have found that their credits are not accepted at the institution in which they enroll or are only accepted as general/elective credit (French, 2016).

Environment: Understanding the dual enrollment experience. Astin's definition of environment is vast and includes everything a student experiences during his/her college career that may influence his/her outcomes, including programs, personnel, pedagogy, curricula, campus climate, the facilities, interactions with other students, student organizations, and student support services (Astin, 2010) .

In the context of the current study, the existing dual enrollment environment literature, which is vastly limited to the program models, helps provide insight into the common characteristics associated with various instances of these programs. Although the characteristics of these program models do not fully describe the physical environment in which they exist, they are shaped by that environment, and in turn, the environment created by the dual enrollment program models uniquely shape the college transition for students who participate in the various models. To form a more complete understanding of the dual enrollment experience once students have enrolled, it is imperative to gain insight into the wide-ranging variables of the dual enrollment environment from existing literature and future studies like this one. Because the dual enrollment programs provide an initial college experience for participants, an exploration of the literature on the first-year experience is a valuable addition to this conversation. Finally, this section would be incomplete without a discussion of the dual enrollment environment in Georgia.

Dual enrollment program models. Dual enrollment programs are offered in a variety of models, which may be influenced by the availability of a variety of resources including personnel, location, technology, and financial resources. Student variables, such as GPA, interests, age/grade level, availability, living arrangements, and access to transportation also help to shape the structure of dual enrollment programs secondary and postsecondary institutions select. The models for dual enrollment programs are differentiated by their program features: location of classes, type of instructor, course offerings, mix of students, type of credit, and timing of courses (Edwards, Hughes, & Weisberg, 2011). While some institutions implement a unique mixture of models, most dual enrollment programs can be categorized into one of the three basic program models: 1) At High School, 2) Virtual Campuses, or 3) On-College Campus (Edwards, Hughes, & Weisberg, 2011). A report by the James Irvine Foundation (Edwards, Hughes, & Weisberg, 2011) offers the following descriptions for each of these models:

At high school model. The "At High School" dual enrollment program model allows students to take college-level courses, in their high schools often during the traditional school day. Whether providing a pathway to CTE, collegiate level rigor in core content, or academic success in college, these credit-bearing courses can be offered before, during, or after the regular school day and are only open to the participating high school students. Regarding one particular feature, instructor type, there are two common approaches to providing the professional talent to teach course materials. The first is to give the responsibility of instructing the course to the high school teachers. These teachers must have the same qualifications as college professors, which includes a graduate degree in the content area, and they are often required to complete additional training provided by the partner college or university. One challenge with this approach is that the talent pool is small and teachers are not incentivized to seek a graduate degree in the content

area when their personal career goals require degrees related to teaching and educational

leadership. The second approach is to have college professors visit high school campuses to

teach these courses.   Regardless of the approach chosen, this model is convenient for students

who are already on the high school campus, therefore eliminating the need for access to

transportation. Despite the convenience, however, this model eliminates students' exposure to

college campus life and their access to on-campus college resources.

     Virtual campus model. The Virtual Campuses model of dual enrollment allows students

to earn college credit by taking college core, CTE, or academic success courses at their

convenience. Some institutions may integrate dually enrolled students with regularly

matriculated college students while other may choose to reserve some online courses specifically

for dually enrolled students. The strength of this model is the flexibility and the inherent push

for students to be more involved in and dedicated to their learning. Students can access course

materials at all times, allowing them to learn and complete the course requirements when they

have time available. Since there is no physical meeting space, the program eliminates the need

for transportation for students and eliminates additional commuting responsibilities for

professors. Conversely, the strengths of this program model are also its weaknesses. Students

who are underprepared in some non-cognitive aspects (e.g., time management and organization

skills) or who may still need in-person interaction with an instructor, may struggle with the

abundance of freedom and lack of in-person interaction in the virtual campus setting.   Like those

who participate in the "at high school" model programs, students who participate in the "virtual

campus" dual enrollment model get the benefits of engaging in college-level academic rigor but

are not exposed to the college environment. While the students in this model may not have

access to on-campus resources, they are often given access to the virtual extensions of these

resources; for example they may choose to arrange virtual appointments with someone in the writing center.

On college campus model. While courses in the "On-Campus" dual enrollment model take place on the college campus and are taught by college faculty, course offerings depend on the institution type. Technical schools may only offer CTE courses while four-year institutions may offer academic success and college core courses. As with the other program models, the "on-campus" model challenges students with collegiate level academic rigor. However, students who participate in this program model also receive the benefit of an authentic college experience which contributes to greater self-efficacy, increased motivation, and a smoother college transition. One particularly significant barrier to participation in this model of dual enrollment is transportation. Students who are without readily accessible public or private transportation often cannot take advantage of this program.

The first-year experience. Traditionally, students who take college courses for the first time are first-year college students as opposed to high school students engaged in college courses. The first college year is widely acknowledged as the traditional point of transition for first-year students (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005). Many institutions today have designed and implemented initiatives and approaches that are inclusive of many campus resources and success services that help students transition into their role as college students and persist beyond the first college year (Koch & Gardner, 2014). Collectively, these efforts are known as the first-year experience (FYE).

While each institution approaches the FYE by implementing programs and initiatives that best suit the needs of their population, the most popular initiatives include new student orientation programs, parent/family orientation programs, summer bridge programs, summer and

common reading programs, academic advising, developmental education, distance learning and online first-year courses, faculty development, first-year seminars, learning communities, service learning, and supplemental instruction (Koch & Gardner, 2014). With respect to this study, some FYE components are particularly relevant, such as orientation programs, first-year seminars, and student support services. By providing insight into how these programs support first-year students, the literature on these programs illuminates the contributions of programs and services to the first-year experience/environment. Likewise, the literature also names elements that could be found in the dual enrollment environment, a starting point from which this study can further examine the role of program leaders in connecting dually enrolled students with these elements.

Orientation programs. New student orientation programs are very common but vary in their design according to the needs of the enacting institution. While the designs vary, the four major aims of these programs are to (1) improve the likelihood of academic success, (2) promote connections between new students, (3) assist students in adjusting to a new environment, and (4) inform students and families of the college experience (Renn & Resason, 2013). Little is known about whether or not dual enrollment student participate in orientation programs.

First-Year Seminars. Research suggests the First-Year Seminar (FYS) is greatly beneficial to participating students. Although there are several types of FYSs (i.e., extended orientation models, academic seminars, professional seminars, and basic study seminars), with each type supporting goals and outcomes unique to the FYS type itself, most FYS share the common goals of supporting first-year students through a successful college transition, orienting students to available resources and organizations on campus, cultivating personal development, improving critical thinking and writing skills, developing systems of support, consideration and

planning for careers, and promoting interactions between students and faculty and staff (Renn &

Resason, 2013; Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005; Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005).

There is evidence that shows participation in an FYS leaves students with a greater appreciation

of academic advising, a stronger sense of community, an increased likeliness that students will

participate in other beneficial experiences, and increased grade point averages (GPA) within the

first college year (Renn & Resason, 2013). These benefits are often the outcomes of a successful

FYS, indicators of which include: academic credit (preferably 3 credit hours), the involvement

(in design and instruction) of both faculty and academic affairs personnel, training and

compensation for the instructors, the involvement of upper-level students in curriculum delivery,

and the assessment of seminar effectiveness and student progress (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot,

2005; Renn & Resason, 2013). Although first-year seminars provide many benefits, MOWR

will only pay for college courses that count toward local and/or state high school requirements

and therefore will not pay for students to take first-year seminar courses (Georgia Department of

Education, 2017).

Student Support Services. Most institutions provide services and programs that contribute

to first-year student success, especially when the services and programs are the product of

collaboration between student and academic affairs. These services include but are not limited to

student counseling services, student health services, campus recreation programs, career services,

services and programs for women, services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students,

services for students with disabilities, and religious and faith-based services (Upcraft, Gardner,

& Barefoot, 2005). As first-year students gain an appreciation for these services and begin to see

them as valuable to their college experience and academic progression, these students are less

reluctant to use these services. These student support services therefore serve as valuable points

of connection between students and the institution (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005).

