The Effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program on Sophomore Slump

Lisa-Ann M. O'Connor

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The Effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program on Sophomore Slump

Abstract
Research suggested that there is a need for higher education institutions to focus on retaining sophomore students, as many struggle with sophomore slump. The term sophomore slump is "widely used to describe students who lack motivation, feel disconnected, and flounder academically" (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006, p. 18). To address this matter, some institutions of higher education have invested resources into sophomore year or second-year initiatives to retain sophomore students, but the lack of reported assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of sophomore year or second-year initiatives in higher education institutions is an issue. The most cited initiatives that universities created to support sophomore year or second-year students are leadership development, academic advising, and career planning (Gahagan, Jr., 2009). The Rising STARR Sophomore Program is a sophomore year or second-year initiative that supports career planning by engaging sophomore students through career-related activities to identify job-related goals. The program also addresses the growing industry needs of employers who collaborate with the career center in preparing and hiring students for leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time careers related to their major. This quantitative evaluative case study assessed if the Rising STARR Sophomore Program is an effective intervention to address sophomore slump and, if so, how elements of this program might be useful to educators who are planning similar programs. The program's effectiveness was assessed using a one-group pretest-posttest design, with program theory and logic model as a framework. The results of this study showed that students who interacted with the Rising STARR Sophomore Program reported high rates of motivation, decision-making, and confidence with respect to career success. They attributed their success to the program.

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The Effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program on Sophomore Slump

By

Lisa-Ann M. O’Connor

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by
Dr. W. Jeff Wallis

Committee Member
Dr. Michael L. Muffs

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St. John Fisher College

August 2016
Dedication

I would like to thank God, my family, friends, and colleagues who have supported me throughout this journey. This process was an incredible journey for me and I could not have done it without Him. To God be the glory for His work in and through me during this journey. Mark Batterson stated it best, “Quit living as if the purpose of life is to arrive safely at death. Set God-sized goals. Pursue God-ordained passions. Go after a dream that is destined to fail without divine intervention. Keep asking questions. Keep making mistakes. Keep seeking God. Stop pointing out problems and become part of the solution. Stop repeating the past and start creating the future. Stop playing it safe and start taking risks. Expand your horizons. Accumulate experiences. Enjoy the journey. Find every excuse you can to celebrate everything you can. Live like today is the first day and last day of your life. Don’t let what’s wrong with you keep you from worshiping what’s right with God. Burn sinful bridges. Blaze new trails. Criticize by creating. Worry less about what people think and more about what God thinks. Don’t try to be who you’re not. Be yourself. Laugh at yourself. Don’t let fear dictate your decisions. Take a flying leap of faith. Quit holding out. Quit holding back. Go all in with God. Go all out for God.”
To my parents, Donald and Olive O’Connor, I dedicate this dissertation to you both who have instilled in me the value of education and the tenacity to always do my best. To my brothers, sister-in-law, and everyone in my family: I love you all and thank you for the love and support that you have given to me.

To my friends, your compassion, encouragement, and understanding as I went through this journey has kept me. Throughout it all, you have remained sympathetic and accepting of my obligations as I pursued and achieved my goals – thank you for being my confidants and for our years of friendship.

To my colleagues from SJFC, New Rochelle: C-Suite, Cohort 6, alumni, staff, and faculty; I have learned from each and every one of you over the course of this program. We have completed another chapter in our story and I look forward to seeing how the others unfold.
Biographical Sketch

Lisa-Ann M. O’Connor is currently Associate Director of CUNY Service Corps at Borough of Manhattan Community College. In this role, she manages the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the CUNY Service Corps program, as well as, administer and expand the program’s recruiting, training, and student and alumni employment components. She has over 10 years of higher education experience, as well, as experience in corporate, nonprofit, human resources, and public relations.

Ms. O’Connor holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Baruch College where she graduated in 2006. In 2011, she graduated with a Master of Science in Education in Mental Health Counseling from Hunter College where she was awarded the ASCA Foundation Scholarship and inducted into Chi Sigma Iota International Honor Society. She came to St. John Fisher College in 2014 and began her doctoral studies in the Ed.D. program in Executive Leadership where she was inducted into the Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education. Ms. O’Connor pursued her research exploring the effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program on sophomore slump under the direction of Dr. W. Jeff Wallis and Dr. Michael L. Muffs and received the Ed.D. degree in 2016.
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I would like to express my gratitude to Borough of Manhattan Community College and the City University of New York for the support received during this doctoral research.
Abstract

Research suggested that there is a need for higher education institutions to focus on retaining sophomore students, as many struggle with sophomore slump. The term sophomore slump is “widely used to describe students who lack motivation, feel disconnected, and flounder academically” (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006, p. 18). To address this matter, some institutions of higher education have invested resources into sophomore year or second-year initiatives to retain sophomore students, but the lack of reported assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of sophomore year or second-year initiatives in higher education institutions is an issue.

