

Identified Stressors of Minority Students Enrolled

In the University of Wisconsin-Stout

By

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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the
Masters of Science Degree
With A Major in

Education

Approved: 2 Semester Credits


Investigation Advisor

The Graduate College
University of Wisconsin-Stout
August, 2004

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ABSTRACT

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Identified Stressors Among Minority Students Enrolled in the University of Wisconsin-

Stout
(Title)

Education	Jill Stanton	June 2004	75
(Graduate Major)	(Research Advisor)	(Month/Year)	(No. of Pages)

American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual
(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)

Although the transition to college poses difficulties for all students, minority students face additional obstacles that can impede their progress in school. The traditional age student population of colleges and universities in the United States is becoming increasingly more ethnically and culturally diverse (Biasco, 2001, p.2). While the minority college student population has increased, these students often experience difficulty succeeding in predominantly white colleges. Research has shown that ethnic minorities are at a greater risk of low retention and graduation rates in predominantly white colleges and universities (D'Augelli & Hesberger, 1993). The factors that are generally cited as contributing to the dropout rates and poor academic achievement of ethnic minority students are lack of financial resources, poor academic preparedness and lack of social support (Austin, 1982). The grades of most minority students average half a

letter below those of their white classmates (Steel, 1992, p.1). The sense of failure can make college an intolerable place for some minorities. The feelings of being overwhelmed can begin to evolve into stress.

There are other factors that create additional stressors. There is a growing recognition that the campus climate also plays an important role in the success or failure of minority students (Steel, 1992, p.2). Seventy percent of minority students who enroll in four year colleges drop out at some point, as compared with 45 percent of whites (Steel, 1992, p.1). Problems for minority students have been documented in the residence halls, fraternities, with campus police, interracial dating and campus life (Steel, 1992, p.12). Higher dropout rates for Hispanics, African Americans and Native Americans on predominantly white campuses are now partially attributed to an inhospitable climate (McClellan, 1996).

While many specific events and situations have been implicated as stressors for college students, more research is needed to investigate the nature of these stressors specifically for minority college students. Research is also needed to determine which stressors are prevalent for minority college students enrolled in predominantly white campuses. It is unclear whether most stressors result from behavioral, emotional, physiological or academic factors.

The purpose of this study was to identify stressors reported by minority students who are enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The researcher utilized a survey, and data was collected through the Multicultural Student Services Center. The survey consisted of 63 items. The researcher used the categories behavioral, emotional,

physiological and academic factors, which were developed by Gadzella in 1994. The questions were revised to fit more closely with the goals of the research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give a special thanks, to Jill Stanton who devoted her time and interest in me. Just saying thank you doesn't seem like it is enough. Thank you, we did it! I would also like to thank Mary Riordan and the Multicultural Student Services staff for helping me with my survey. I would like to thank the students who completed my survey; I could not have completed this research without you.

I would like to thank my family for their continuous support and love throughout this process. To my children-remember, you can accomplish anything you set your mind too. No matter where life takes you, you will always remain close to my heart. Mommy loves you.

To my loving mother, Nannie Moore, you have inspired me to accomplish my goals and reach for the stars. If I could touch half of the lives that you have inspired, I would have accomplished so much. Although you may never have a movie or book about your life, you deserve much more than any words can say. I am what I am today because of you. I am proud to be your daughter.

I would like to dedicate this thesis in honor of my father, Rev. Otis Moore Jr.; although your physical presence is gone, your spirit remains. I am grateful for the time we've shared and I become radiant in your memory.

To my sisters and brothers (and their families), we have grown and moved many miles apart but somehow remain close. I am proud of each and every one of you. I want you to know how much I love you all.

To my friends, thank you for believing me and listening, even when I felt I had nothing else to say.

To all of you whom I have had a chance to encounter through my educational experiences, I want to say thank you; you've kept me going.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Education is a key to achievement and success in life for a number of reasons. One reason is that education is a valued commodity. Education is the best hope of getting out of poverty. Dominant cultures shape the larger contexts and substance of all learning in society. Higher education is no exception. Social, political, economic events, legal and legislative challenges, and more importantly, demographic shifts are forever changing the landscape of American higher education. Colon (1991) stated that colleges and universities have their own unique cultural identities and are inclined to transmit the dominant societal culture. As emerging cultures clash with dominant ones, an evolutionary process takes place. This is nowhere more apparent than in U.S. higher education.

The general population has become increasingly more diverse. Social constructions of race in the United States are powerful and have real consequences. Individuals identify with a group and with each other. Racial and ethnic identity gives meaning to people's lives. It influences much of what we do in life and with whom we might associate. It even influences life goals. Demographic trends are shaping the racial and ethnic mix of the nation. Because the racial and ethnic composition is changing, it is all the more important to understand racial and ethnic differences as well as similarities (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Profile, 2002).

To understand the enrollment of minority students in colleges, we must first examine how the population is represented demographically. With a population of approximately 37 million, Latino(a) Americans have become the largest minority group

in the United States. The African American population is estimated at approximately 35 million. There are approximately 12 million Asian Americans and 4 million Native Americans. Overall, the minority population is expected to increase. This has led to a significant increase of students of color enrolling in colleges, especially predominantly white colleges (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Profile, 2002).

Landmark court decisions that have challenged discriminatory admission policies to higher educational institutions and recent demographic trends have contributed to the creation of ethnically diverse student bodies (Ancis & Mohr, 2000). There has been a significant increase in the number of ethnically diverse students entering colleges and universities. While African Americans are estimated to be the second largest population of minorities, they are underrepresented on college campuses. Alarming statistics report that African American males are more likely to be killed in a violent act or incarcerated than enrolled in college. In fact, more African American men are currently in U.S. prisons than in U.S. colleges (Fulford, 1994). Today, African American male students have more success at being accepted into colleges of their choice, but there is a high probability they will not complete their basic course work, let alone attempt more advanced programs (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

Although universities are thought to be more liberal than the general United States population, there continues to be racial issues on campuses. This is due in large part because campuses are not prepared for the changes needed as a result of including non-traditional adults, women, and racial/ethnic minorities in their student body (Williams, 1991, p.59). Most African Americans historically place special importance on acquiring education. Beginning with emphasis in the home of the slave family, even while law

prevented the schooling of slave children, and continuing through the creation of separate, inferior schools for African American children to desegregation of public schools, education always held a high priority in African American families (Burgher, 1995). Many educators argue that many students would not drop out of school were it not for a whole host of inadequacies in their education. These inadequacies are noted as insensitive teachers, poor counseling, unresponsive administrators, overcrowded classes, irrelevant curricula, and neglected school facilities. Even African American school children that stay in school are not guaranteed equal opportunities in life. Many high schools do not prepare some students who are interested in college for advanced schooling (Sullivan, 1993).

The economic and educational background of Native American students, especially reservation residents, makes considering entering a predominantly white college a very difficult decision. Native American students often feel isolated and discouraged, particularly if the college does not help them understand the environment of higher education. Even at campuses with large numbers of Native Americans in their student body, few Native faculty or advisors are present to serve as role models (Statistical Handbook on Racial Groups in the United States, 2000, p.115).

About 53% of the Native American students leave at the end of the first year. Only 10% of Native American students, who leave the reservation for traditional college, complete their training (Banton, 1992, p.69). According to studies of cultural discontinuity theory, minority children, having been initially raised in a distinctive culture of their own, are often thrust into a school system that promotes the values of the majority culture and not those of their own. For Native American students, this may be

especially true.

In a 2002 study, Cullian found that African Americans and Latino(a) students were more likely to be enrolled in private for profit institutions and less likely to be enrolled in public 4-year colleges or universities than white students were. Racial and ethnic tolerance in higher education profoundly affects the access and quality of education for racial and ethnic minority students (Willie, 1995). An institution that is primarily created and maintained by white faculty may present perspectives and values that exclude, penalize or ignore students of color (Biasco, 2001). Jackson (1991) stated that minority students enrolled in predominantly white institutions average higher attrition rates, greater states of alienation and, perhaps most significantly, less satisfactory relationships (p.139). Traditional white colleges and universities are becoming more diverse, but the consistent reluctance of higher education to create an environment of acceptance may create stress for many minority students.

Retention scholars have known for a long time that a student's fit in the college environment has a direct impact on his/her staying power until graduation. Factors that exacerbate stress on minority college students have often been thought to cause a decline in enrollment. African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans are less likely than Whites to pursue a college education, and the percentage of minority students in graduate programs and first year professionals generally declines from undergraduate enrollments (Heaton, 1998).

The number of students of color enrolling and graduating from the nation's college and universities has begun to slow, according to the 2000-2001 (Annual Status Report on Minorities). Students of color attending universities rose by 2.3% between

1997 and 1998, continuing a trend of modest increases that began in the early 1990s. However, the latest national statistics indicate a slowdown in the rate of enrollment by students of color (Annual Status Report on Minorities, p.46). Staying in college becomes even more difficult for individuals who feel that they are struggling to be accepted into college.

Statement of the Problem

Research suggests that minorities who attend predominantly white campuses are less likely to obtain degrees (Biasco, 2001). Many minorities who do enroll on predominantly white campuses often drop out. This may be due to higher levels of stress on minorities to conform to the norms and values of white culture. In order to maintain a higher minority retention rate in the University of Wisconsin system, research would suggest that the effects of the academic, physiological, emotional, and behavioral stressors be identified, so they can be addressed. The researcher felt a strong need to study these issues on her campus, a small state university in Wisconsin. A survey was modified by the researcher. The academic, physiological, emotional, and behavioral stressors identified in the survey came from the Life-Stress Inventory, which was designed by Gazella, and adapted to include the researcher's personal experiences.

In this research, physiological stressors are identified as "sweating, stuttering, trembling, rapid movements, exhaustion, irritable bowels, asthma, muscle tightness, hives, migraines, arthritis, virus, weight loss, and weight gain". Emotional stressors are identified as experiencing "fear, anxiety, worry, guilt, grief, depression, and anger". Behavioral stressors are identified as "abused self, others, smoked excessively, irritable towards others, attempted suicide, used defense mechanisms, and separated from others".

Other stressful situations are identified as “examinations, being stereotyped, missing classes, term papers, irrelevant classes, class discussions, final grades, excessive homework, forgotten assignments, crowded classrooms, lectures, unclear assignments, roommate conflict, lack of social activities, lack of faculty support, racism on campus, dating frustration, conflict with instructors, few minority classmates, not feeling socially accepted, financial difficulties, conflict in living arrangements, increased workload, change in major, and graduation anticipation”. The stressors were developed based upon research presented in the literature review and categorized according to Gazella.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the stressors of minority students enrolled on a predominantly white campus in hope that the information collected might lead to developing programs to help students stay and complete their degrees. The surveys were mailed by the researcher, with mailing labels provided by the Multicultural Student Services Center, to all minority students enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in the fall of 2003. The surveys were mailed back to the researcher in a return envelope. Students were mailed a reminder, by the researcher, two weeks after the mailing date, with the assistance of the Multicultural Center staff. The students could also drop off the survey in a drop-box that was located at the Multicultural Center. The researcher picked up completed surveys three weeks after the distribution of the surveys, which was in October, 2003.

Research Questions

Questions this research wished to address were:

1. What academic stressors are experienced by minority students on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Stout most often?
2. What physiological stressors are experienced by minority students on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Stout most often?
3. What emotional stressors are experienced by minority students on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Stout most often?
4. What behavioral stressors are experienced by minority students on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Stout most often?
5. Which gender do physiological stressors affect more?
6. Which gender do emotional stressors affect more?
7. Which gender do behavioral stressors affect more?

Definition of Terms

American Indian, Native American, or Alaskan Native-A person having origin in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition. For accuracy and consistency with previously published data, the term American Indian or Alaskan Native is used to identify these students, recognizing that the term American Indian is sometimes preferred (Statistical Handbook on Racial Groups in the United States, 2000).

Asian or Pacific Islander-A person having origins in any of the Pacific Islander original peoples of the far East, southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, or Pacific Islands. This includes people from Korea, the Philippine Islands, Samoa, and Vietnam (Statistical Handbook on Racial Groups in the United States, 2000).