Although no literature could be found on the extent to which dual enrollment students participate

in these services, these services are typically available to all students enrolled at an institution. It

can therefore be assumed that dually enrolled students have access to student support services on

their respective campuses.

Dual enrollment in Georgia. In 2015, the Georgia General Assembly enacted new

legislation that combined former dual enrollment programs (i.e., the Accel Program, Dual

Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally [HOPE] Grant, and the original Move On When

Ready program) in order to simplify the existing dual enrollment structures (Georgia Student

Finance Commision, 2016). This new program, which now carries the name Move On When

Ready (MOWR), is the state-funded dual enrollment program in Georgia. Governed by the

Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), the MOWR program allows students from eligible

high schools and home study programs to earn college credit while simultaneously satisfying

their high school graduation requirements. Primarily, the MOWR program is intended to help

remove some of the financial barriers that may otherwise prohibit students from participating in

dual-credit programs (Georgia Student Finance Commision, 2016).

According to the MOWR Regulations (2015), high school students enrolled in an eligible

high school or home study program in the State of Georgia are eligible to participate in MOWR

beginning in the fall of their ninth-grade year and continuing until the student graduates. Once

accepted into an institution, MOWR students must abide by all rules set forth by the high school

or home study program and the postsecondary institution and maintain Satisfactory Academic

Progress (SAP) as determined by the postsecondary institution (Georgia Student Finance

Commision, 2016). MOWR students can receive funding (i.e., tuition and fees) for three

semesters or four quarters per award year.

Outputs: Understanding the outcomes associated with dual enrollment

participation. Although the focus of this study is to explore the Dual Enrollment environment,

it is important to gain an understanding of the outputs/outcomes of the program to provide the

context for a better understanding of the intentions behind the development of the dual

enrollment programs at the sites included in this study.

Program Outcomes. State governments have continued to provide significant funding

for dual enrollment programs despite the lack of evidence supporting the assumed outcomes

(e.g., financial relief, academic success, college pathway, and college acculturation) (Taylor,

Borden, & Park, 2015; Karp & Hughes, 2008). Although there is a lack of consistency in data

supporting the extent to which students benefit from participating in dual enrollment programs,

researchers have identified some benefits of dual enrollment participation that are largely

supported by their studies.

Financial benefits. Students who participate in dual enrollment might benefit from their

participation both during their time as dually enrolled students and once they become college

students (Edwards, Hughes, & Weisberg, 2011). With the average cost of college attendance at

four-year institutions nearing $25,500 per school year in the 2014-2015 school year (National

Center for Education Statistics, n.d.), students and their families can save thousands by

participating in government funded dual enrollment programs (Karp & Hughes, 2008; Cowan &

Goldhaber, 2015; Young Jr., Joyner, & Slate, 2013). Even after graduating from high school,

students who participated in dual enrollment programs have earned credit towards their degree

prior to matriculation, thereby often decreasing the amount of time and money needed to attain a

degree (Cowan & Goldhaber, 2015; Young Jr., Joyner, & Slate, 2013). However, these financial benefits are not limited to students. Secondary schools that may not otherwise have the funding to provide a variety of academic opportunities and electives for their students find that providing students with an opportunity to take dual enrollment courses alleviates the financial need for providing a curriculum that meets the interests of their students (Karp & Hughes, 2008).

Academic success. Dual enrollment is promoted as a strategy for preparing students for success in college, including those populations that are traditionally underrepresented (Kanny, 2015; Taylor J. L., 2015). The academic support structure provided to dually enrolled students seems to stem mostly from the institutions of higher education (Kanny, 2015). One recent study suggests institutions provide dual enrollment students with an academic advisor but found that support structures are usually available in two forms: academic preparation courses and access to regularly available campus resources (Khazem & Khasem, 2012). In program models that provide students with for-credit academic success courses, dual enrollees not only develop skills and strategies that promote student success in college but also build peer networks of support and encouragement and learn basic information about the college and the programs and services available (Edwards, Hughes, & Weisberg, 2011). The academic and student support services and programs provided by the college, both on campus and often online, are available to all students, including those who are dually enrolled (Georgia Student Finance Commision, 2016). Student support services such as counseling services, campus recreation, services and programs for women, services and programs for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students, services for students with disabilities, and faith-based services both challenge and support students to succeed, especially when these services are the product of collaborations between student affairs and academic affairs (Schuh, 2005).

College pathway. Widely accepted as an entry point to higher education, dual enrollment illuminates a pathway to college for students across the academic achievement and representation spectrum (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005). First, these programs can inspire students to seek higher education following their dual enrollment experience (Karp & Hughes, 2008; Howerter, 2011; Karp M. M., 2012). Students considering participating in a dual enrollment program may be motivated and engaged, but often they initially lack the self-efficacy, or confidence in their ability to succeed in college (Ozmun, 2013). Research suggests that the leap in confidence that students who participate in dual enrollment programs experience (Ozmun, 2013) may be attributed to their initial success in college-level courses prior to matriculation (Karp, 2007). Regardless of the dual enrollment model, students in dual enrollment programs have the opportunity to experience the academic expectations of college, including course requirements, grading expectations, and instructor interactions (Karp, 2007). As a result, dual enrollees are approximately 34% more likely than their non-dual enrollment peers to enroll in college after graduation and 22% more likely than their non-dual enrollment peers to complete college (Taylor J. L., 2015; Cowan & Goldhaber, 2015).

College acculturation. Dually enrolled students participating in programs on college campuses benefit from exposure to an authentic collegiate environment and benefit from experiencing the academic, executive functions, (e.g., organizational skills, self-management, etc.), and social expectations of college (Edwards, Hughes, & Weisberg, 2011). One study found that students in dual enrollment programs gained a better understanding of their role as a college student, which ultimately helped them successfully transition to college following their dual enrollment experience because they reported feeling confident in their abilities, had learned to

navigate the academic demands of being a college student, and identified the differences between college and high school classroom expectations (Karp, 2007).

Roles and Responsibilities of Student Affairs Administrators

While little is known about the contributions of program leaders in the dual enrollment environment specifically, the literature does provide context for understanding the roles of these leaders as student affairs administrators in the broader framework of higher education. Although the definition of the role of student affairs administrators has shifted over time and researchers have yet to reach consensus on a single definition, Winston, Creamer, and Miller (2001) describe student affairs administrators as "persons who are employed to attend effectively to both the educational mission of the institution and the organization's maintenance requirements in ways that are consistent with the historical values and technical principles of the field" (p. 5). Likewise, descriptions of the responsibilities of student affairs administrators vary from researcher to researcher. In one study, researchers acknowledged the ever-changing "environment and demands of the education system and students" (Abbas, Fiaz, & Fareed, 2011) and outlined a comprehensive list of 26 roles and responsibilities of student affairs administrators:

1. Researcher

2. Event Manager

3. Project Manager

4. Public Relations Officer

5. Media Coordinator

6. Academic Counselor and Advisor

7. Graphic Designer

8. Publications

9. Publicity and Marketing

10. Protocol Officer

11. Emotional Counselor

12. Industry-Academia Liaison officer

13. Sports and Leisure

14. Workshop and Conference Facilitator

15. Alumni Coordinator

16. Internships and Job Hunt

17. Career Guidance

18. Discipline Maintenance

19. Student Organizations and Societies

20. Inter-Academia Collaborations

21. Problem Solver

22. Intra-University Assistance

23. Student-Faculty Bridge

24. Research Support

25. International Community and Culture

26. Scholarships and Trainings

While student affairs administrators may fulfill some or all of the roles and responsibilities defined by Abbas, Fiaz, and Fareed, the self-reported roles and responsibilities of dual enrollment program leaders remains the focus of this study. A study on the perceptions of

student affairs administrators (Martinez, 2017) regarding their roles found that the descriptions leaders provided of their roles could be characterized into four categories:

1. Connective Leadership - makes connections to other departments, represents the office, and provides direction and vision for staff;

2. Instructive Leadership - emphasizes instruction on leadership and the development of individuals;

3. Supportive Leadership - advocates for students;

4. Constructive Leadership - constructs programs for students

While there is no published research that specifically explores the contributions of program leaders in the dual enrollment environment, these four categories of leadership and the 26 identified responsibilities for student affairs administrators provide a lens through which the role and impact of dual enrollment program leaders can be examined. By placing the dual enrollment program leaders within the broader category of student affairs administrators, inferences can be made about their roles and potential impact on the environment – and ultimately the ways in which they influence their dual enrollment programs and students.

Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter is of particular relevance to this study because it establishes the foundation for research that was conducted and helps to identify gaps in the published literature. Much of the existing research on dual enrollment has been conducted with the goal of identifying the academic outcomes and benefits of participation. Despite the limited and conflicting evidence regarding dual enrollment outcomes, participation in these programs is believed to be an effective initiative for creating college pathways for a larger and more diverse population of students. As a baseline for understanding the responsibilities and contributions of

dual enrollment program leaders, the definition, roles, and responsibilities of student affairs administrators was reviewed. This study extends our current knowledge base by furthering our understanding of the dual enrollment experience for participating students on a college campus, specifically how program leaders contribute to this experience. Where previous research has placed emphasis on student participation, this study focuses on describing specific elements of the dual enrollment environment as determined by the contributions of dual enrollment leaders and the responsibilities they assume in supporting students in transition and meeting the aims of dual enrollment programs.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine the processes and practices of program leaders as elements of the dual enrollment environment at three comprehensive four-year institutions of higher education in Georgia in 2017. Specifically, the study provides insight into the intentional design of the dual enrollment environment at the selected institutions by exploring the day-to-day tasks, processes, and practices of the program leaders and the challenges they face. This study addressed one research question:

1. What processes/practices do program leaders contribute to the dual enrollment environment?

Three Georgia institutions were selected based on their reputations for having successful and unique dual enrollment programs. The leaders of these dual enrollment programs were individually interviewed to gain a better understanding of their daily processes and practices and the inner workings of their respective programs. These interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to determine the relevant aspects of the work of the dual enrollment program leaders. The basic qualitative study with an exploratory approach was selected because little is known about the environment dual enrollment participants encounter once enrolled or what program leaders do to help students reap the benefits of participating in a dual enrollment program, leaving little guidance regarding which variables should be examined. The exploratory nature of basic qualitative studies allows for the participants to guide researchers in determining what variables represented in the study hold value.

The researcher of this study identifies as a Black American woman, former elementary school educator, and founder of a program that provides college preparation courses and mentoring for high school students. These identities may have several implications regarding the

interpretation of the data collected in this study. First, the themes that emerged during the analysis of the data reflect the researcher's acute awareness of issues of diversity and her understanding of the structure, organization, and operations of public high schools in Georgia. Second, the researcher's coursework in the Master of Science in First-Year Studies program and training and professional experiences as an educator provided context to understand the dual enrollment students as both part of the college student population and as adolescents. Third, as an alumna and graduate student of Kennesaw State University (KSU), one of the sites included in this study, the researcher is intimately familiar with the KSU student experience. However, the researcher has no ties to the KSU dual enrollment program.

Setting

The participants in this study were given the opportunity to select the setting for their interview from among three options: in-person meeting, web-based video conference, or phone call. Two of the participants chose to conduct their interviews via phone call. The researcher conducted phone interviews in a private home office setting. Calls were conducted using a speakerphone to allow them to be recorded with a digital recorder. One of the participants chose to meet in-person. This interview was conducted in the participant's private office and was recorded using a digital recorder.

Participants

The participants in this study are program leaders of dual enrollment programs at three public, comprehensive universities within the University System of Georgia (USG): Georgia Southern University (GA Southern) in Statesboro, GA, University of West Georgia (UWG) in Carrolton, GA, and Kennesaw State University (KSU) in Kennesaw, GA. Institutions were selected using purposive sampling to gather a range of dual enrollment program types (i.e.,

typical program, large program with longstanding history, and honors program for high-achieving students). Each institution was selected based on its status as a USG comprehensive university and its reputation for having a distinguished dual enrollment program. For each institution, a designated dual enrollment program coordinator and/or director was selected to represent the respective institutions during the study.

Prior to formally selecting the participating institutions, the researcher contacted representatives from each institution individually via email to determine their willingness to participate in the study. The email explained the researcher's general interest in the dual enrollment environment, the proposed design, and the expected time investment. Participants were informed that interview questions would be provided in advance and were allowed to select their preferred method of interviewing.

Georgia Southern University (GA Southern). GA Southern is a large, Carnegie Doctoral-Research institution located in Statesboro, Georgia. According to the university's 2016 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Report (Georgia Southern University, 2016) and the university's Fact Book (Georgia Southern University, n.d.), the university enrolled 18,005 undergraduates in Fall 2016 and had a total enrollment of 20,673 students. The GA Southern student body is fairly balanced in gender (53% female), primarily white (62% white, 26% black, 12% other), and predominantly full-time (57%). The Georgia counties representing the largest enrollment are Gwinnett, Bulloch, Fulton, Cobb, and Chatham counties. The university is also recognized by multiple organizations for their online programs.

Hollie Daniels. The Coordinator of Dual Enrollment Advising, Hollie Daniels, was selected as a participant in this study. At GA Southern, Daniels served as a Dual Enrollment Advisor and Adjunct Professor of the First-Year Seminar course before becoming the

Coordinator of Dual Enrollment Advising. Daniels has a master's degree in Student Personnel in

Higher Education from the University of Florida. As a high school student in Florida, Daniels

also participated in a dual enrollment program which allowed her to graduate with both a high

school diploma and an associate degree. Daniels will leave her position as Coordinator of Dual

Enrollment Advising at the end of the Spring 2017 semester to pursue a doctoral degree in

Education Policy and Evaluation; she is considering researching dual enrollment for her

dissertation.

University of West Georgia (UWG). UWG is a large, Carnegie Doctoral-Research

institution located in Carrolton, Georgia. According to the UWG website, the student body is

female dominant (about 66%), primarily white (about 51% white, 36% black, 13% other), and

predominantly full-time (about 73%) (University of West Georgia, n.d.).

April Wood. UWG's Interim Director of New Student Programs, April Wood, was

selected to participate in this study. In her former role as a recruiter for UWG, Wood was

introduced to the dual enrollment program when she was assigned a recruitment area that

included the dual enrollment target territory. She has since held several positions in New

Students Programs, including Coordinator of Pre-College Programs, Associate Director of Dual

Enrollment and Associate Director of New Student Programs. Wood has earned a Bachelor of

Science in Business Administration, a Bachelor of Science in Computer Information System, and

a Master of Education in Higher Education Administration. She plans to seek a doctoral degree

in Higher Education Administration.

Kennesaw State University (KSU). Among the 50 largest universities in the nation,

KSU is a large, Carnegie Doctoral-Research institution located in Kennesaw, Georgia. KSU's

website reports that the student body has an even mix of genders (51% male), is primarily white

(57% white, 21% black, 22% other), and is majority full-time (72%) (Kennesaw State University, n.d.).

 Stacey Solomon. Stacey Solomon, KSU's Director of Dual Enrollment Program, was selected to participate in this study. Prior to becoming the Director of Dual Enrollment, Solomon served as an Academic Advisor for the Dual Enrollment Program, a position created by the former director's efforts to expand the program. Solomon holds a Bachelor of Science in Mass Communication/Media Studies from KSU and a Master of Education in Higher Education/Higher Education Administration. She plans to further her education with a doctoral degree in Lifelong Learning and Organizational Development.

Research Instruments

 To gain a better understanding of the depth and breadth of each of the dual enrollment programs, the researcher compiled a list of questions for the interview protocol (see Appendix A). These questions were intentionally structured to understand four broad topics surrounding the dual enrollment programs at the selected institutions: program/student demographics (inputs), program structure (environment), statistics/outcomes (outputs), and challenges (environment). To further explore each of the topics, several open-ended questions were included to encourage the participants to thoroughly explain how their institutions address various situations. While the interview protocol was thorough and structured, the interviewer occasionally asked clarifying questions to prompt more thorough answers from the participants. Additionally, participants were invited to share any documents they found relevant to the interview. While no request for specific documents were made, each of the participants provided at least one document or referenced their website for inclusion in this study.