The most cited initiatives that universities created to support sophomore year or second-year students are leadership development, academic advising, and career planning (Gahagan, Jr., 2009). The Rising STARR Sophomore Program is a sophomore year or second-year initiative that supports career planning by engaging sophomore students through career-related activities to identify job-related goals. The program also addresses the growing industry needs of employers who collaborate with the career center in preparing and hiring students for leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time careers related to their major.
This quantitative evaluative case study assessed if the Rising STARR Sophomore Program is an effective intervention to address sophomore slump and, if so, how elements of this program might be useful to educators who are planning similar programs. The program’s effectiveness was assessed using a one-group pretest-posttest design, with program theory and logic model as a framework.

The results of this study showed that students who interacted with the Rising STARR Sophomore Program reported high rates of motivation, decision-making, and confidence with respect to career success. They attributed their success to the program.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

A student’s sophomore year or second-year experience in college can be both challenging and anxiety producing as they start to think about their future personal, academic, and career goals (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006). Unfortunately, there is less institutional attention given to students during this time, as compared to their freshman year or first-year experience (Graunke & Woosley, 2005). The result of such an approach is that many sophomores withdraw from the college due to poor grades, or transfer to another college that they feel provides a better environment for support and learning (Gohn, Swartz, & Donnelly, 2000-2001) or offers degree programs that they feel will yield higher results for career opportunities.

Schreiner, Pattengale, and Gardner (2000) recognized these occurrences within higher education institutions and described the approaches taken by the institutions as myths. They brought attention to two of the myths believed by higher education institutions: “the first myth is that ‘the retention problem,’ is primarily a problem of the first-year; and the second is that if we concentrate retention programming on the first-year, we will have adequately addressed the problem” (p. 90). National Retention Data from the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange suggested that on average 80.6% of first-year students return for the sophomore year (Lipka, 2006). However, of those who return for their sophomore year, an additional 9-10% will not proceed to the junior year (Lipka, 2006). Herein lies the conception of the sophomore slump. The term
sophomore slump is “widely used to describe students who lack motivation, feel disconnected, and flounder academically” (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006, p. 18).

Symptoms of the sophomore slump are,

. . . prolonged indecisiveness about selecting a major, inappropriate decision-making about academic course selection and major and minor fields of study, low levels of academic engagement, low levels of commitment, dysfunctional behavior which interferes with academic success (such as excessive drinking), disappointment and frustration with the academic experience, increased time-to-degree completion rates, absenteeism, lack of co-curricular involvement, and lack of social and academic integration (Schreiner, Pattengale, & Gardner, 2000, p. 90).

To address these problems, institutions of higher education need to shift their long-term retention efforts beyond the freshman year or first-year experience and look at sophomores with a focus on “three major sources of student departure: academic difficulties, the inability of individuals to resolve their education and occupational goals, and their failure to become or remain incorporated in the intellectual and social life of the institution” (Graunke & Woosley, 2005, p. 369).

With these facts in mind, higher education institutions should facilitate a fair degree of everyday interaction among sophomore students, faculty, and staff. According to Schaller’s 2005 qualitative study of sophomores’ college experiences, these formal and informal interactions should integrate effective and comprehensive experiences that connect the dots in such a way that sophomores learn how to think and act intentionally and independently about their career now and in the future (Schaller, 2005).
This integrated experience would allow today’s student to become competitive, engaged, and self-motivated professionals who would take responsibility for their own careers. Schreiner, Pattengale, and Gardner (2000) found that “there are some unique issues for sophomores and that these demand further exploration” (p. 89). They recommended universities take these steps: (a) conduct research on the phenomenon, (b) collect data from sophomores about their experiences, (c) develop partnerships between academic and student affairs departments to address the issues, and (d) actively address key sophomore year developmental and academic outcomes (Schreiner, Pattengale, & Gardner, 2000). Once the university or college has bought in to these recommendations, a commitment to implement a program would be the next step.