Black, non-Hispanic-A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of

Africa, not of Hispanic origin. While the terms African Americans or Black American are often preferred, to preserve consistency with previously published education data, the term African American, non-Hispanic is used in this report (Statistical Handbook on Racial Groups in the United States, 2000).

Discrimination-Overt action in which members of an ethnic or racial group are treated unequally and unfavorably by members of a dominant group (Sedlacek, 1986, p.484).

Dominant Group-Any culturally or physically distinctive and self-conscious social aggregate, which has hereditary membership and a high degree of endogamy, and which discriminates against a subordinate group (Smith, 1988).

Ethnic Group-A social segment of society identified primarily on cultural grounds by such behaviors as languages, religion, food habits, folk practices, dress, and gestures or mannerisms (Smith, 1988).

Latino(a)-A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term Latino(a) is used in this report, with the recognition that Hispanic, as a generic term for all of Latin American /Spanish origin may be preferred by some (Statistical Handbook on Racial Groups in the United States, 2000).

Institutional Racism-The social arrangements whereby people of one racial or ethnic group are systematically oppressed and exploited by institutions of a society controlled by another racial group (Steele, 1979).

Minority Group-Any culturally or physically distinctive and self-conscious social aggregate, which has hereditary membership and a high degree of endogamy, which

is subject to political, economic, or social dominance by a majority group (Steele, 1979).

Norms-Rules that specify appropriate and inappropriate behavior in a specific society (Cox, 2000).

Racism-An inclusive concept that embraces the notions of prejudice, discrimination, and racism (Smith, 1988).

Stereotype- A usually oversimplified conception, opinion or belief (*The American Heritage Dictionary*, 1991).

Values and Conceptions-Regarding the desirability or undesirability of things including their beauty, morality, merit, or worth (Cox, 2000).

White, non-Hispanic-These are persons with origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East (except those of Hispanic origin) (Statistical Handbook on Racial Groups in the United States, 2000).

Assumptions

The following assumptions in this research are:

1. The students will respond accurately and honestly to the items on the survey.
2. The students will understand the survey items, even those for whom English is a second language, because they are enrolled in university coursework.

Limitations

There are two limitations which are apparent in this research:

1. This study and its' findings by design and nature are not generalizable to other populations. The survey was administered only to those students who attended the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

2. The students may not respond accurately and honestly to the survey because they are embarrassed by their own thoughts and/or behaviors related to survey items.
3. Students may not want to participate and therefore not return the survey.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

The review of literature covers a multitude of areas in relation to minority college students and stress. These areas include an overview of characteristics of minority groups, types of minority groups, and minority enrollment in higher education. The literature review also covered a summary of issues relating to stress, types of stress, warning signs, causes of stress and interventions.

Academic stress among college students has been a topic of interest for many years. There have been many studies that have reported a strong relationship between stress and success of college students (Schafer & Sidel, 1996; Fisher, 1994; Altmaier, 1983; Greenberg & Vallettutti, 1980). College students experience high stress at predictable times each semester due to academic commitments, financial pressures, and lack of time management skills. When stress is perceived negatively or becomes excessive, it can affect both health and academic performance (Morgan, 1997). The stress that students experience is universal, but there are individual differences in how stress is perceived and addressed.

Stress has been associated with major life events, daily hassles and changes in life (Altmaier, 1983). Each individual deals with stress differently. The stress levels appear to increase even more for minority students. Stress seems to affect minority college students much more on predominantly white campuses because of noticeable cultural differences. How minority students deal with stress may be different from students from dominant cultures due to differential characteristics. Some cultures may not choose to attend predominantly White colleges to avoid dealing with culturally stressful environments

(Schafer & Sidel, 1996; Fisher, 1994; Altmaier, 1983; Greenberg & Vallettutti, 1980).

Characteristics of Minority Groups

Sedlacek (1986) reported four characteristics common to all minority groups.

1. A minority is a social group whose members experience discrimination, segregation, oppression or persecution at the hands of another social group. Minority groups carry more of the burdens of society. They complete those tasks that are considered less pleasant in a particular group. The oppression of the one group confers privilege upon another.
2. The disabling factors experienced by minorities are related to special characteristics that its members share, either physical or cultural or both. Groups that are identified primarily on cultural grounds by such behavior as language, religion, food habits, folk practices, dress, gestures or mannerisms are termed ethnic groups. Groups identified chiefly on physical grounds, such as hereditary characteristics of skin color, facial features, hair textures or statures, are termed racial groups. Usually the dominant group holds a low regard for those cultural or racial characteristics that distinguish the members of the minority from themselves.
3. Minorities are self-conscious individuals. The individuals making up a minority recognize the fact that they are members of a particular group and this recognition affects their behaviors. Minority members are aware of something that they share in common with others like

themselves. It is a sense that “I am one of them- a sense of peoplehood.”

Individuals come to know who is and who is not a member of their group.

4. Generally a person does not become a member of a minority group voluntarily; he or she is born into it. Members of a minority group usually conceive of themselves as being alike by virtue of their common ancestry (pp. 10-12).

Walter Ensel (1991) summarized these characteristics by stating, “minorities are a culturally or physically distinctive and self-conscious social group, with hereditary membership. This membership may cause political, economic, or social scrutiny by a dominant group” (p. 302).

Four Types of Minorities

Peggy Thoits (1995) reported four types of minorities 1) pluralistic 2) assimilationist 3) secessionist and 4) militant. A pluralistic minority desires to live peacefully side by side with the dominant group by seeking tolerance for its’ differences. However, while craving tolerance for its’ cultural idiosyncrasies, a pluralistic minority also seeks to maintain cultural identity against dominant-group absorption. Pluralistics also seek to maintain their group integrity. Assimilationists expect to be absorbed with the emergent common culture that is a product of the blending of opposing racial and ethnic strains. Assimilationists view society as a two-way process in which, through a mixing of the differing racial groups and cultural traditions, a new identity and culture emerge.

The secessionist minorities recognize both assimilation and cultural pluralism. Although desiring to maintain their own identity, they are not satisfied, as the cultural

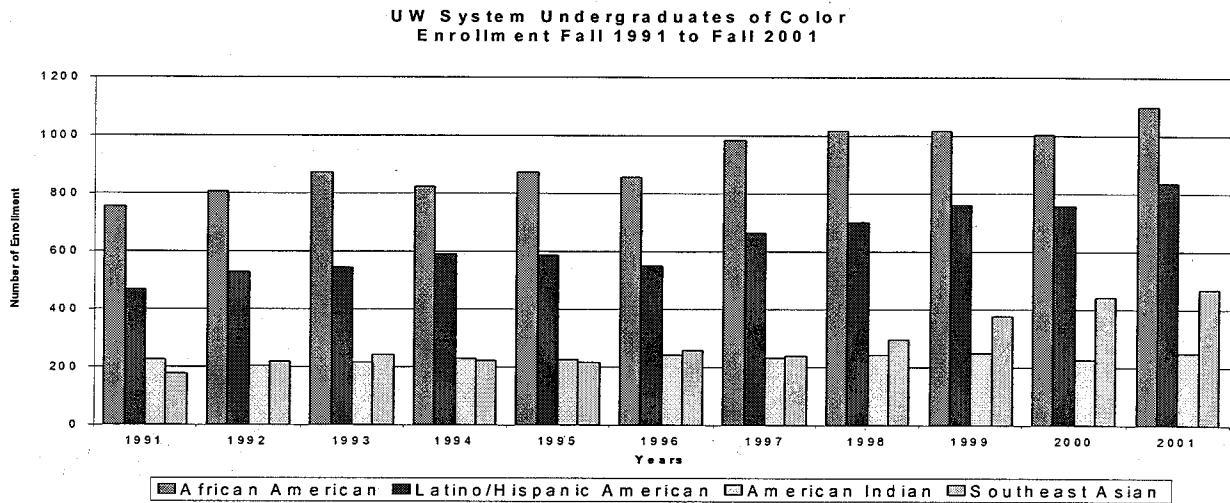
pluralist, with mere toleration and cultural autonomy; the aim of the secessionist is statehood of full political self-determination.

Militant minorities go far beyond the demand for equality or even cultural and political autonomy and insist upon reversing the prevailing group status. Domination over others is set as the goal. Such a group is frequently convinced of its' own superiority (pp. 53-79).

University of Wisconsin System Minority Enrollment

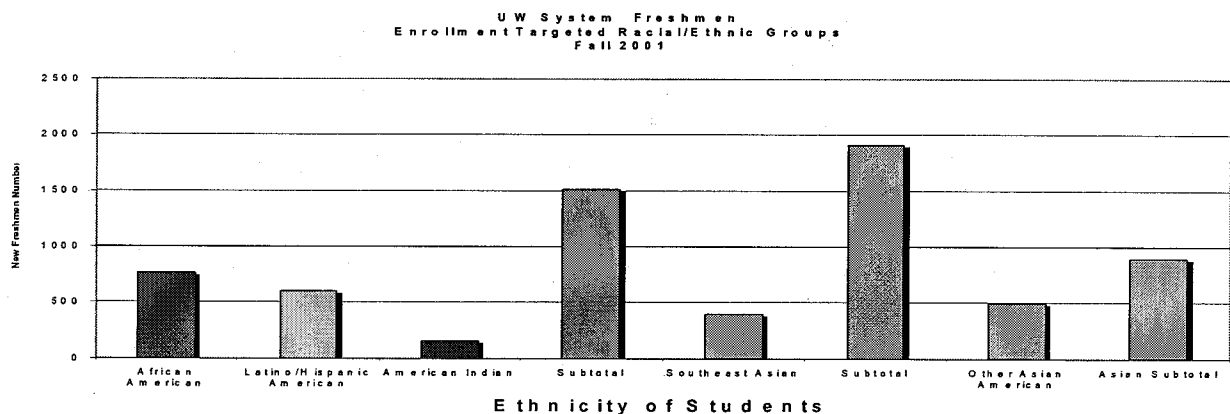
The Minority and Disadvantaged Student Annual Report (2002) collected data from the 1998 to 2001 system diversity plan and reported that college continues to remain an attainable goal for youth of color in Wisconsin and nationally. However, a lower high school completion rate, inadequate financial aid, and lack of pre-college opportunities contribute to low college enrollment and graduation rates for students of color. During the fall semesters of 1991-2001 (Table 1) the number of undergraduates of color, including Southeast Asian Americans, increased 63 percent, from 1, 624 in 1991 to 2,647 in 2001. Latino(a)s increased 79 percent, from 468 to 836. African Americans increased 45 percent from 755 to 1097. Native Americans increased 10 percent, from 224 to 247. From 1991 to 2002 the total of new freshmen of color increased from 1567 to 2407 or from 6.6 percent to 8.6 percent of the total enrollment. This is contrary to declining national trends.

Table 1



Among the new freshman of color, African Americans increased from 526 to 763 or from 2.2 percent to 2.7 percent. Latino(a)s increased from 342 to 598, or from 1.4 percent to 2.1 percent. American Indians decreased from 165 to 153 or from 0.7 percent to 0.5 percent. Asian Americans increased from 534 to 893 or from 2.3 percent to 3.2 percent of the total enrollment (Table 2).

Table 2



Between fall 2000 and fall 2001, new-targeted undergraduates of color increased from 2458 to 2647 in the UW system, a 7.7 percent increase of enrollment of targeted racial/ethnic groups over the previous fall (Table 2). Southeast Asian Americans

increased 5.9 percent from 441 to 467. Latino(a)s increased 10.3 percent, from 758 to 836. American Indians decreased 3.1 percent from 255 to 247 and African Americans increased 9.3 percent from 1,004 to 1,097.