Procedure

The primary source of data collection were one-on-one interviews. Participants were provided with a consent form and interview questions, and each participant was interviewed individually. The interviews were conducted within two weeks of the initial invitation to participate,. Prior to each interview, the participants signed and returned a consent form that included a description of the project, procedures, time required for participation, a statement on confidentiality (a waiver of anonymity), and inclusion criteria for participation. At the start of each interview, participants were reminded of the purpose of the study.

The expected time commitment for each interview was one hour. If the prepared questions for the interview were not completed in one hour, the interview was stopped and the researcher asked participants if they would like to continue the interview in the moment, at another time convenient for them, or not at all. Despite going over the expected hour allotted, each of the participants agreed to complete the interview.

Data Analysis

The data collected in this study was gathered through interviews with three key individuals. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. After reading through the transcripts, the researcher identified instances when the program leader discussed personal actions. These action statements were then labeled with initial codes that described the action taken (e.g., working with parents, educating parents, facilitate orientation, etc.). Statements with similar labels where then grouped together and given axial codes that embodied the characteristics of the labels in the group of statements. The coded data was then used to identify the themes presented in chapter four: setting parental boundaries, supporting student development, orienting students, and seeking support.   Finally, the researcher questioned

the meaning of the findings, sought to understand the lessons to be learned for this study, and identified questions that remained unanswered.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative validity, one of the strengths of qualitative research, is checked using a few strategies throughout the data analysis process (Creswell, 2014). The researcher employed at least two strategies to assess the validity of the findings: triangulation and peer/colleague examination. To justify the themes and gain a clearer understanding of the contributions of dual enrollment program leaders to the dual enrollment environment, evidence was gathered from three independent sources and triangulated to justify the themes (triangulation). The thesis committee chair, the Director of the Master of Science in First-Year Studies program, served as the colleague examiner for this study and questioned and reviewed the interpretation of the findings to check that the interpretations would resonate with the consumers of the study (peer/colleague examination).

The reliability, or consistency, of the approaches used in this study is assessed by the very inclusion of this chapter where all procedures of this case study are documented. While the researcher has outlined each step of the research process and provided the interview protocol that will allow the study to be repeated, the consistency of results may be subject to the timing of a recreated study. It is evident from the data collected that the roles and responsibilities of dual enrollment program leaders are in constant flux as institutions seek to improve their dual enrollment programs and the State of Georgia refines the regulations for the Move On When Ready (MOWR) initiative. Researchers seeking to recreate the study may find that changes to the MOWR initiative itself and/or the implementation of this program has changed since the publication of this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the data collected in this study. Summaries of the transcribed interviews of three dual enrollment program leaders at select comprehensive, four-year Georgia institutions with distinguished dual enrollment programs have been organized by institution and by the four topics around which the interviews were structured (i.e., program/student demographics [inputs], program structure [environment], statistics/outcomes [outputs], and challenges [environment]). Following the summaries, the findings are presented with respect to the research question driving this study:

1. What processes/practices do program leaders contribute to the dual enrollment environment?

Georgia Southern University

Georgia Southern University was recommended as a participant in this study because its dual enrollment program is representative of a "typical dual enrollment program." Hollie Daniels, the Coordinator of Dual Enrollment Advising, was selected as the participant representing Georgia Southern University (GA Southern).

Program and student demographics (Inputs). The dual enrollment program at GA Southern includes 452 students. These students are predominantly high school seniors and juniors (sophomore students are admitted on a case-by-case basis). The 259 high school seniors are mostly white and female. The dually enrolled students are usually local students, but the program has seen an increase in enrollment by students from distant counties. The program accepts joint enrollment students (students who are not receiving Move On When Ready [MOWR] funding) but has no joint enrollment students currently enrolled.

After completing the same application process as all other first-year students, providing the additional paperwork required for MOWR students (e.g., the Student Participation Agreement [SPA]), and being accepted by the institution, the dual enrollment students are classified in the institution's database as type R students. Daniels is notified via email that the student has been accepted; she, in turn, emails the student to schedule their required advising appointment. All GA Southern students must meet with their advisor each semester. At the advising appointment, Daniels reviews the SPA with the student, recommends classes for the students to take, and teaches them how to register for themselves. She comments that it is her personal goal to help students with the transition to college and to help them learn to take responsibility for their learning and all aspects of their college career.

Dual enrollment students are exempt from the live-on requirement at GA Southern, which states that any local student with three or fewer credit hours must live on campus or at home. This presents a challenge because some students are not local but are not required to live on campus. Daniels has tried but has not been successful in getting the institution to amend the rule to include non-local dual enrollment students. The dual enrollment students are also not required to take the First-Year Seminar since MOWR funding will not pay for that course.

Structure (Environment). In her interview, Daniels described the growth of the GA Southern dual enrollment program, the funding allocated for the program, and her concerns if the program's funding were to be eliminated. GA Southern's dual enrollment program is growing slightly. Daniels suggested that adding programs like living learning communities may help the program grow in number of participants. The staff dedicated to the program includes Daniels and an admissions officer who works part-time with the dual enrollment program. The program is housed in the First-Year Experience department, and funds for Daniels' position are allocated via

Academic Affairs. If the state were to reduce or eliminate the current funding for MOWR,

Daniels believes the institution would no longer support the program. The program currently

benefits the institution by assisting with the recruiting of students; however, Daniels believes the

institution is not likely to set aside funds for the program if the state were to reduce or eliminates

MOWR funding.

To further explore the dual enrollment environment at GA Southern, the researcher asked

Daniels to describe the policies governing the classroom environment. There are no specific

policies regarding the classroom, nor are there attendance policies specific to dual enrollees.

There are no dual enrollment only classes, and all courses are taught by college professors on the

college campus or online. There is no cap to how many dual enrollment students may take

specific courses. Professors or instructors are notified of dually enrolled students in their courses

but are not required to do anything with that information. Professors and instructors are not

specifically trained to support the dual enrollment population.

First-year seminar. Dual enrollment students are not required to take the First-Year

Seminar (FYS). However, the new policy at GA Southern states that dually enrolled students

who choose to continue their college education at the institution after their high school

graduation must take the FYS. Students who know they will be staying at GA Southern after

high school are encouraged to take the FYS. There is no FYS specifically for dually enrolled

students. Due to the lack of demand for an FYS course specifically for dual enrollees, Daniels

was unable to justify funding a faculty position to teach the course.

Non-Cognitive development. Daniels discussed meeting with parents and students to

inform them of the responsibilities and initiative required for the program. She encourages

students to explore majors both at GA Southern and at other institutions. She indicated that one

of her goals is to assist in student development outside of the classroom by challenging dually enrolled students, questioning their decisions, and supporting them in self-monitoring their time management and other student skills.

College acculturation. Dual enrollment students attend orientation. Daniels attributes much of the college acculturation process to several factors, including the GA Southern one-day Soar orientation, participation in classes with college-aged students, enrollment in courses taught by college professors, not having dual enrollment only courses, and taking classes on the college campus. She believes that dual enrollment students should be expected to complete the same tasks (e.g., attending advising appointments, independently registering for classes) as all other GA Southern students to facilitate their acclimation to the college environment since this is a typical part of the responsibilities of a college student.

Statistics and outcomes (Outputs). In her role, Daniels tracks students' high school GPA, GA Southern GPA, the average number of credit hours students take, popular courses, how students perform in those courses, majors declared after high school graduation, and retention rate. She reports that 59% of her graduating seniors continued their college education at GA Southern after graduation.

From the data she has gathered, Daniels has learned that dual enrollment students get involved in traditional college experiences (e.g., student organizations, recreation, intramural sports, and fitness activities). Additionally, she encourages them to take advantage of on-campus resources (e.g., the writing center, academic success center, tutoring) by sending out the schedule of the academic success center each semester.