Since 2000, there has been a growing interest in the sophomore year or second-year experience. Gahagan and Hunter (2006) noted that, “nation-wide increasing numbers of higher educators are seeking information and ideas to assist them in improving the experience of second-year students” (p. 21). Of those higher education institutions that implemented sophomore year or second-year initiatives, the STARR Career Development Center of Baruch College of the City University of New York (CUNY) initiated the Rising STARR Sophomore Program in 2010 as an intervention to address the sophomore slump. The program’s approach is to develop the career and leadership skills of sophomore students in an effort to engage and retain them at the college.

This program came about because of feedback the career center received from students that they desire stronger career readiness skills earlier in their academic development, as well as, their government, nonprofit, and Fortune 500 employer partners.
Their employer partners articulated that their recruiting efforts had expanded to target sophomores to fill their employment pipeline, a change from their traditional approach, which had focused on juniors and seniors.

With the feedback received from both students and employers, the STARR Career Development Center addressed these matters by creating the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. The goal of this program is to bolster student’s skills and knowledge through didactic and applied experiences to meet industry demand. The program attempts to accomplish this by addressing the skills and knowledge gaps of sophomores, while strengthening their retention efforts in clarifying their career goals and facilitating access to career pathways. It also increases collaboration with faculty members and other stakeholders across the college (e.g., academic advisors, key administrators, etc.) to assist the participants of the program. This provides better-prepared students entering employer talent pipelines, which is also an opportunity to support employer partners in their efforts to engage students earlier in their academic development and increase the institution’s profile.

This study measured the effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program in preparing sophomore students for leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time careers related to their major. An examination of data completed by past participants of this workforce readiness-training program provided insight on ways higher education institutions might implement their sophomore year or second-year initiatives. The workforce readiness-training program had no in-depth analysis; therefore, the outcomes of the program were unknown.
Problem Statement

Retention is a major concern for institutions of higher education as they are under scrutiny to demonstrate the value of a college education. Sophomore year or second-year students in particular are a concern as they depart from the college for reasons such as poor grades, the need for an environment of support and learning, and the need for degree programs that yield higher results for career opportunities. Therefore, the initiatives that universities create to support sophomore year or second-year students are important. Articulating how a new program will support institutional goals and enhance the chances of the program’s acceptance campus-wide, secures its successful longevity. However, the lack of assessment and evaluation data to inform effectiveness of programs for sophomores in higher education settings is an issue (Gahagan, Jr., 2009).

Baruch College’s STARR Career Development Center implemented the Rising STARR Sophomore Program for sophomores in 2010 as an intervention to address sophomore slump. The goals of the workforce readiness-training program are to (a) strengthen students’ soft skills and workplace competencies; (b) impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence; and (c) prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job (Baruch College, 2016). The Rising STARR Sophomore Program focuses on connecting students early with career opportunities through six components. Students: (a) attend workshops on general career development topics, such as resume and cover letter writing, interview skills, networking, and job searching; (b) attend an orientation that provides an overview of the program, the role of the program manager, and the expectations of participants; (c) meet with the program manager one-on-one to discuss the student’s career path; (d) meet with the
In 2015, the program manager for the workforce readiness-training program reported experiencing a decrease of sophomore students participating in the program. Given the purpose of the workforce readiness-training program, it needs to be effective in engaging and preparing sophomore students for employer talent pipeline programs. The effect and impact this program has had on training and preparing four groups of sophomore students for leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time careers in areas related to their major is unknown. Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004) noted that knowing the nature and scope of the problem, where it is located, and who is affected are important findings to program evaluation. Knowledge of the impact the Rising STARR Sophomore Program has in achieving its goal to strengthen students’ skills and knowledge to meet employers’ expectations added to the literature pertaining to program impact outcome studies.

This study was the first in-depth quantitative investigation conducted of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. The outcomes of the study filled the present gap in the literature pertaining to data on assessment of sophomore year or second-year initiatives. The results of this investigation informed the practice of administering sophomore year or second-year programs that aim to (a) strengthen students’ soft skills and workplace competencies; (b) impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and
confidence; and (c) prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job. Therefore, this quantitative evaluative case study used program effect or program impact to explore the effectiveness of the workforce readiness-training program in a higher education institution setting. Program effect or program impact is the “portion of an outcome change that can be attributed uniquely to a program as opposed to the influence of some other factor” (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004, p. 206). Without analyzing outcomes data, it is difficult to determine whether the Rising STARR Sophomore Program is achieving its intended goals.