Overview of Minorities and Higher Education

Minority students at colleges with an overwhelmingly white student body, faculty, advisors, coaches and administrators, have difficulty successfully completing their education. The campus culture may be neutral at best and it may often be hostile to the presence of members of racial minorities. The high attrition rate of students of color on predominantly white college campuses confirms the need for a positive environment (Schaefer & Sidel, 1996). A number of widely publicized racial incidents have occurred on college campuses. These have included cross burnings, overt discrimination, distribution of racist literature, physical attacks, derogatory behavior and racist remarks (Sedlacek, 1986, p. 48). Beyond these are more subtle practices, such as campus bars that discourage minority student patronage by not including minority-oriented music in their selections and local law enforcement officials who more closely monitor the activities of some minority students than whites (Cox, 2000, p. 34). Institutional racism involves policies and procedures, either informal or formal, which can result in negative outcomes for minority students. Institutional racism is often more of a problem for minority students than individual racism (Smith, 1988).

The overall picture of ethnic groups in higher education is not promising. Social climate on predominantly white campuses has often been negative. The upward trend of enrollment has declined for minority college students. According to Osipow (1980), several factors account for this trend:

1. A reduction in financial aid and more reliance on loans than on grants, coupled with rising cost of tuition, have tended to discourage students who would be the first members of their families to attend college.
2. Pushing for higher standards and excellence in educational achievement without providing remedial courses has locked out many minority students.
3. Employment opportunities, though minimal for minorities without some college, have continued to lure young people, who feel the need to contribute to their families' income and who otherwise might have gone to college.
4. Negative publicity about affirmative action may have discouraged some minorities from even considering college.
5. Increasing attention to what appears to be a growing number of racial incidents on predominantly white campuses also have been a discouraging factor. Minority students have complained that the campus is often a hostile environment and many universities have received complaints of racial harassment from fellow students. These factors create additional stress on minority students (pp. 36-40).

Stress

Stress is difficult to define because it is abstract. Stress is a part of everyone's life. A certain amount of stress is to be expected in daily life, but too much stress can be harmful (Lazarus, 1985). Stress is an individualized phenomenon, unique to each person

and environment. Pinel (1999) reported stress as “the body’s reaction to any demand on it (p.2).” It may mean different things to different people. The element of stress is common to all individuals. Stress can occur due to the demand to adjust to a different situation or condition (p. 2). Anger, frustration, depression, hatred, anxiety, fear, and guilt are real stresses (Pinel, 1999, p. 3). The way that one responds to stress can be attributed to such factors as sex, age, genetic background, diet or other external factors (Lau & Gruen, 1994).

Negative thinking can cause stress because it damages confidence and makes one feel that they are not equal to the task they face. According to Parham (1981), negative thoughts occur when a person puts themselves down, criticizes themselves for errors, doubts their abilities and expects failure. Negative thinking not only damages confidence, it also harms performance and paralyzes mental skills (p.10). It is likely that every living organism has experienced stress. Unless people live a protected life on a deserted island, stress is part of life. For some individuals stress may be a very large part. As reported by Weyhing, Bartlett, & Howard (1984) stress affects how people interact with one another, morale and the overall college environment. If stress becomes overwhelming it can create feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, and people may feel that they are unable to change their circumstances (p. 4).

College students, especially minorities, are a group particularly prone to stress (Slaney, 1981). For some, they must adjust to being away from home for the first time, plus maintain a high level of academic achievement and adjust to a new social environment. All college students, regardless of year in school, often deal with pressures that lead to stress.

Types of Stress

Some individuals are more sensitive or prone to stressors than others. "Stress is caused by environment and internal demands that need to be adjusted continuously," (Dill & Henley, 1998, p.27). The environmental and internal demands will vary from culture to culture. According to Segrin (1999), there are different types of stress—acute stress, episodic acute stress and chronic stress. Acute stress is the most common form of stress. It comes from demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipates demands and pressures of the near future. Acute stress is thrilling and exciting in small doses, but too much is exhausting. Acute stress is recognized by most people. It is usually short term and doesn't have time to do extensive damage associated with long term stress.

There are those, however, who suffer acute stress frequently, whose lives become very disordered. Individuals who experience episodic acute stress may always be in a rush, but always late. If something can go wrong, it does. These individuals have difficulty organizing. It is common for people with acute stress reactions to be over aroused, short-tempered, irritable, anxious and tense. Interpersonal relationships can deteriorate rapidly when others respond with real hostility. Another form of episodic acute stress comes from ceaseless worry. The person may imagine disaster around every corner. They may also feel that the world is a dangerous unrewarding place where something awful is always about to happen. Often, lifestyle and personality issues are so ingrained and habitual with these individuals that they see nothing wrong with the way they conduct their lives. They may blame their woes on other people and external events (Segrin,1999).

While acute stress can be thrilling and exciting, chronic stress is not. This is the

grinding stress that wears people away day after day. Chronic stress destroys bodies, minds and lives. It wreaks havoc through long-term attention. Chronic stress comes when a person never sees a way out of a miserable situation. It's the stress of unrelenting demands and pressures for seemingly unending periods of time. Some chronic stresses stem from traumatic childhood experiences that become internalized and remain forever painful and present. Chronic stress kills through suicide, violence, heart attack, stroke and perhaps even cancer. People can wear down until there is a final breakdown (Segrin, 1999).

Warning Signs of Stress

There are usually warning signs that an individual is becoming overwhelmed with stress. These signs can be lowered self-esteem, fatigue, impulsive behavior, emotional instability, anxiety and irrational fears. They may experience trembling, nervous tics, tooth grinding, a tendency to be easily startled, nervousness, and high-pitched laughter. Other signs may be stuttering, other speech difficulties, accident-prone behavior and general disorientation (McEwen, 1993, p.171). These warning signs can lead to physical stress.

Physical Signs of Stress

To the body, stress is synonymous with change. Anything that causes a change in your life can cause stress. It does not matter if it is considered "good or "bad" change, they can both cause stress (Sadava, 1993). Research (Varni, Colegrove, Dolgin & Katz, 1994) has suggested that overstress can cause physical damage to the gastrointestinal tract, glandular system, skin condition, cardiovascular system and brain function. Symptoms of physical damages to the gastrointestinal tract are ulcers, cramps, diarrhea,

colitis and irritable bowels. A symptom of physical damage to the glandular system is thyroid gland malfunction. Symptoms of physical damages to the cardiovascular symptom are high blood pressure, heart attack, abnormal heart beat and stroke. Physical damage to the skin can create itchy skin rashes. Stress can affect the immune system by decreasing resistance to infections and neoplasm. Stress can lead to muscle tension, which tends to build up over time. Common physical based diseases are asthma, constipation, high blood pressure, diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis (pp. 13-14). Other effects of stress on the body are allergies, frigidity, impotence, frequent heartburn, shortness of breath, excessive weight gain or loss, excessive nervous energy, increased cholesterol level, and tendency toward fainting or nausea. In women, stress can disrupt hormonal balance and menstrual rhythm. Stress can also cause muscle spasms (p. 14). Physical stress can possibly lead to emotional stress and vice versa.

Emotional Signs of Stress

Emotional damages of overstress in the brain can create fatigue, headaches, crying spells, depression, anxiety attacks and sleep disturbance. Other emotional indicators may include an inability to laugh easily or openly, recurring feelings of hopelessness, exhaustion, depression, becoming isolated from others, or over-bonding. An individual may also increase their use of alcohol or drugs. Some of the most common reactions to stress among students appear to be emotional, such as fear, anxiety, worry, anger, guilt, grief or depression (Neeman, 1996). After recognizing the signs of stress, students must identify causes of stress and work to eliminate or at least lessen them, if they hope to cope in a healthy manner.

Causes of Stress

Some students can see transition into college as a positive experience that can be exciting, but some may see these changes as a threat. Being in a different environment can create a great deal of stress on some minority college students. Individuals often move away from home for the first time during this period and are removed from family and friends, sometimes at great distances. Their social supports may diminish greatly (Pancer, Hansberger, Pratt & Alisat, 2000 p. 39). The first weeks and months of school seem to create the largest period of stress for students. They tend to go through more life changes and have to adjust to being in a new environment. College places added pressure. This pressure for minorities is caused by the change of environment of moving away from home and moving into unfamiliar surroundings. Students can become stressed about not having enough money, academic achievement, unrealistic expectations, time urgency, changes in eating habits, changes in sleeping habits, social pressures, extra-curricular activities, employment, difficulty with interpersonal relationships, loneliness, spending too much time studying or not enough time studying and not getting enough physical activity (Zeigler, 1999). Homesickness, academics, finances and environment are factors that can cause stress for minority college students.

Homesickness

College represents a critical development period for students (Chickering, 1996). For the first time in a student's life, he or she may be leaving home and entering a new social environment where he/she must adjust to new social norms and establish new relationships. These development challenges can be extremely stressful and are often marked by feelings of loneliness and homesickness (Cutrona, 1982). Homesickness is a

stressful experience. For some students the feelings of homesickness may be mild, but for others it can lead to feelings of grief, anxiety and depression. Some students go through this phase rather quickly; others, however, may experience it throughout their academic year. Homesickness can make it difficult for a minority student to cope effectively with college life (Fisher, 1994). Students suffering from homesickness may become absent-minded, non-attentive or avoid going to class altogether, which affects academic performance.

Academics

“Stress is marked by overly high performance standards, with high levels of worry, self-criticism, and lack of attention while preparing for or taking exams” (Altmaier, 1983, p. 52). Stress can make it difficult for students to prepare appropriately for exams, because it usually interferes with concentration. Students may become anxious and perform poorly. The academic workload requires that students face a series of peak periods such as midterms and finals. There is a relatively constant underlying pressure to complete assignments (Hudd, 2000). Sometimes students may become overwhelmed because they have a large course workload. Many students add extra courses or add on more credits during the semester to complete college within four years. Increased coursework can create stress among students. Higher academic success may be related to higher self-expectations for students to maintain their academic standing (Nelson, 2002, p. 766). This can, however, create psychological, physical, social, and educational stress. Students who rely upon scholarships have added stress to maintain a specific grade point average in order to receive funding for college.

Financial

Many students have to work because they are unable to obtain enough financial aid. Many times students' work hours are not compatible with the time they need to use for studying. More time spent at work can impose on time otherwise available for studying (Troackle, Barnes & Egget, 2000, p. 131). Overworking can reflect negatively on academic performance and therefore generate enhanced issues of stress. Income from jobs may help students solve some financial issues, but students can often find themselves exhausted physically (Arnstein, 1999, p. 52). When students start to have financial troubles, their outlook on life may be dramatically affected. Financial problems can create psychological strain and can leave some students regretting their attempt at college. This may make the college environment even more stressful.

Environmental

It is not uncommon for students to blame their environmental stress on an unfriendly campus climate (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Many minority students may view campuses as hostile, threatening and unfriendly (Swann, 1991). Research has shown that some events which otherwise serve to reduce stress can actually increase feelings of stress (Dill & Henly, 1998). Environmental stressors for minorities can also be caused by experiences with prejudice and stereotyping.

Prejudice

Research has suggested that minority students are often not seen as equal to their peers. They may have to adapt to institutional racism and a prejudicial environment. The term prejudice is used with somewhat differing meaning by various individuals. Prejudice is commonly taken to mean a prejudgment about a person or group without bothering to

verify the opinion or to examine the merits of the judgment (Steele, 1979). Implicit in this definition is the assumption that prejudice involves a hasty and premature appraisal of individuals or groups. Social scientists view prejudice as an attitude, a particular state of mind (Jacobs, 1996). According to Steele (1979), prejudice has three aspects: what people think (the cognitive level), what they feel (the emotional level) and how they are inclined to act (the action-oriented level).

The cognitive level consists of an individual's mental picture or image of a minority group. It deals with how individuals perceive a minority, what they believe about it and what traits they attribute to its members (Steele, 1979).

The emotional level refers to the feeling that transpires within the individual. Fear, sympathy, pity, hate, anger, love, contempt, and envy are emotional responses. Although the emotional level of prejudice is distinct from the cognitive level, the two may appear together. One may even overlap the other (Steele, 1979).