When asked, "What goals do you have for your dual enrollment students?" Daniels replied:

On paper, none. We don't have a mission for program, we don't have a

vision, we don't have learning outcomes or anything like that. But for me

personally my goal is that the students will persist in college after they

graduate from high school so that they will continue and go to college and

that they will graduate from college as a result of having access to college

earlier… my goal is that they keep going and they do well. And that as a

result of dual enrollment, the transition is easier than students who did not

dual enroll and that they had a better sense of direction after they dual

enroll, that they know which major they want to declare, that their rate of

changing their major is lower than students who did not dual enroll…

Because MOWR is housed under the first-year experience and first-year

experience has a clear mission and vision, I don't see us breaking apart and

making our own, but I definitely think that there could be different ones

for dual enrollment students, but I don't think that is in the plans right

now. (H. Daniels, personal communication, 2017)

Challenges (Environments). During the interview, Daniels reported several challenges,

her attempts to overcome the challenges, and her ideas for improving the dual enrollment

program. One of the challenges is meeting with each of her dual enrollment students for

advising when she has a large case load. She has addressed this issue by offering group advising

sessions. Another challenge she discussed is working with parents. She uses interactions with

them (e.g., parent orientations, high school meetings, first advising appointments, etc.) to teach

parents that the students have to take the initiative and assume responsibility for their college

education. She informs parents of their rights according to FERPA and directs them to campus

resources (e.g., parent portal, school website, "Eligibility versus Readiness" article, etc.).

Daniels hopes to start a mentoring program where former dual enrollment students who have

continued at GA Southern mentor current dual enrollment students. Additionally, she would like

to host a Senior Night where she could disseminate information to a large population of high

school students who are interested in dual enrollment and their parents.

Daniels reports that she sees a need for additional training for high school counselors.

She feels that high school counselors are not appropriately trained to screen students for college

readiness nor for working with the dual enrollment student population. She believes that there

should be more training for high school counselors regarding how to support dually enrolled

students, navigate the application process, and select and approve the appropriate classes.

Daniels also reports that she believes training is needed for the professionals who support

the dually enrolled students at colleges and universities. She states that the legislation did not

indicate how these programs should be run or identify the staffing needs for the programs. She

suggests that the state bring together post-secondary professionals who support these students to

share ideas and best practices.

University of West Georgia

The University of West Georgia (UWG) was recommended for participation in this study

because of its long-standing dual enrollment program. April Wood, the Interim Director of New

Student Programs, was selected to represent UWG.

Program and student demographics (Inputs). The dual enrollment program at UWG

is made up of 9th through 12th grade students, ages 13-18. These students come from many

parts of Georgia (and some from Alabama) and reside at home. The average dual enrollment

student takes seven credit hours (usually one on-campus course and one online course per

semester). The dually enrolled students are allowed to take honors courses if they qualify.

Wood did not have the demographics specific to the dual enrollment program but suspects that

the demographics of the program closely resembles the demographics of the institution. These

students are coded as "pre-freshmen" in the UWG student data system.

Structure (Environment). There are three staff members dedicated to the program: the

director, the coordinator, and a graduate assistant. Wood refers to the process of communicating

and recruiting students as "rolling out the red carpet." She states that she and her coordinator

reach out to students (via email or phone) as soon as they express an interest in the program and

later call the students to walk them through the process of enrolling. She believes that educating

parents about and supporting parents through the dual enrollment process (e.g., applying and

matriculation) early on makes for a smoother dual enrollment experience for students and their

families while also showing families that the program staff care about the students.

Once students are enrolled, Wood and her coordinator visit high schools to conduct group

advising sessions with students and their high school counselors. In these sessions, they discuss

the appropriate classes and program requirements. Wood also hosts orientations specifically for

dual enrollment students and their families. Wood facilitates the orientation with occasional

help/collaboration from the orientation department. During the orientation session, students are

given a campus tour to help them acclimate to the college environment. Wood encourages

students to "walk their schedule" before the start of classes to become familiar with the location

of their classes. Wood communicates with students via emails, text messages, and push

notification alerts. She states that students always have two direct points of contact, herself and

the coordinator, either of whom will walk students through any and all parts of the dual

enrollment program.

UWG's dual enrollment students take regular college courses. Faculty are not given special instructions for supporting or teaching these students, unless requested by the faculty member. Wood does inform faculty that if there is an issue with a dual enrollment student, the faculty member is invited to contact her and she, in turn, is able to contact the high school. Additionally, she is invited to faculty events where she can educate the faculty on the dual enrollment population.

First-year seminar. UWG dually enrolled students are not encouraged to take the FYS, UWG 1101, because the course is not funded by the state, it is not a requirement for every degree program, and the course credit would not likely transfer to another institution if the student decides to enroll elsewhere after high school. Wood stated that dually enrolled students at UWG make use of campus resources, such as the center for academic success, the writing center and the math center.

Non-cognitive development. Wood promotes campus services. She is aware of dual enrollment students using counseling services and accessibility services to receive support for various personal matters (e.g., 504 accommodations, IEPs, etc.).

College acculturation. Wood believes that the more students are engaged on campus, the more acclimated they become, which in turn leads to increased college success. Wood stated that she and the dual enrollment staff promote on-campus services, programs, and other opportunities for dual enrollees to get involved in campus life (e.g., political groups, religious groups, club sports, student organizations, health services, etc.). Wood also encourages students to participant in the yearly Week of Welcome.

Statistics and outcomes (Outputs). During the interview, Wood stated that the student data system used at UWG allows her to access a variety of student data (e.g., GPA, number of

classes, number of students, student demographics, etc.). Wood reports that her on-campus students have a 94% success rate and her online students have a 93% success rate. Wood stated that her goals are for students to be successful and to be retained at UWG after their high school graduation. Currently, the institution retains approximately 55% of dual enrollment students after high school graduation.

Challenges (Environments). Wood discussed the challenge of working with parents. She stated that she has to address parents directly to teach them not to email professors and to expect little information about their student from the institution. She encourages parents to attend orientation so that they can discuss parental boundaries (e.g., not calling the professor, not coming into the classroom) and how to be supportive of their student. She stated that she rolls out the red carpet for parents and guides then through the process while being mindful of what student information is disseminated to parents.

Another challenge Wood discussed is that some students (particularly those that start taking classes in 9th grade) may run out of MOWR funded courses in which they can enroll. All college courses funded by MOWR must be approved by the state and must satisfy high school requirements. Additionally, she expressed a concern about the differences in expectations between the state, the high schools, and the institutions, each of whom have different goals for dually enrolled students. While the state wants to make sure the students are funded, high schools fret about how dual enrollment negatively impacts their funding, and highly selective institutions of higher education are more likely to accept Advance Placement (AP) credit than dual enrollment credit (whereas state institutions are not as particular).

Wood stated that some improvement efforts have been made on the state's part with the implementation of a listserv and the formation of committees that address issues.

When asked about the goals she has for her dual enrollment students, Wood replied:

All of my goals are based around success and I tell my students if you're

not passing classes you can't stay in the program- it's just that simple. I

make it very clear that they have to pass these classes and that is typically

the main goal I give them… Internally, we have goals for these students,

but to outwardly tell them that, we don't. We just make it very clear that

they have to pass. (A. Wood, personal communication, 2017)

Wood views her success as helping students to become college educated, employed, and

productive citizens of the community who give back.

Kennesaw State University

The dual enrollment program at Kennesaw State University (KSU) is an honor's program

with high GPA admissions requirements (higher than the standard admission requirement for

incoming students at KSU). Stacey Solomon, the Director of Dual Enrollment Program, was

selected to represent KSU.

Program and student demographics (Inputs). The students that participate in the dual

enrollment program at KSU are predominantly local high school juniors and seniors, between the

ages 15 and 18. This is an ethnically and culturally diverse group of students who are

academically advanced. All students are MOWR students. Some students choose to take online

courses, while others choose to live on campus. Once enrolled, the students are classified as

Move On When Ready (MR) students in KSU's data system.