Theoretical Rationale

Theory provides a frame that directs an investigation and an interpretation of findings. A theoretical rationale, therefore, is a “perspective that shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change” (Creswell, 2014, p. 64). The theoretical framework for this program evaluation is program theory. Program theory is “assumptions about resources and activities and how these are expected to lead to intended outcomes” (Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 2010, p. 60). It “has been described and used under various names, for example, logic model, program model, outcome line, cause map, and action theory” (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004, p. 139). Program theory has three components: the program impact theory, the service utilization plan, and the program’s organizational plan. The program impact theory is “the change process actuated by the program and the improved conditions that are expected to result,” the service utilization plan is “the program’s assumptions and expectations about how to reach the target population, provide and sequence service contracts, and conclude the relationship when services are
no longer needed or appropriate,” and the program’s organizational plan is the “program resources, personnel, administration, and general organization” (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004).

This study focused on program impact theory utilizing the logic model. The logic model is “a systematic and visual way to present the perceived relationships among the resources, activities, and changes or results” of a program (Petersburg, 2015). The logic model is useful in evaluating and describing organizational processes in an effort to promote results-based performance. Figure 1.1 displays the sequence of actions in a logic model:


The sequence of actions can be described as the six levels of analysis that serves as a conceptual map of a program’s overall “logic.” The six components are: (a) inputs, resources needed for the program; (b) activities, services; (c) outputs, products and participation in the program; (d) initial (short-term) outcomes, changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and opinions; (e) intermediate outcomes, changes in behavior or action that result from participants’ new knowledge; and (f) long-term outcomes, changes in participants’ condition or status in life (Petersburg, 2015).

The three types of logic models are: (a) theory approach model, (b) outcomes approach model, and (c) activities approach model. Theory approach model illustrates how and why a program will work, outcomes approach model outlines the approach and
expectations behind a program, and activities approach model describes what a program intends to do. This research utilized the outcomes approach model, which outlines relationships between program components and participant changes in behavior. It also depicts the gaps between program components, assumptions, and outcomes (Kellogg, 2016). The structure was appropriate for the program evaluation because it provided a framework for evaluating whether there was a relationship between the Rising STARR Sophomore Program and its outcomes. Outcomes are the results and the benefits the participants receive.

The study evaluated the program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes, which in the program developmental stage is called program maintenance. This stage refers to programs that have been in effect for over 1-year (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). The Rising STARR Sophomore Program is an established program in its sixth year of operation. The intermediate outcomes of the program measured the before and after results of past participants’ involvement in the program. Intermediate outcomes include the program’s impact on students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence. Long-term outcomes will further infer the impact the program had on students. The long-term outcomes measured the ability of past participants to acquire leadership program, internship, part-time, and full-time jobs as a result of participating in the program. This determined the program’s effectiveness to bolster student’s skills and knowledge through didactic and applied experiences to meet industry demands.
Statement of Purpose

It is important to assess data beyond students indicating their satisfaction and to examine if students learned from the initiative. The most cited initiatives that universities create to support sophomore year or second-year students in an effort to address sophomore slump are leadership development, academic advising, and career planning programs. To understand the effectiveness of these programs and their impact on students, data that measures the impact of these programs on their intended outcomes would need to be collected to provide an understanding of the sophomore year or second-year initiatives from a student context that includes satisfaction and learning (Gahagan, Jr., 2009).

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program, a workforce readiness-training program created to support sophomore year or second-year students with career planning. The study assessed the factors of this sophomore year or second-year initiative that made it effective to influence students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence, in an effort to facilitate student’s access to career pathways, such as employer talent pipeline programs offering leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time jobs. The findings added to the literature on the effectiveness of workforce readiness-training programs in higher education as a sophomore year or second-year initiative with respect to addressing the sophomore slump, a retention issue affecting institutions of higher education. The data acquired will be used by higher education institutions to create or enhance their programs to improve future outcomes.
Research Questions

The research questions that guided this quantitative evaluative case study were:

1. To what degree does the Rising STARR Sophomore Program achieve its intermediate goals to impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence?
2. To what degree does the Rising STARR Sophomore Program achieve its long-term goals to prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job?
3. Is there a relationship between the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes?