The action oriented level refers to the tendency or nature to act in a certain way toward a minority group. The emphasis is upon tendencies to act, not upon the action itself. Prejudice is a system of negative conceptions, feelings and action-orientation regarding members of a particular group (Steele, 1979). Chickering (1996) wrote that it is often difficult for some African Americans to feel like they belong because of the views and actions of the dominant culture. Since color easily marks him/her off from being an ordinary American, and since he/her lives amidst social conditions sometimes embedded with racism, he/she becomes an American who is not accepted as an American, hence a kind of negative American (p. 3).

History in the U.S. has demonstrated that members of the minority status are often

randomly denied various rights and privileges even when their qualifications are as equal to those of the dominant group. Many times students and faculty members of a dominant group may feel that minority students are allowed on predominantly white campuses only because of affirmative action. This thinking leads to the misunderstanding of minority students and creates stereotypical views such as thoughts of students being accepted into college because of the color of their skin, not their abilities.

Stereotyping

Many minority students are not seen as an individual but as representing a group in a category. Many individuals from the dominant culture may have limited exposure to individuals from different cultures. The views may be slanted by their limited experiences. Stereotyping overlooks the fact that people have many traits (Labbe, 1997). When being stereotyped, people are sized up in terms of only one or a limited number of characteristics. Stereotypes obscure a variety of characteristics by magnifying one attribute out of proportion to others (Slaney, 1981). Attitudes are not to be equated with behavior, with what people actually do. They are merely a predisposition or prediction of certain kinds of actions. As such, attitudes are not necessarily correlated with actual behavior.

Discrimination

Discrimination entails overt action in which members of the dominant group treat members of an ethnic or racial group unequally or unfavorably (Stokes, Murray, Peacock, & Kaiser, 1994). In a study of Ponterotta and Wise (1987), undergraduate students at the University of California Santa Barbara were asked to indicate the characteristics that most people would use to describe Latino(a) students. The six most stereotypic

statements generated were as follows: poor personal hygiene habits, comes from a violent family, acts defensively when confronted, has a low GPA, does not come from a middle class family and does not accept political opinions of others (pp. 218-219). Ponterotta and Wise reported that whites expect Latino(a)s to be more like them, but will not fully accept them into their society because of distorted stereotypes. Grace (1994) identified examples of stereotypes about Native Americans. She cited the use of Native Americans as an object to be counted ("Ten Little Indians"), a practice that usually includes identical pictures of Native Americans, from which students conclude that they are a homogenous population. The use of Native Americans as mascots for athletic teams is also disconcerting. Language is another area in which prejudice can be found. For example the expression "Indian-giver" and "Drunker than ten Indians," are often used. Dealing with stereotypic views can increase feelings of stress for minority students.

How to Handle Stress

Stress is a major issue for college students due to academic, personal and social pressures. Many believe that at times, stress is caused more by the way we think about a problem than by the problem itself. By becoming aware of negative thoughts and challenging them, an individual can break the cycle whereby thoughts contribute to negative emotional states (Zuckerman, 1989). Stake & Orlofsky (1981) reported the following activities that can help diminish stress: find a physical activity that you can enjoy and make time for it; prioritize your time on paper and set reasonable goals that can be accomplished; don't expect too much from yourself; don't make unnecessary appointments or unachievable deadlines; learn to say "NO"; create opportunities when you can relax your entire mind and body; tense; then relax the major muscle groups in the

body; avoid stress prone diets; eat breakfast; space meals evenly throughout the day; avoid excessive caffeine and sugar; take vitamin C and B complexes; use family and friends for support; and, most importantly, recognize your body's own physical and mental signs of stress and develop positive strategies of coping (p. 653-654).

Coping Skills

Stress management can be used to help students deal with stress. There are many coping skills. One way to begin coping and managing stress is to know the physical and emotional limits. In order to eliminate negative stress, students will need to identify the stressor. Greenberg & Vallettutti (1980) reported that a strong psychological adjustment on the part of an individual is known to effectively help offset the dysfunctional effect of stress. The coping skills selected by the student need to be techniques that meet his/her needs. Having a strong support team is very beneficial in fighting stress. Social support is helpful because it provides the individuals with feedback, justification and a sense that one can master one's environment (Hobfoll, 1988, p. 120). Social support may consist of interactions where meaningful supports occur between people. Problem-solving focus is another way to cope with stressful situations (Fisher, 1994, p. 85). There is a need to help students identify what is creating the stress and then develop steps to reduce the effects of the causes. Emotion-focusing coping is used to help create distractions for the students. Emotion-focus deals with getting the student physically active and involved in distracting activities.

Time Management

Students must recognize when they have overloaded their schedules. Students may need to make adjustments to decrease their stress levels by developing a balance

between work and college. Students may also need to prioritize their time. Students who have a greater understanding of the importance of time management seem to have a lower level of stress (Lazarus, 1985).

Healthy Living

Maintaining good health is also important in reducing stress. Exercising can help to release the stress that has been built up in the body (Stone, 1992). Many colleges have a physical fitness program. The local community may also have some health facilities. This will allow students to engage in other activities and increase their social supports. Eating properly can also help to reduce stress. A diet that is not high in caffeine helps to keep the body from experiencing extreme energy than to extreme crashing. The right diet can create healthy moderate bursts of energy that stays with a student throughout the day. Students should avoid skipping meals because the body lacks the nutrients needed to reduce stress (Altmaier, 1983).

Positive Self-esteem

Students who have higher levels of self-esteem are less prone to stress (Sedlacek, 1995). Those students who deal with stress more effectively have a good sense of themselves. These students have a positive self-concept or confidence. They may also possess strong self-feeling, strength of character, determination and independence. Students with high self-esteem usually have a realistic self-appraisal, recognize and accept any deficiencies and work hard at self-development.

Students of color with high self-esteem may recognize the need to broaden their individuality; this need usually occurs when choosing academic classes, joining campus organizations and developing friendships. Many understand how to deal with racism.

Most are realistic based on personal experience of racism. They are not submissive to existing wrongs, not hostile to society and do not use racism as a cop-out. They are able to handle racist systems. They assert school roles to fight racism. They demonstrate community service. He/she may be involved in his or her cultural community. They may prefer long-range goals to short-term or immediate needs and are able to respond to deferred gratification.

These individuals usually have someone to whom they can turn to in a crisis and may have secured successful leadership experience. They might also have a successful experience that is pertinent to their racial background.

Diversity Programs

The widespread prevalence and negative impact of “stress on students requires the development of effective and efficient programs for stress management” (Altmaier, 1983, p.43). Educating all students on how to effectively handle stress is needed. Implementing workshops, classes and programs to inform students on how to effectively deal with stress can help to reduce it.

According to Sedlacek (1986), in order for the university to create a less stressful environment, for students of color there are priorities that need to be in place. One that is extremely important is to develop a university wide philosophy statement that encourages cultural diversity. There is also a need to analyze the diversity of faculty and student composition on campus. Also significant, is the establishment of goals to enhance diversity; conducting research on best practices/program/activities that promotes recruitment and retention of culturally diverse faculty and students; and developing, implementing and evaluating a comprehensive plan for recruitment/retention activities

that focus on enhancing cultural diversity on campus among faculty and students and establishing an environment that is welcoming and supportive.

Counseling

Another type of intervention is supportive counseling. According to Sapp (1996), supportive counseling promotes problem-solving, which is done through empathetic reflecting and listening. This form of therapy helps students to come up with methods of handling stress. Counseling allows students the opportunity to talk to someone about their stress issues and receive assistance in resolving the stressful tension. Many college campuses have a multicultural counselor who can help students deal with specific problems they may be having adjusting to a predominantly white campus. On the University of Wisconsin-Stout's campus students who would like to speak with someone regarding the stressors in their life can contact the Multicultural Student Service Center or the Counseling Center.

Summary

This chapter has attempted to establish the importance of conducting this study. In conclusion, many minority students deal with stressful events. Minority students are at a greater risk of dropping out or not enrolling in post secondary institutions (Osipow, 1980). Many of the contributing factors include academic pressures and/or hostile environments. The way that stress is perceived has a great influence on how stress is handled. It is important for colleges and universities to keep a pulse on the experience of minority students on their campuses. This is a vital piece to recruitment and retention. In the chapter to follow, methodology will be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will describe the subjects under study as well as how they were selected for inclusion in this study. Additionally, the instrument which was used will be discussed as to its content, validity, and reliability. Information on data collection and analysis procedures will follow. This chapter will conclude with details of the identified methodological limitations.

Description of subjects

All subjects of this research are minority students enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Stout during the Fall, 2003 semester. The subjects consist of approximately 345 students who are graduates or undergraduates. Every student of color, at UW-Stout during Fall, 2003, had the opportunity to participate.

Sample Selection

There were 345 minority students out of an approximate 8,116 total enrollment attending the University of Wisconsin-Stout during Fall, 2003. Minority student enrollment was verified by the Multicultural Center which mailed the survey to each student.

Instrumentation

A survey specifically developed to gather information pertaining to the perceived stressors identified by minority students at the University of Wisconsin-Stout was designed by the researcher (Appendix A). The survey was modified from the "Student Life Stressor Inventory," which was developed by B.M. Gadzella in 1994. Gadzella

developed the categories and the researcher modified the questions based on those categories.

Participants were informed, in writing, that their participation was voluntary. The information contained in the consent form contained truthful information that was not false or misleading. The consent form included the examiner's name, examiner's phone number, purpose of the study and potential risks (Appendix C). The survey consisted of 63 questions and was two pages in length. Participants filled in their major on question one. Participants circled one answer in questions 2 and 3 that pertains to year in school and gender. Participants responded never(1), rarely(2), sometimes(3), often(4) or always(5) to questions 4-63. The stressors were grouped into categories of academic, physiological, emotional and behavioral stressors. Participants were given the right to refuse to participate and the right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study with no coercion or prejudice. To ensure confidentiality, the survey was mailed by and returned to the Multicultural Student Service Center staff.

Stressors were categorized as academic, physiological, emotional and behavioral. Academic factors, including campus related scenarios were listed as: "examinations, being stereotyped by professors, missing classes, term papers, perceived irrelevant classes, participation in class discussions, final grades, excessive homework, forgotten assignments, crowded classrooms, lectures, unclear assignments, roommate conflict, lack of social activities, lack of faculty support, racism on campus, dating frustration, conflict with instructors, few minority classmates, not feeling socially accepted, financial difficulties, conflict in dorms, increased workload, change in major and graduation anticipation".

Physiological factors were identified as the following: “sweating, stuttering, trembling, rapid movements, exhaustion, irritable bowels, asthma, muscle tightness, hives, skin itching, migraine headaches, arthritis, viruses, colds, flu, weight loss and weight gain”.

Emotional stressors were identified as the following: “fear, anxiety, worry, guilt, grief, depression, and anger”. Behavioral stressors were identified as “abused others, abused self, smoked excessively, irritable towards others, attempted suicide, used defense mechanism and separated from others”.

Participants were given the right to refuse to participate and the right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study with no coercion or prejudice. Because the modification to the survey was significant and this survey was designed for this population, no other measures of validity or reliability were available.

Data Collection

The surveys were mailed by the researcher, with mailing labels provided by the Multicultural Student Services Center, to all minority students enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, in the fall semester of 2003. The participants were given a return envelope for mailing the survey back to the researcher. Students were mailed a reminder, two weeks after the initial mailing, by the researcher, with the assistance of the Multicultural Student Services Center staff. The students could also drop off the survey in a drop-box that was located at the Multicultural Student Services Center. The researcher picked up completed surveys three weeks after the distribution of the surveys.

Data Analysis

All appropriate descriptive statistics were used on data to address the research

questions. Questions were analyzed by frequency and percentage. Additionally, gender comparison statistics were available.

Unknowns

Extraneous variables such as socioeconomic factors, heredity, home, environmental factors, willingness to participate and the rate of response may have negatively affected the results of the survey.

Limitations

The study only represents students enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Stout during the Fall of 2003. Generalizations cannot be made to other colleges or universities. Students could have responded based on what they thought an expected response should be rather than how they really felt. Students could not ask the researcher for clarification of a statement because the study was done by mail.