Structure (Environment). Solomon reported that she puts her efforts into helping

students refrain from the high school mindset. She encourages them to be responsible and

independent of their parents. She also stated that an important part of her role is educating

parents on what they are and are not allowed to do (e.g., parents are not allowed to contact professors).

KSU's dual enrollment program is growing. Solomon recounted a story about how she got her job when the former director asked the university president to create another position to support the growth of the program. The program has four staff members: the director, two academic advisors, and one administrative associate.

Students in KSU's dual enrollment program take honors classes. These classes have a limited number of seats allotted to dual enrollment students. There are no classroom policies in place regarding the classroom environment. Faculty members are not trained or otherwise specifically prepared to support dual enrollment students. Solomon does dedicate some of her time to educating faculty on applying FERPA with dual enrollment students and ensuring they are aware that faculty are permitted to discuss dual enrollment students with her.

First-year seminar. Dually enrolled students are discouraged from taking courses in a learning community. They are also not required to take the FYS, KSU 1101. If students decide to continue their college education at KSU after high school graduation, students with 15 credit hours or more are not required to take the FYS.

Non-cognitive development. Students participate in an orientation session with a student panel to learn about the skills they will need to be successful and the steps they have to take in the program. Students are also invited to attend Lunch and Learns where they learn about various skills like coping with text anxiety. Students are directed to the Psychological Services Center and other campus resources to receive support and accommodations.

College acculturation. Solomon reported that acculturating dually enrolled students to the college campus is a challenge because students are not always on campus and are still

actively involved with their high schools. She also reported that students make use of the

Honors Lounge, join student groups, form study groups, or hang out on the campus green.

Solomon wants to focus more attention on helping students feel part of the KSU Owl culture.

      Statistics and outcomes (Outputs). Solomon conducts a survey of the students each

year to track where students apply for college (i.e., KSU, competitor schools, or other

institutions), parents' level of education, and dual enrollees' opinion regarding the success of the

program, registration, and advising. This information is used to improve the program. Solomon

estimates that about a third of the dual enrollment students continue their college education at

KSU. Others go where they can get scholarships. Solomon does not track their overall GPA

because it is linked to their high school GPA.

      KSU's dual enrollment students participate in an orientation specific to the program but

do not participate in the first-year convocation ceremony nor the FYS. Solomon would like to

create a Dual Enrollment 101 course for students that would be much like the FYS.

Additionally, the dual enrollment students take advantage of learning support, the writing lab,

and other campus resources.

> When asked what goals she has for her students, Solomon replied:
>
> Primarily I want them to learn to self-advocate, to be able to engage as a
>
> college student. My students that have engaged in that manner are very
>
> successful. It's kind of that coming out of the shell because I have students
>
> that have come from being bullied at school to becoming one of the
>
> greatest people here. They've started very young prior to the age of 15, to
>
> be a great student, can self-advocate. Can talk to a faculty member just as

easily as they'd talked to me. That's what I like to see, is that embracing of

college life. (S. Solomon, personal communication, 2017)

Challenges (Environments). Solomon discussed the challenges related to growing or

maintaining the program. To address the issue of having to refer students to other institutions

when they have missed KSU's application deadline, Solomon and her team are planning to

implement a tri-tiered admissions approach where students who apply later will still be

considered for admission but may not receive all the benefits afforded those students who meet

the original deadline. Additionally, Solomon advertises the program by hosting Honor Views

where she invites select students from the metro area to come learn about the program. She also

participates in college summits where she speaks with students from across a local district. She

would like to have more of her students continue their studies at KSU after their high school

graduation but believes that many students choose not to stay due to lack of scholarships.

One of the challenges Solomon mentioned is communicating with parents. She includes

parents in most informative emails. She conducts parent orientations at which she provides

parents with information on their role in their student's journey. She invites others to speak on

behalf of the Parent Association.

When asked about defining college readiness and about what would make the dual

enrollment experience more relevant to students, Solomon defined "college ready" as the ability

to self-advocate, engage in intelligent conversation and debate, and take personal responsibility –

skills she says should be developed during the dual enrollment experience. Solomon dismisses

approximately 2-3% of students at midyear if their grade point average falls below 2.0. She

attributes this to the students' lack of readiness for college (e.g., lack of maturity, inability to take

responsibility for themselves, etc.).

Another challenge Solomon mentioned is the lack of clarity from the state on the policies governing MOWR. She believes the state makes decisions without understanding the impact of those decisions and without being consistent. Solomon's would like the state to write a book of policy to improve the communication between policy makers and those implementing the policies. She suggests that the state make a committee or coalition of representatives from the state, institutions of higher education, and high school counselors to discuss the effective practices within the program and develop plans for what is not effective.

To ensure that incoming students are ready for all aspects of college, Solomon expressed a desire to create a course for high school students to learn study skills prior to going to college. She shared her ideas for seminar-like programs in high schools and college student shadowing for students interested in participating in the dual enrollment program.

Findings

The findings from this study can be organized into four themes: setting parental boundaries, supporting student development, orienting students, and seeking support.

Setting parental boundaries. Each of the participants in the study discussed their interactions with parents at length. Each participant provided anecdotes of interacting with "helicopter parents" (parents who are overly involved with their child's college schooling) and discussed having to educate parents on acceptable behaviors, what information they can expect to receive, what information is private, and how they can appropriately support their dually enrolled student. Two of the participants also discussed how extreme parental involvement negatively impacts students' ability to become independent and self-reliant. The participants have implemented several strategies to set boundaries for parents, including referring parents to a Parent Portal for access to information they are legally entitled to see, facilitating parent

orientations or parent sessions within orientation to discuss how to support their students,
interjecting when parents have contacted professors by calling the parent directly, and reminding
parents of the terms of the participation agreements.

Supporting student development. All of the participants stated that the first-year
seminar is not required nor is it promoted to students in most cases. The processes and student
interactions specifically related to student development that the participants reported were
advising on major selection, teaching students to register for classes, reviewing course syllabi,
attending to/reminding students of dates and deadlines, referring students to academic resources
(e.g., writing center, tutoring services, math lab), encouraging students to participate in student
organizations and club/intramural sports, advising students on college selection, reiterating that
the students need to be self-reliant and have a sense of personal responsibility to be successful in
classes, and facilitating activities (e.g., lunch and learns) with other departments to teach students
important skills (e.g., time management, managing test anxiety, resume building). Each of the
participants expressed a desire for a seminar or workshop specifically for dual enrollment
students through which students could be given instruction on specific skills and information to
support them in going through the dual enrollment process.

Orienting students. The participants each discussed the students' participation in an
orientation session. Two of three participants stated that students attend an orientation
specifically for their population. In addition to facilitating orientations, the participants each
refer students to other campus resources (e.g., academic services, learning support services,
psychological services, recreation). They also that they promote areas/places where students can
find comradery and get involved in activities that will help them get more acclimated and
acculturated to the campus (e.g., Week of Welcome).

Seeking support. Two of three of the participants expressed frustration with the state and a desire for the state to create a group of professionals who work directly with the dual enrollment population to identify best practices and to create/evaluate policies concerning MOWR dual enrollment. One participant stated that the state uses a listserv to identify issues and provide program leaders with an opportunity to interact and share best practices. Each of the participants identified a need for the state to clarify policies concerning the implementation of dual enrollment. Participants also expressed a need for additional training, both for themselves and for the high school counselors, to enhance their ability to better serve dually enrolled students (e.g., identifying correct courses, understanding transcripts, identifying the correct/appropriate dual enrollment site for students, identifying students who are better suited for dual enrollment).

Conclusion

This chapter presented the data collected in this study. The participants of this study shared common experiences in the interviews that lead to the identification of four themes: setting parental boundaries, supporting student development, orienting students, and seeking support. These themes can be used to answer the research question: What processes/practices do program leaders contribute to the dual enrollment environment?

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to describe the processes of dual enrollment program leaders as elements of the dual enrollment environment at three comprehensive four-year institutions of higher education in Georgia in 2017. One-on-one interviews with designated dual enrollment coordinators and/or directors were used to identify the practices these leaders have put in place to support the dual enrollment students and how they contribute to the dual enrollment environment on the campuses of Kennesaw State University, Georgia Southern University, and the University of West Georgia. Specifically, the interviews explored the history, structure, outcomes, challenges, practices, policies, and procedures associated with the dual enrollment program at each of the institutions. The following research question guided this study:

1. What processes/practices do program leaders contribute to the dual enrollment environment?

In answer to the research question, the themes that emerged from the data revealed:

1. Program leaders set boundaries with parents to promote independence and personal responsibility amongst students.

2. Program leaders use interactions with students to promote student development when first-year seminar courses are not available.

3. Program leaders serve as a "compass to the campus," acting as the primary source for orienting students to the college campus.

4. Program leaders seek support and clarification to improve the dual enrollment student experience.

Discussion

The Move On When Ready (MOWR) program is the Sate of Georgia's dual enrollment initiative that provides early access to college for most Georgia secondary school aged students (Georgia Student Finance Commision, 2016; Georgia Department of Education, 2017). These students are allowed to earn college credits while simultaneously earning high school credits (Georgia Department of Education, 2016). It is legally mandated that institutions waive the tuition and book fees for accepted dually enrolled students. Despite the legal requirement that state-funded institutions operate a dual enrollment program or the regulations regarding funding, the state has not indicated whether institutions should have dual enrollment program leaders nor has it provided guidelines for implementing the programs. Institutions and program leaders, therefore, have taken on the responsibility of designing the dual enrollment environment students experience on campus. The processes and practices that have been established are the contributions of the dual enrollment program leaders and the focus of this study.

When considering the elements of an environment, it is easiest to examine the elements that exist as opposed to identifying those that do not exist, as suggested by Astin's IEP model (Astin, 2010). In this study, the findings indicate that program leaders devote a significant amount of time to setting boundaries for parents in order to give students the chance to develop their independence and sense of personal responsibility. This demonstrates that one of the contributions of program leaders is to remove or limit parents as elements of the dual enrollment environment, a responsibility that could be added to the list of 26 roles and responsibilities of student affairs administrators (Abbas, Fiaz, & Fareed, 2011). It can be argued that the program leaders in this study view their leadership role, at least in part, as supportive leadership because they are advocating for student independence (Martinez, 2017).

The intentionality of the dual enrollment leaders' efforts to facilitate the independence of students in their dual enrollment programs is a significant "value added" for students in these programs. While all first-year college students are expected to operate autonomously – advocating for themselves, taking responsibility for their education, and attending to the administrative aspects of their schooling (e.g., paying tuition, following up on registration holds, etc.) – dual enrollees are supported in making this transition. Because of the support dual enrollees receive when they first become part of a college campus community, it can be anticipated that this population of students would be more successful in making the transition to college and becoming autonomous. This study, while drawing attention to this particular value-added aspect of dual enrollment programs, did not gather data relevant to the degree of success dual enrollee's experience in making the transition college and/or becoming autonomous during their participation in a dual enrollment program or following their high school graduation. An exploration of the impact of dual enrollment programs on students' autonomy and transition to college is recommended for future research studies.

It is common practice for first-year college students to take a first-year seminar to learn academic success skills and help get oriented to the collegiate environment (Renn & Resason, 2013; Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005). For various reasons (e.g., course not required, state will not fund course, course will not transfer), dual enrollment students do not typically take a first-year seminar course. In response to the lack of a first-year experience course offering in the dual enrollment environment, program leaders have taken on the responsibility of promoting student development and connecting students with campus resources. This act of taking on responsibility for supporting student development in the absence of a formal course is a blend of constructive leadership (because the program leaders are constructing programs for students),

connective leadership (the program leaders are helping students make connections across campus), and instructive leadership (the program leaders are promoting development of their students) (Martinez, 2017). The participants in this study each expressed a desire to have a course or seminar designed specifically for the dual enrollment program through which they could provide students with the skills and support they might not otherwise receive. Since no such course or seminar has been designed or approved at any of the institutions in this study, the participants attempt to support student development during advising appointments and orientations in order to provide the benefits students are missing by not being permitted to take the course (Renn & Resason, 2013; Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005).

The efforts on the part of the dual enrollment program leaders to provide information and facilitate student development that would typically be offered through the first-year seminar course demonstrate that each participant has identified a need for such support for their dual enrollees. There is a significant body of research that demonstrates the benefits of a first-year seminar in helping college students transition to college, but no research that explores the impact of enrolling or not enrolling in a first-year seminar on dual enrollees. Future research on dual enrollment programs should investigate the impact of first-year seminars on dual enrollees and/or explore alternatives for providing dual enrollees with the information and support offered by the first-year seminar.

In addition to supporting student development, program leaders serve as a "compass to the campus" for dual enrollment students (connective leadership). The program leaders each indicated that they orient students to the campus in some way. Whether facilitating an orientation for students and their families or directing students to specific campus resources on a case-by-case basis or even sending out operating schedules for the various support centers on

campus, dual enrollment program leaders help to orient students to the campus. This is yet another indication that these program leaders may view their role as a student affairs administrator that exercises connective leadership (Martinez, 2017) By helping to orient dual enrollees to campus, the program leaders contribute to the students' sense of belonging, acclimation, and acculturation. Because the services offered on campus are often advertised effectively in first-year seminar courses, the program leaders fill the gap between what students need to be successful and what the state is willing to fund. Additionally, the actions of these program leaders establishes a clear link between value-added benefits and participation in a dual enrollment program (Renn & Resason, 2013; Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005)

This gap between what dual enrollees need and what the state will funds seems to be a point of frustration for the participants in the study. Though it may not be seen as a direct contribution to the dual enrollment environment, program leaders have taken their concerns to the state and have sought out support, clarification, and policy change (supportive leadership). By voicing their opinions and requesting that the state clarify and communicate its policies regarding MOWR, program leaders are better able to advise students and communicate policy information to the students and their families. Their desire for clear, cohesive, and well-communicated policy and their desire to work towards creating and sharing high impact practices for dual enrollment programs across Georgia is an indication that there is a gap in the literature regarding dual enrollment programs, an understanding of the dual enrollment environment, and the establishment of best practices for dual enrollment programs.

Implications for Practitioners

The study offers implications for practitioners regarding the administration of dual enrollment programs. The review of literature in Chapter 2 revealed a lack of research on dual

enrollment programs – and, in consequence, there are no clearly established and articulated best practices for developing and administering dual enrollment programs. Moreover, the state policies provide insufficient guidance, as is evidenced by the study participants' desire for the state to develop and provide them with written policies and direction. Consequently, dual enrollment program leaders in the State of Georgia will likely find that they have little guidance in creating and running their programs.

Additionally, practitioners may find that they need to provide additional support to both students and parents beyond the administrative aspects of the dual enrollment programs that they lead. As articulated by the participants in this study, the State of Georgia's MOWR program will not fund the cost of a first-year seminar for dual enrollees. Consequently, the leaders of dual enrollment programs typically assume responsibility for providing the information that would have received in the seminar, helping students to acclimate to the college environment, connecting them with campus resources, and providing them with support as they transition to the college environment.

A final implication for practitioners is that the lack of published research on dual enrollment programs coupled with the lack of clear guidance from the state results in inadequate training opportunities available to the leaders of dual enrollment programs as well as other administrators involved (e.g., high school guidance counselors). Since the programs included in this study were identified for inclusion specifically because they are successful, it can be assumed that the program leaders have the necessary knowledge and expertise to ensure the success of their programs. However, despite their apparent expertise, the study participants expressed a desire for training, not only for themselves but for high school counselors as well. Consequently, practitioners need to be aware that much of the knowledge and expertise

associated with dual enrollment programs may need to come from their own efforts to gather information and network with other program leaders.