CHAPTER FOUR

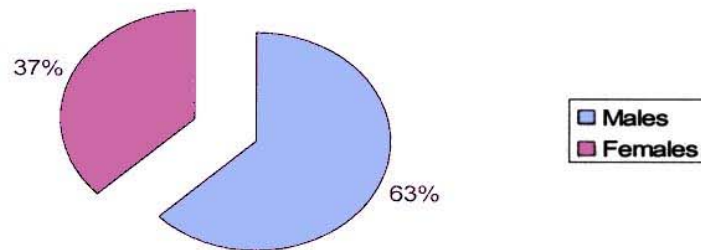
Results

This chapter will present the results from a survey, which identified perceived stressors of minority students enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The demographic information will be reported first. Then, each research question will be addressed with the disclosure of relevant descriptive statistics.

Demographic Information

All of the subjects for this study were either graduate or undergraduates students enrolled on the University of Wisconsin-Stout campus during the Fall of 2003. The demographic data collected provided discrete variables describing frequencies between gender, major and year in school. Aside from the demographic information, a Likert scale was used to collect this information.

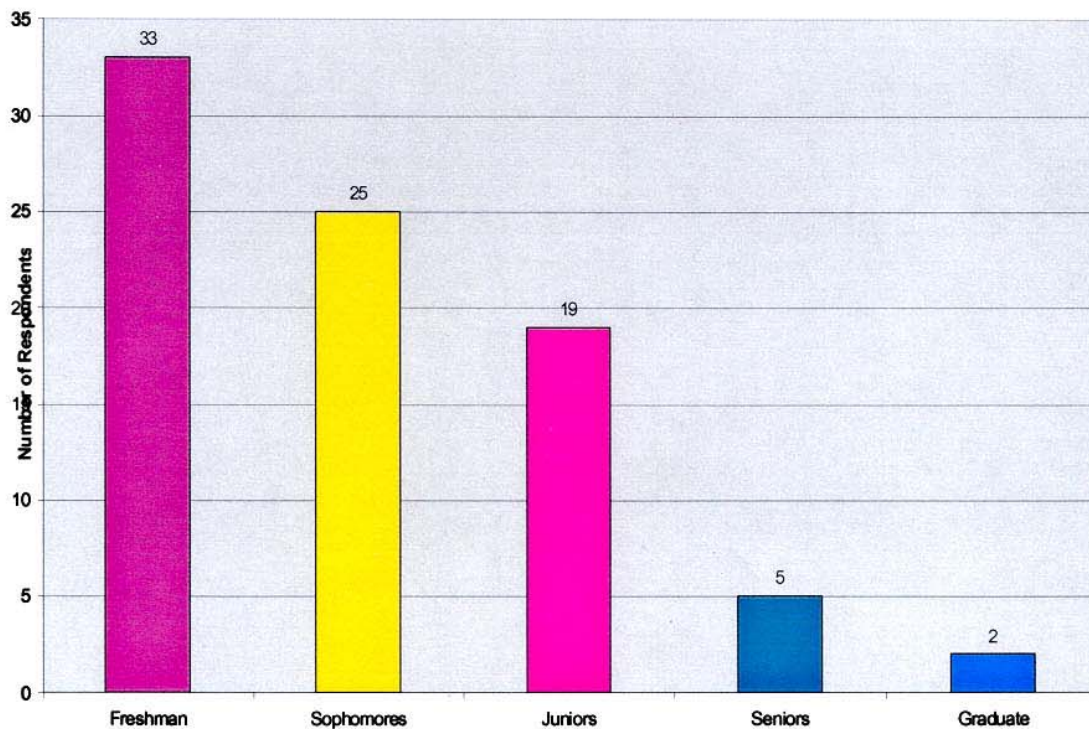
For the purposes of this study, the demographics questions were major, year in school, and gender. The students in the survey consisted of 37% (n=31) females and 63% (n=52) males. A total of 345 students were surveyed, with 83 respondents (24%). Table 3 shows a comparison between the total number (frequency) of male and female survey respondents. In Table 4 and Table 5, demographic data used is described as year in school and majors.

Table 3 Genders

The respondents consisted of thirty-three Freshmen (36%), twenty-five Sophomores (32%), nineteen Juniors (24%), five Seniors (6%) and two graduate students (1%). See Table 4.

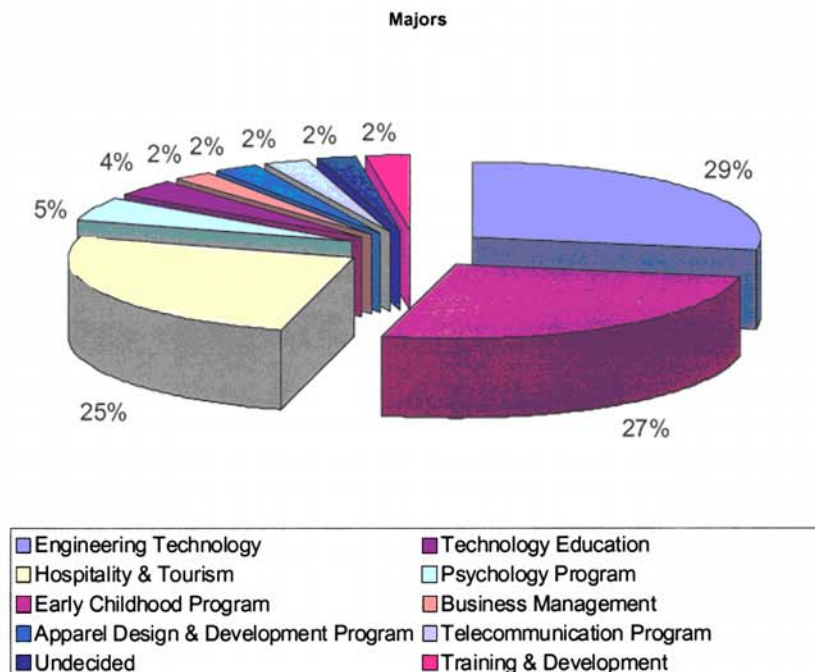
Table 4

Year in School



The undergraduate students represented the following programs: the largest number of respondents were from the Engineering Technology program, which represented 18 respondents; number two was the Technology Education program, which represented 22 respondents; number three was the Hospitality and Tourism program, which represented 21 respondents; number four was the Psychology program, which represented four respondents; number five was the Early Childhood program, which represented three respondents; number six was the Business Management program, which represented two respondents; number seven was the Apparel Design and Development program, which represented two respondents; number eight was the Telecommunication Systems program, which represented two respondents; and number nine were students who indicated undecided majors, which represented two respondents. The two graduate students both majored in Training and Development.

Table 5 Academic Programs



Inferential Statistics

Questions 4-63 of the survey, containing items regarding the opinions of respondents were measured using a five point Likert scale (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always), creating data at the numerical scale of measurement. These items pertained to the respondents' opinions regarding college student stressors and the physiological, emotional and behavioral ways they deal with stress.

Research Question 1: (Table 6)

What academic stressors were experienced most often?

Table 6 Rate of Response For Each Academic Stressor

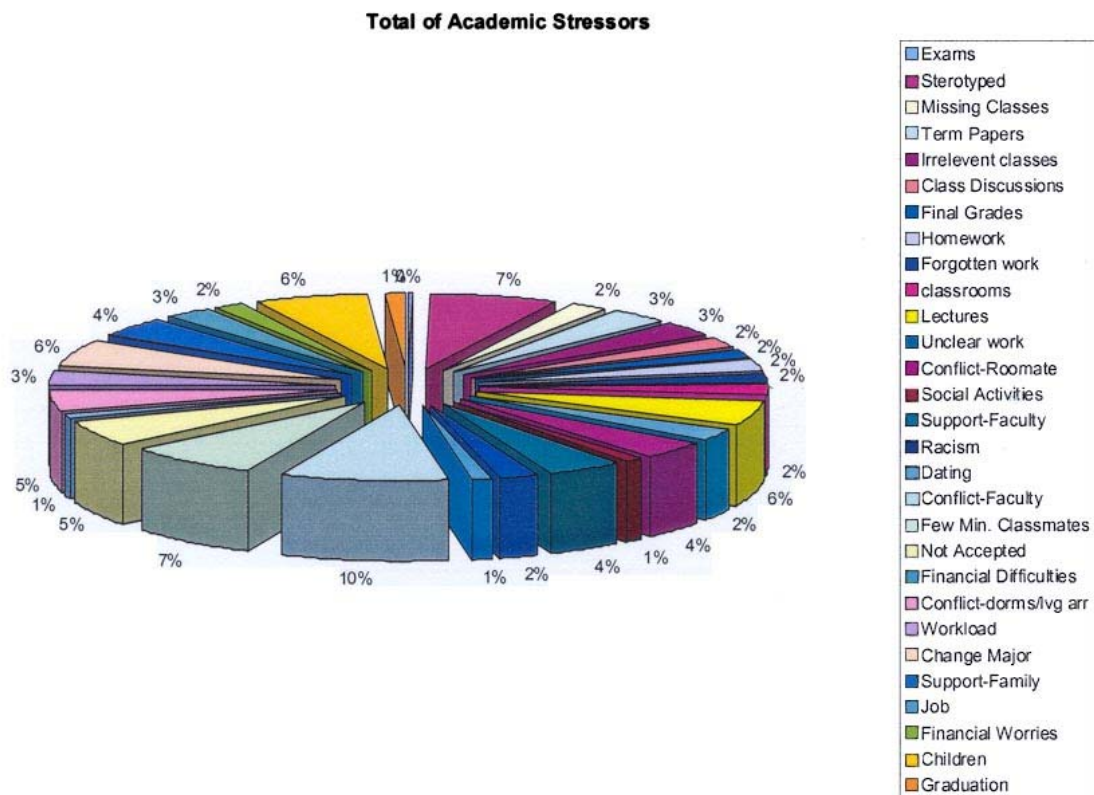


Table 6 shows the results of the most common academic stressors identified by the respondents on questions 4-32 of the survey. Fifty-two percent of the respondents indicated that exams cause the most academic stress. Respondents (twelve percent) indicated that increased workload was also a major stressful factor. Financial worries were indicated as the third largest cause of academic stress with a ten percent response rate. Eight percent of respondents indicated that crowded classrooms were a cause of stress.

Research Question 2: (Table 7)

What physiological stressors were experienced most often?

Table 7 Rate of Response for each Physiological Stressor

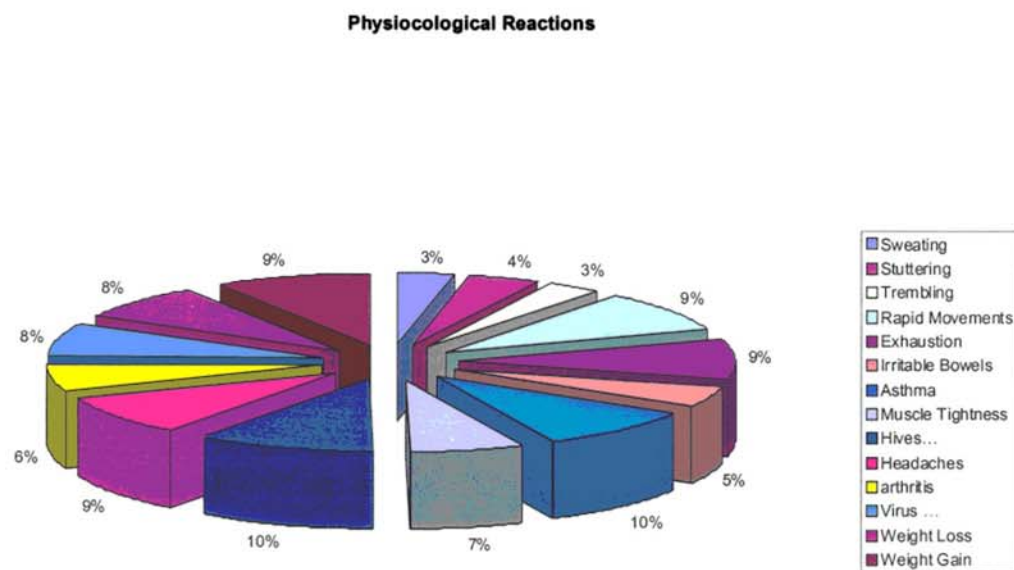


Table 7 shows the results of the most common physiological reactions to stress identified by the respondents on questions 33-46 of the survey. Respondents indicated

that “asthmatic symptoms” and the “development of hives” were the most common physiological reactions to stress, which had a ten percent response rate. “Rapid movements, exhaustion, headaches and weight gain” followed with a nine percent response rate each. “Virus and weight loss” both had an eight percent response rate.

Research Question 3: (Table 8)

What emotional stressors were experienced most often?

Table 8 **Rate of Response for each Emotional Stressor**

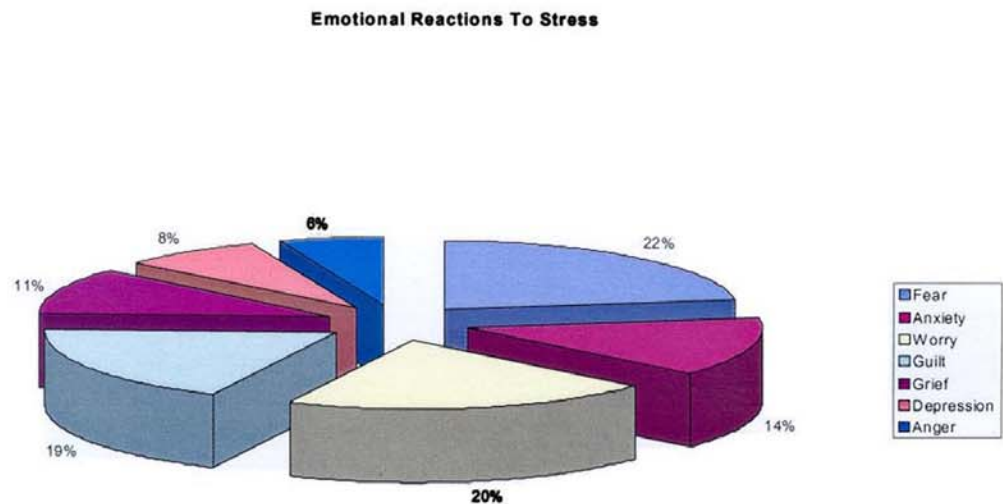


Table 8 shows the results of the responses to emotional reactions to stress identified by the respondents on questions 47-53 of the survey. Respondents indicated “fear”, which had response rate of 22%, was the leading emotional reaction. “Worry” had a response rate of 20%. Rate of response for “guilt” was 19% and “anxiety” had a response rate of 14%. “Grief” had an 11% response rate. “Depression” had an eight percent response rate and “anger” had six percent response rate.

Research Question 4: (Table 9)

What behavioral stressors were experienced most often?

Table 9 Rate of Response for each Behavioral Stressor

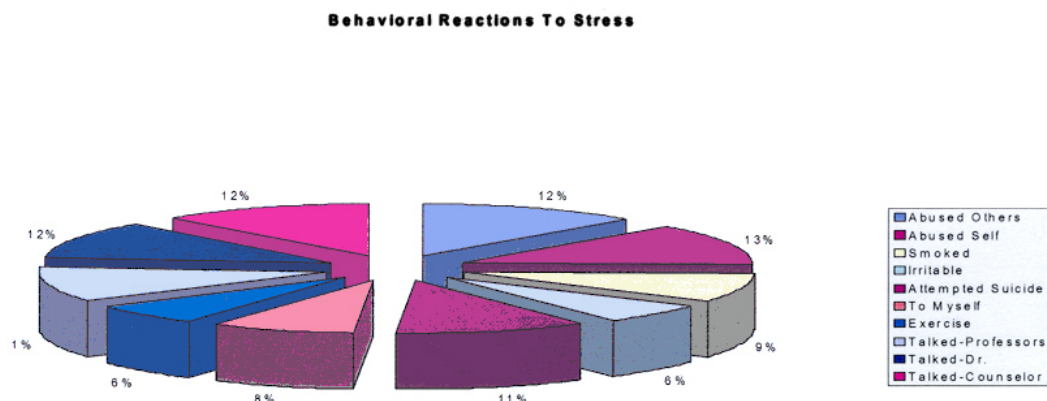


Table 9 shows the results of the most responses to behavioral reactions as identified by the respondents on questions 54-63 of the survey. Respondents indicated “abused self” as the leading behavioral response with a 13% rate of response. “Abused others, talked with counselor and talked with doctor” were the second behavioral responses with response rates of 12%. “Talking with professors and attempted suicide” were the third behavioral responses with response rates of 11%.

Research Question 5: (Table 10)

How does gender affect academic stressors?

Table 10 Academic Stressors (Males vs. Females)

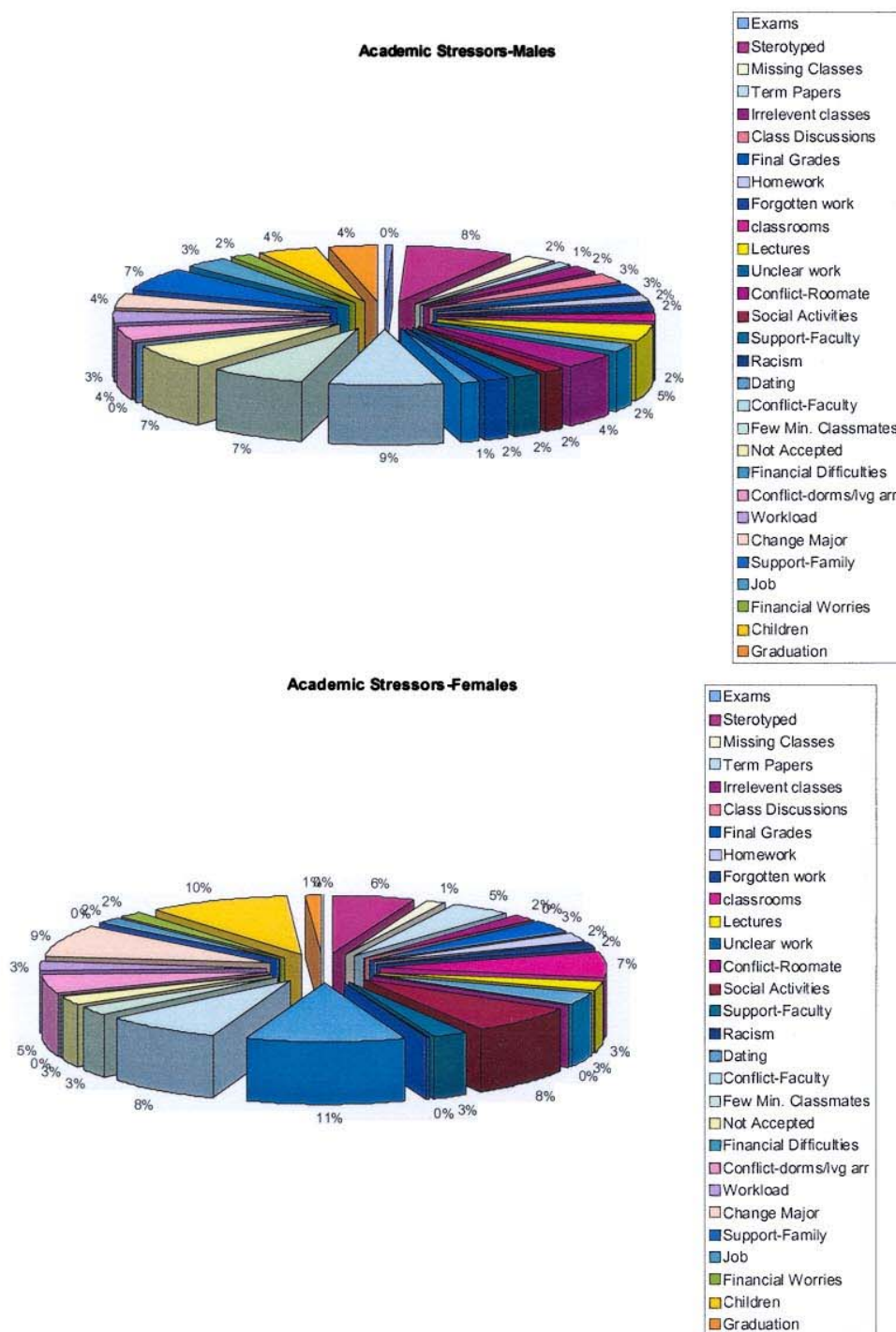


Table 10 shows the results indicated by both male and female respondents for questions 4-32. Females reported “dating frustration”, 11% rate of response, as a

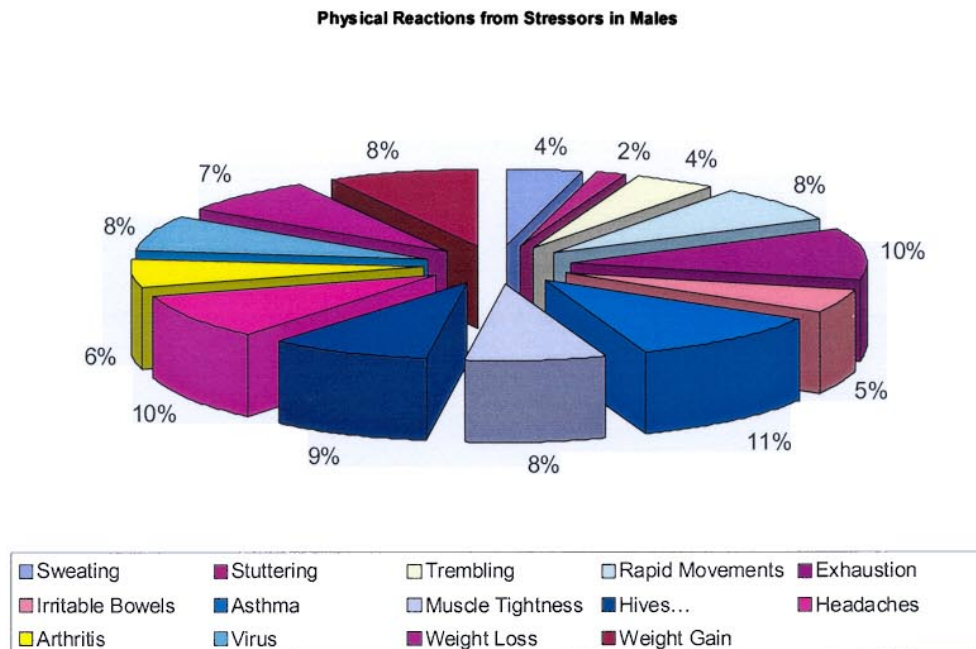
component of academic/campus stressors. “Trying to raise a family while attending school” was the second largest with a 10% rate of response. “Change of major” had a response rate of 9%. “Conflict with faculty and lack of social activities” had an 8% response rate. “Crowded classrooms” had a 5% response rate.

Males reported that “conflict with faculty” was the leading academic stressor with a 9% response rate. “Being stereotyped” had an 8% response rate. “Few minority classmates, not being socially accepted and lack of family support” had a response rate of 7%. Lectures had a response rate of 5%. “Conflict with roommate, conflict in dorms or other living arrangements, graduation, increased workload and having children and trying to go to school” had a response rate of 4%.

Research Question 6: (Table 11)

How does gender affect physiological stressors?