Limitations

Exploratory qualitative studies are particularly useful for gaining a better understanding of limited and undocumented phenomena; thus, these types of studies free the researcher from limitations. The purposive sampling of the institutions included in this study allowed the researcher to collect data from sources with reputable but varied dual enrollment programs and enabled her to broaden the parameters of the transferable findings. Consequently, more institutions may find that they are similar to the universities included in this study than if the researcher had only included one type of dual enrollment program.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study sought to gain a better understanding of the contributions of program leaders to the dual enrollment environment at their respective institutions. In doing so, the researcher identified two areas of consideration for future research: student perception of the impact of program leaders on their dual enrollment experience and the communication between program leaders, dual enrollment students, and the families of these students. While this study contributes to the body of literature exploring the elements of the dual enrollment environment, more research should be conducted to understand how students perceive this environment. Additionally, the findings of this study indicate that program leaders spend a significant amount of their time communicating with not just dually enrolled students but also with their families. Further research should be done to gain a better understanding of the scope and effectiveness of this communication.

Conclusion

This study used one-on-one interviews with dual enrollment program leaders to determine the contributions they make to the dual enrollment environment. To answer the research question (i.e., What processes/practices do program leaders contribute to the dual enrollment environment?), transcripts of the interviews were coded and four themes emerged: setting parental boundaries, supporting student development, orienting students, and seeking support. From these themes, the researcher concluded that program leaders set boundaries with parents to promote independence and personal responsibility amongst students, use interactions with students to promote student development when first-year seminar courses are not available, serve as "compass to the campus," (i.e., are the primary source for orienting students to the campus), and seek support and clarification to improve the dual enrollment student experience. These contributions are elements of the dual enrollment environments at the institutions included in this study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Invite to Participate

Dear _____,

My name is Amanda Woodford and I am a second year student in the Master of Science in First-Year Studies (MSFYS) program at Kennesaw State University. As such, I am beginning my thesis journey and I am interested in researching dual enrollment programs in GA. I am contacting you today to see if you'd be willing to participate in an interview within the next three weeks to discuss your institution's approach to dual enrollment. I will be seeking IRB approval for the study, but before I submit my application, I wanted to check to ensure that you, or a designee from the institution, are willing to participate. You can expect the interview to take about one hour and the questions will be provided in advance. I will be submitting my IRB application on or before Thursday, March 9 and I'd love to have "INSERT NAME OF INSTITUTION" represented in my small case study. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,

Amanda Woodford
MSFYS Graduate Assistant
Master's student- First-Year Studies
Kennesaw State University
awoodfor@kennesaw.edu

CC: Dr. Stephanie Foote, Committee Chair

Appendix B

IRB Consent Form

Title of Research Study: College Year Zero: A Comparative Case Study of the Implementation of Dual Enrollment Programs in Three Comprehensive Institutions of Higher Education in Georgia

Researcher's Contact Information: Amanda Woodford, (678) 739-8396, awoodfor@students.kennesaw.edu

Introduction
You are being invited to take part in a research study conducted by Amanda Woodford, a student in the Master of Science in First-Year Studies program at Kennesaw State University. Before you decide to participate in this study, you should read this form and ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

Description of Project
The purpose of the study is to learn more about how select four-year institutions in Georgia implement dual enrollment programs by conducting interviews with designated dual enrollment program coordinators and/or directors at Kennesaw State University, Georgia Southern University, and the University of West Georgia.

Explanation of Procedures
If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct an interview with you via phone, online (Google Hangout), or in person. The interview will include questions about the history, structure, outcomes, challenges, practices, policies, and procedures associated with the dual enrollment program at the institution you represent. The interview will take about one hour to complete. With your permission, I would also like to audio record the interview. The questions will be provided to you prior to the interview and if you have any documents that are relevant to the questions and you would like to share them for the study, I will accept digital copies via email within one business day of the interview.

Time Required
Your participation will take approximately one hour.

Risks or Discomforts
I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life.

Benefits
Possible benefits include enhanced knowledge of institutional practices related to dual enrollment.

Compensation

You will not receive compensation for your participation.

Confidentiality

Given the nature of this study, anonymity and confidentiality cannot be promised. However, data collected will only focus on descriptions of the dual enrollment at the three institutions selected for the proposed study. You have identified because of your particular professional position with the dual enrollment programs at one of the selected institutions.

Inclusion Criteria for Participation

You must be a designated dual enrollment program coordinator and/or director, over age 25, at one of the selected institutions (Kennesaw State University, Georgia Southern University, or the University of West Georgia) to take part in this study.

Signed Consent

I agree and give my consent to participate in this research project. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty.

_____
Signature of Participant or Authorized Representative, Date

_____
Signature of Investigator, Date

_____

PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES OF THIS FORM, KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO THE INVESTIGATOR

Research at Kennesaw State University that involves human participants is carried out under the oversight of an Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding these activities should be addressed to the Institutional Review Board, Kennesaw State University, 585 Cobb Avenue, KH3403, Kennesaw, GA 30144-5591, (470) 578-2268.

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Program/Student Demographics

- Who are your dual enrollment students?

  - What is unique about the students that you accept into the program?

  - Other than their age and concurrent enrollment, how are DE students different from other first-year students?

  - What are the DE student demographics? (age, gender, ethnicity, average GPA, etc.)

  - What percentage of your DE students are MOWR?

- Are DE students fully considered to be first-year students by the institution or are they considered to be a special and/or separate population?

- What does the application process look like?

  - From the institution's perspective?

  - From the student's perspective?

Structure

- How has the DE program here developed over time? (timeline/history)

  - What trends have emerged?

  - Is the program growing, shrinking, or sustaining?

- What staff do you have dedicated to the program?

- How are funds allocated to support the program?

- Is there any fear that funding for the MOWR program will diminish?

  - How does your institution plan to sustain the DE program financially?

- What policies are in place regarding the classroom environment?

  - Are there special classes for DE students?

  - Is there a cap to the number of DE students allowed in each section?

- How does faculty prepare for teaching courses with DE students?

- Is the curriculum altered/redeveloped in any way to accommodate DE students?

- How does your institution support faculty in their role, especially as it pertains to teaching young DE students?

- Are DE students required or encouraged to take a first-year experience course?

    o If not required, how many students take a FYE course?

    o Is there a separate FYE course specifically for DE students?

- How do these institutions promote the non-cognitive development of dual enrolled students?

- How do institutions acculturate students?

Stats/Outcomes

- What student data do you track?

    o How many students enroll in your institution?

    o How many students enroll in another institution?

    o How many student choose not to seek higher education within one year of graduation?

- To what extent do students enroll in higher education at the school or other institutions?

- What are the student demographics/outcome data

    o GPA compared to other seniors

    o College retention

    o Study abroad

    o Undergraduate research

- In which traditional first-year experiences do DE students participate?

- Do DE students engage in on-campus activities?

- Do DE students take advantage of on-campus resources?

- What benefits does the Dual Enrollment program provide for your campus?

- How does DE impact the course experience for other students?

- What goal(s) do you have for your DE students?

Challenges

- What logistical challenges arise in the college classroom when implementing a dual enrollment program? How do the institutions address these challenges in the classroom?

- What plans are currently in place concerning the future of the DE program?

- How do the laws governing minors impact the DE experience for students (both DE and traditional), parents, faculty, and staff?

- What is the dynamic between your institution and the parents/legal guardians of DE students?

  - o What legal challenges do you face?

  - o What expectations do you have for parents?

  - o What role do parents play in the DE program?

  - o How are these expectations expressed?

  - o Are parents oriented?

  - o How does FERPA impact your communication with parents?

- How do you manage the expectations of parents and DE students who base their assumptions on the high school culture?

- In your opinion, are high school students "ready" for college? Why (not)?

  - o What defines college readiness?

- How can we make this experience more relevant to students?

- What are some of the unique challenges of operating a DE program in your institution?

- How do you address these challenges?

- In your opinion, is there a gap between the theory of Dual Enrollment and the practice?

  - o What are these gaps?

  - o Have you seen any progress towards improving these gaps beyond the efforts you put forth here?

- What, if anything, could the University System of GA, the GA Department of Education, your partner high school(s), or your institution do to

  - o Support the DE program?

  - o Support faculty that teach courses with DE students?

  - o Insure that high school students are ready for all aspects (including non-cognitive) of college?

- Should funds be allocated to designing campus resources for this small population?

- What is the impact of matriculating with college credit?