Table 11 Physiological Stressors (Males vs. Females)



Physical Reaction to Stressors in Females

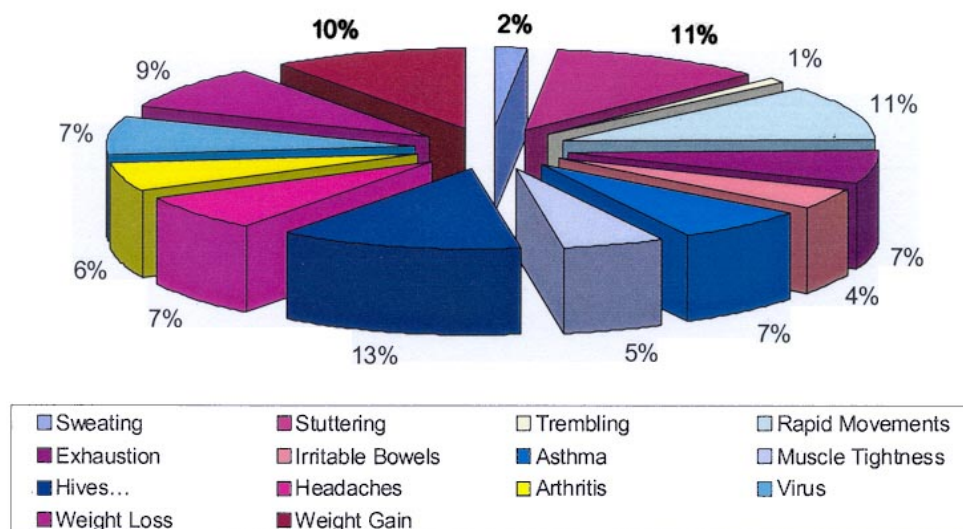


Table 11 shows that females reported “hives”, 13%, as the leading physical reaction to stress. “Stuttering and rapid movements” had a response rate of 11%. “Weight gain” had a response rate of 10% compared to males that had a response rate of 9%.

Males reported “asthma”, an 11% response rate, as the leading physical reaction to stress compared to females (7%). “Exhaustion and headaches” were the second most reported physical reactions to stress with a response rate of 10%. “Hives” had a response rate of 9%.

Research Question 7: (Table 12)

How does gender affect emotional reactions to stress?

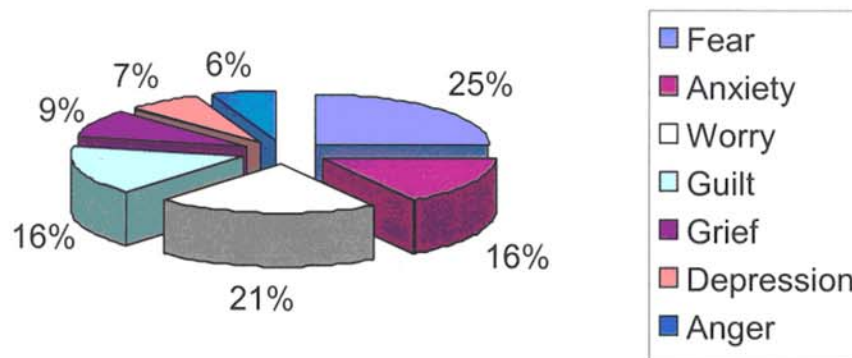
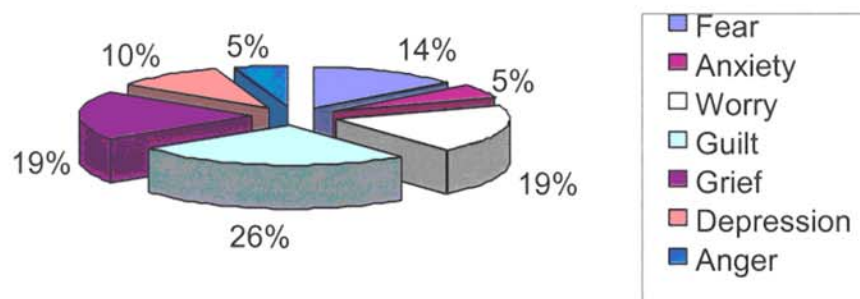
Table 12 Emotional Stressors (Males vs. Females)**Emotional Reactions to Stressors in Males****Emotional Reactions to Stressors in Females**

Table 12 shows that females (28%) reported feeling “guilty” when they become

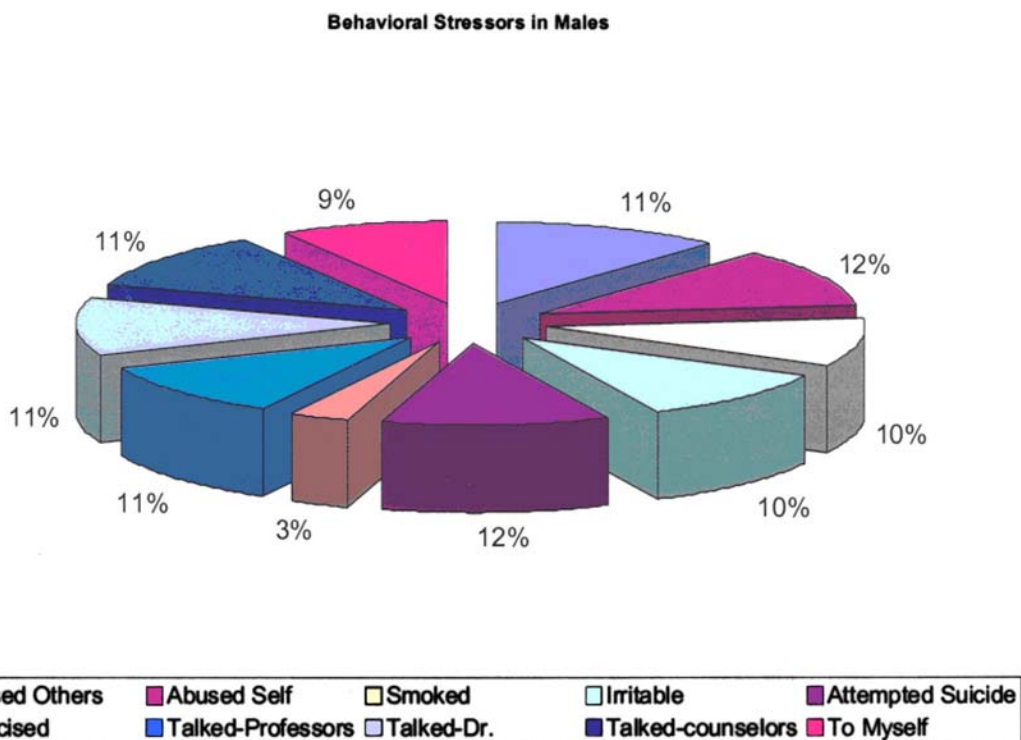
stressed compared to 21% of males. Females reported “worry and grief” as the second most common responses to emotional stress with a 19% rate of response. “Fear” had a response rate of 14%.

Males reported “fear” as the most common emotional reaction to stress with a response rate of 25%. “Worry” was the second most common reaction to stress with a 21% response rate. “Anxiety and guilt” had a response rate of 16%.

Research Question 8: (Table 13)

How does gender affect behavioral responses to stress?

Table 13 Behavioral Stressors (Males vs. Females)



Behavioral Stressors in Females

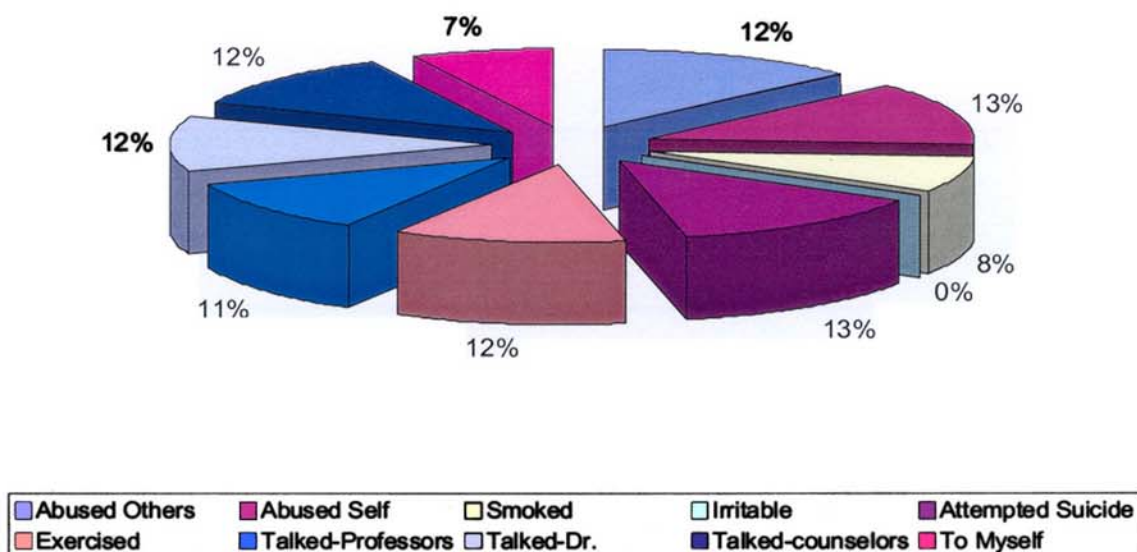


Table 13 shows that females reported “abused self and attempted suicide” as behavioral reactions to stress with a 13% response rate. “Abused others, exercised, talked with doctor and talked with counselor” had response rates of 12%. “Talked with Professors” had a response rate 11%.

Males reported “abused self and attempted suicide” as the leading behavioral reactions to stress with a 12% response rate. “Abused others, talked with professors, doctors and counselors” had a response rate of 11%. “Smoked or became irritable” had response rates of 10%.

Summary

This chapter revealed the results of a survey designed to identify stressors perceived by minority students at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Chapter five focuses on the summarization of these findings, conclusions to be drawn and implications of this and future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter will briefly review the purpose of this study and the methodology employed. Additionally, a brief discussion regarding the significance of the study will be presented. A more detailed discussion, including conclusions drawn from the results, will follow. Also, implications of this study and recommendations for future research will be addressed.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to gather descriptive statistics from minority students regarding identifying stressors while enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Data was collected via a survey designed specifically for this investigation. Appropriate descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were used on the data to address the research questions 4-63.

The review of literature looked at the evidence which identified characteristics of minorities, types of minorities, University of Wisconsin system minority enrollment, and an overview of minorities in higher education. The research also examined stress, the types of stress, the warning signs of stress, physical, emotional, behavioral and academic signs of stress, and causes of stress.

Discussion

Research indicated that there have been many studies that have reported a strong relationship between stress and the success of college students (Schafer, 1996; Fisher, 1994; Altmaier, 1983; Greenberg & Vallettutti, 1980). College students experience high

stress at predictable times each semester due to academic commitments, financial pressures, and lack of time management skills. When stress is perceived negatively or becomes excessive, it can affect both health and academic performance (Morgan, 1997). College students, especially minorities, are a group particularly prone to stress (Slanelly, 1981). They must adjust to being away from home for the first time, maintain a high level of academic achievement, and adjust to a new social environment. College students, regardless of year in school, often deal with pressures that lead to stress. Research has proven that minority students are not seen as equal as peers. They often have to adapt to institutional racism and a prejudicial environment. (Steele, 1979).

The researcher feels that the results of this study could have been more precise if more students were surveyed. The survey could have provided more information if it was given to all universities in the University system. The survey could have also identified differences between the different minority groups. The researcher must emphasize that the population sought out of this study is a small percentage of the entire university minority population. In any case, it is believed that certain conclusions have been drawn and helpful insights may be gained despite the extremely small sample in this study (n=83). Thus, conclusions have been drawn cautiously, utilizing all the data and breaking percentages down and reporting frequencies when necessary.

Conclusions

Minority students may experience stress differently due to cultural differences. This research indicated that minority females and males also experience academic, physiological, emotional and behavioral stress differently. There are ways to help students cope with stress. By establishing strong diversity programs and having

multicultural counselors, students may be able to eliminate or reduce their level of stress and develop more effective ways of coping with stress.

Diversity Programs

The widespread prevalence and negative impact of "stress on students requires the development of effective and efficient programs for stress management" (Altmaier, 1983, p.43). Educating students on how to effectively handle stress is needed. Although the survey represent a small percentage of minority students on the UW-Stout campus the results are alarming. In the survey, females reported "dating" as the leading cause of academic stressors. University of Wisconsin-Stout needs to provide a visible social outlet for students of color. The activities will allow minority students to talk, interact and engage with others. This may give students the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging and identify with other minority students who may be experience similar stressors. Males and females reported "abused self and attempted suicide" as a leading behavioral reaction to stress. Females had a 13% response rate and males had a 12% response rate. This area needs to be addressed by counselor, staff and facility. By implementing workshops, classes and programs to inform students on how to effectively deal with stress University of Wisconsin -Stout can help to address these issues.

In order for University of Wisconsin -Stout to create a less stressful environment, there are issues that need to in place. Develop a university wide philosophy statement that encourages cultural diversity. Analyze the cultural diversity of faculty and student composition on campus and set goals for enhancing diversity. Conduct research on best practices/program/activities that promote recruitment and retention of culturally diverse faculty and students. Also, it would seem important to develop, implement and evaluate a

comprehensive plan for recruitment/retention activities that focuses on enhancing cultural diversity on campus among faculty and students (Sedlacek, 1986).

Counseling

Another type of intervention is supportive counseling. According to Sapp (1996) supportive counseling promotes problem-solving which is done through empathetic reflecting and listening. This form of therapy helps students to come up with methods of handling stress. University of Wisconsin -Stout counselors can allow students the opportunity to talk to someone about their stress issues and receive assistance in resolving the stressful tension. University of Wisconsin -Stout has multicultural counselors who can help minority students deal with specific problems students who may be having difficulty adjusting to a predominantly white campus. Students enrolled at University of Wisconsin -Stout, who would like to speak with someone regarding the stressors in their life can contact the Multicultural Student Services located at 217 Bowman Hall, (715) 232-1381 or the Counseling Center located at 410 Bowman Hall, (715) 232-2468.

Implications

Involved parties may want to work collaboratively toward developing an implementing intervention and prevention strategies which promote the physical and emotional safety, health, and well-being of all students.

Local Agencies can also provide assistance to students who have difficulty coping with stress, such as the following:

- Arbor Place, 320 - 21st Street, NE, Menomonie, WI 54751, 715-235-4537, 1-800-995-4537 Arbor Place, Inc. provides confidential alcohol and other drug abuse

treatment services to adults and their families affected by alcohol and drug abuse. Staff is fully trained to provide assessment and design treatment programs. An intensive 21 day residential program, a 10 day relapse program and outpatient services are all available. Prevention resources are provided by full time prevention specialist. A crisis line is staffed 24 hours a day.

- The Bridge, PO Box 700, Menomonie, WI 54751, (715) 235-9074, 1-800-924-9918. The Bridge is a domestic abuse and sexual assault agency, serving Dunn and Pepin counties, whose goal is to end physical, sexual, and emotional violence in our society. Our mission is to support, advocate for, and empower victims/survivors to work toward this goal. Services include: Safe Home and Shelter; Information and Referral; Public Education; Crisis Counseling; Support Groups; Advocacy and Counseling; 24 hour crisis line. THERE ARE NO FEES FOR SERVICES.
- First Call for Help First Call for Help, 1202 North Broadway, Menomonie, WI 54751, 1-800-254-2350 (V/TTY), 715-235-3947 Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 a.m. Messages left at other hours will be responded to the morning of the next working day. First Call for Help (FCFH) is a regional information and referral service keeping track of agencies, organizations and programs serving the public. FCFH can put you in touch with a service or services with resource(s) to help you with a problem.
- Additional resources located in Menomonie, WI are the Dunn County Human Services, 808 Main Street,(715) 232-1116. Dunn County Sheriff's Department,

615 Stokke Parkway, (715) 232-1348. Menomonie Police Department, Police Dispatch Center, (715)232-1283, Police Business Office (715)232-2198, email menopd@uwstout.edu.

Recommendations for Further Research

Considering the preceding discussion and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- Continue to investigate stressors in minority college populations and work toward developing solutions.
- Gather more information that would indicate more causes of stress perceived by minority students.
- Attempt to get information from minorities on other predominantly white campuses to compare results.
- Gather information from Caucasian students to determine if race is a factor when examining the effects of stress.
- Gather information from predominantly minority campuses to determine if the stressors identified in this survey are similar or if those campuses have stronger support network.
- Interview minority students to get more in-depth responses or explanations of the most significant stressors felt in colleges and universities.

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Appendix A

1. Major: _____

2. Year in school: (Circle one) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Grad

3. Gender: (Circle One) Male Female

I often feel stressed due to:

(Circle one response for each)

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
4. Examinations	1	2	3	4	5
5. Being stereotyped	1	2	3	4	5
6. Missing classes	1	2	3	4	5
7. Term papers	1	2	3	4	5
8. Irrelevant classes	1	2	3	4	5
9. Class discussions	1	2	3	4	5
10. Final grades	1	2	3	4	5
11. Excessive homework	1	2	3	4	5
12. Forgotten assignments	1	2	3	4	5
13. Crowded classrooms	1	2	3	4	5
14. Lectures	1	2	3	4	5
15. Unclear assignments	1	2	3	4	5
16. Roommate conflict	1	2	3	4	5
17. Lack of social activities	1	2	3	4	5
18. Lack of faculty support	1	2	3	4	5
19. Racism on campus	1	2	3	4	5
20. Dating frustration	1	2	3	4	5
21. Conflict with instructors	1	2	3	4	5
22. Few minority classmates	1	2	3	4	5
23. Not being socially accepted	1	2	3	4	5
24. Financial difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
25. Conflict in dorms or other Living arrangements	1	2	3	4	5
26. Increased workload (School or work)	1	2	3	4	5
27. Change in major	1	2	3	4	5
28. Lack of family support	1	2	3	4	5

		Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
29.	Having a job	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Financial worries	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Having children and trying to go to school	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Graduation anticipation	1	2	3	4	5

During stressful situations, I have experienced the following (physiological):

33.	Sweating	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Stuttering	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Trembling	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Rapid Movements	1	2	3	4	5
37.	Exhaustion	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Irritable bowels	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Asthma	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Muscle tightness	1	2	3	4	5
41.	Hives, skin itching	1	2	3	4	5
42.	Migraine headaches	1	2	3	4	5
43.	Arthritis	1	2	3	4	5
44.	Viruses, colds, flu	1	2	3	4	5
45.	Weight Loss	1	2	3	4	5
46.	Weight gain	1	2	3	4	5

When under stressful situations I have experienced (emotional):

47.	Fear	1	2	3	4	5
48.	Anxiety	1	2	3	4	5
49.	Worry	1	2	3	4	5
50.	Guilt	1	2	3	4	5
51.	Grief	1	2	3	4	5
52.	Depression	1	2	3	4	5
53.	Anger	1	2	3	4	5

When under stressful situations I have (behavioral):

54.	Abused others	1	2	3	4	5
55.	Abused self (drugs/alcohol)	1	2	3	4	5
56.	Smoked excessively	1	2	3	4	5

		Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
57.	Irritable toward others	1	2	3	4	5
58.	Attempted suicide	1	2	3	4	5
59.	Kept to myself	1	2	3	4	5
60.	Used exercise	1	2	3	4	5
61.	Talked with professors	1	2	3	4	5
62.	Talked with physician	1	2	3	4	5
63.	Talked with counselor	1	2	3	4	5

Additional comments:

Appendix B
Survey Results

1. Major:

Engineering Technology	23
Technology Education	22
Hospitality & Tourism	21
Psychology Program	4
Early Childhood Program	3
Business Management	2
Apparel Design & Development Program	2
Telecommunication Program	2
Undecided	2
Training & Development	2

2. Year in school: (Circle one)

Freshmen	27
Sophomore	22
Junior	17
Senior	7
Graduate	1

3. Gender: (Circle One)

Females	31
Males	52

I often feel stressed due to:**(Circle one response for each)**

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
Questions	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Exams	2	9	11	25	31
Stereotyped	48	13	7	8	2
Missing Classes	13	43	12	10	0
Term Papers	21	17	17	8	3
Irrelevant classes	21	5	32	22	0
Class Discussions	15	8	25	27	3
Final Grades	12	41	13	14	0
Homework	16	28	13	21	0
Forgotten work	14	35	18	11	0
classrooms	13	38	11	11	5
Lectures	38	13	22	5	0
Unclear work	16	26	21	15	0
Conflict-Roommate	26	26	13	13	0
Social Activities	7	20	20	31	0
Support-Faculty	28	19	15	16	0
Racism	14	36	21	7	0
Dating	7	48	16	7	0

	Never(1)	Rarely(2)	Sometimes(3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Conflict-Faculty	63	9	2	4	0
Not Accepted	35	9	27	7	0
Financial					
Difficulties	6	49	24	4	0
Conflict-dorms/lvg					
arr	30	23	17	7	3
Workload	20	29	12	10	7
Change Major	39	34	27	12	0
Support-Family	27	26	14	3	0
Job	18	20	16	14	0
Financial Worries	11	12	18	23	6
Children	42	12	16	8	0
Graduation	8	21	17	20	0

During stressful situations, I have experienced the following (physiological):

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Sweating	20	38	16	2	2
Stuttering	27	32	16	2	1
Trembling	19	31	23	4	1
Rapid					
Movements	56	2	18	2	0
Exhaustion	57	16	5	0	0
Irritable Bowels	29	26	16	7	0
Asthma	59	18	1	0	0
Muscle					
Tightness	42	13	14	9	0
Hives...	65	3	0	0	0
Headaches	55	11	20	0	0
arthritis	37	17	11	13	0
Virus ...	47	18	13	0	0
Weight Loss	50	16	12	0	0
Weight Gain	57	21	0	0	0

When under stressful situations I have experienced (emotional):

Questions	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Fear	23	18	16	1	0
Anxiety	14	24	7	39	0
Worry	21	17	27	13	0
Guilt	19	21	20	18	0
Grief	11	16	39	12	0
Depression	8	26	20	24	0
Anger	6	8	26	31	7

When under stressful situations I have (behavioral):

	Never(1)	Rarely(2)	Sometimes(3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Abused					
Others	73	1	0	1	0
Abused Self	73	1	0	0	0
Smoked	52	22	0	0	0
Irritable	36	16	22	0	0
Attempted					
Suicide	62	12	0	0	0
To Myself	47	1	13	0	0
Exercise	36	31	7	0	0
Talked-					
Professors	64	6	3	0	0
Talked-Dr	67	4	1	0	0
Talked-					
Counselor	69	5	1	0	0
Additional Comments					

Appendix C

Dear University of Wisconsin-Stout Student:

I am a graduate student at UW-Stout in the Education Master's program. In order to fulfill all the requirements for my degree, I must conduct a field study and complete a research paper. I have chosen the topic of stressors, particularly those identified by minority students on a predominantly white campus. I have developed a brief survey to gather information on your perceptions of your student experiences as it pertains to academic, psychological, emotional and behavioral stressors. With your cooperation, I will collect such data and share the results. Identifying stressors can help to determine how minority enrollment and retention can be improved. This information will hopefully be helpful in the implementation of support programs to reduce stressors experienced by students of color at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. As a college student, I understand how valuable your time is. This survey will only take 10 minutes of your time. You may return this survey in the return envelope or drop it off at the Multicultural Student Services located at 217 Bowman Hall. **Please complete by November 24, 2003.**

Mary Riordan of Multicultural Student Services has graciously volunteered to assist me with mailing the survey. The information you provide is completely confidential. Completed surveys will not be viewed until all have been collected.

It is understood by returning this questionnaire you are giving informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. You understand that the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship of stress on students of color and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. You also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. You are aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that only minimal identifiers are necessary and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. You realize that you have the right to refuse to participate and that your right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

Note: Questions or concerns about the research study should be addressed to Nannette Walker (651) 423-8516, the researcher. Questions about the rights of research subjects can be addressed to Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 Harvey Hall, Menomonie, WI, 54751, (715) 232-1126.

If you would like to speak with someone regarding the stressors in your life, please contact: Multicultural Student Services, 217 Bowman Hall, (715) 232-1381 or the Counseling Center, 410 Bowman Hall, (715) 232-2468.

Thank you for your time, your participation is greatly appreciated.

Nannette Walker