Potential Significance of the Study

Gahagan’s (2009) national study of the prevalence and purpose of sophomore year or second-year initiatives, states that there is a lack of data about the effectiveness of sophomore initiatives and their impact on students. The data currently provided by higher education institutions is information on students’ satisfaction with programs rather than what they learned from the program. For sophomore initiatives to be sustainable over time, universities and colleges need to begin evaluating their sophomore year or second-year initiatives. A survey administered in 2005 by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition stated that programs offered for second-year students need to be assessed and more time and resources be devoted into their development (Tobolowsky & Cox, The Development of College Sophomores, 2007). This would provide data that would change the manner in which higher education institutions address the sophomore slump.
Currently, the Rising STARR Sophomore Program is the first sophomore year or second-year initiative administered by Baruch College’s STARR Career Development Center within a 4-year public college of the City University of New York (CUNY) that prepares students for employer talent pipeline programs and focuses on increasing retention, improving leadership, and transitioning students to the world of work.

Career centers provide resources that are critical to sophomores as they attempt to decide upon or reaffirm an academic major. By integrating multifaceted programs that permit (a) exploration of career options, (b) development of a career decision plan, (c) an understanding of the realities of the workplace, and (d) the awareness of co-curricular experiences that enhance the students’ career choices, sophomores will develop connections between their academic endeavors and life-long aspirations (Gardner, 2000, p. 76).

This study contributed to the field of sophomore year or second-year initiatives, as there is limited empirical research on the effectiveness of workforce readiness-training programs administered by a career center for sophomores in a higher education institution setting as an intervention to address the sophomore slump. It also addressed the gaps in sophomore year or second-year research and added knowledge to the development of effective workforce readiness-training program practices in higher education institution settings.

**Definitions of Terms**

**Career Maturity.** “An individual’s ability to make appropriate career choices, including awareness of what is required to make a career decision and the degree to which one’s choices are both realistic and consistent over time” and “the extent to which
an individual has acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to make intelligent, realistic career choices” (Levinson, Ohler, Caswell, & Kiewra, 1998).

**Career Services.** A department within a college or university charged with the responsibility of guiding students through career and goal oriented processes.

**First-Year Experience.** The types of initiatives provided by higher education institutions for students recognized as freshmen.

**National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.** An educational organization comprised of members of the higher education community throughout the United States and abroad.

**Rising Sophomore.** Student in a higher education institution that is transitioning from their first-year to their second-year of college after gaining a specific number of credits.

**Second-Year Experience.** The types of initiatives provided by higher education institutions for students recognized as sophomores.

**Self-efficacy.** “A person’s beliefs concerning his or her ability to successfully perform a given task or behavior” (Betz & Luzzo, 1996, p. 414).

**Sophomore.** Student in a higher education institution that has transitioned from their first-year to their second-year of college after gaining 28–60.5 credits.

**Student Retention.** The rate at which a student remains at the college. This rate can be measured from term-to-term or year-to-year.

**Talent Pipeline.** The opportunities provided by companies to train, enhance knowledge, and improve skills in students that can result in full-time jobs.
Chapter Summary

Outcomes-based assessment can often be challenging, Terenzini and Upcraft (1996) stated, “while assessing the purported outcomes of our efforts with students is probably the most important assessment we do, it is seldom done, rarely done well, and when it is done, the results are seldom used effectively” (p. 217). To understand the effectiveness of sophomore year or second-year initiatives created by higher education institutions and their impact on sophomore year or second-year students, a one-group pretest-posttest research design with program theory was utilized to assess the effectiveness of a workforce readiness-training program.

The study’s research questions guided by the theoretical rationale brought light to the purpose of this study, which was to determine the degree the past participants perceived the program to have: (a) impacted their motivation, decision-making, and confidence; and (b) prepared them to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job. Answers to these questions were obtained from the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s pretest-posttest archival data and survey of the past participants.

The data provided by this study addressed how universities and colleges can evaluate their sophomore year or second-year initiatives for sustainability over time. It also provided information that programming concentrated on sophomore year or second-year students addresses the sophomore slump, a retention issue.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

This quantitative evaluative case study explored the effectiveness of a workforce readiness-training program, the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. The Rising STARR Sophomore Program provides opportunities for sophomore students to develop industry skills and knowledge. The program’s purpose is to create a pool of sophomores poised and ready to enter an employer’s talent pipeline. The effectiveness of this program was evaluated by the collection and analysis of quantitative data that was undertaken to assess its outcomes and impact.

Chapter 2 provides a summary of previous and current scholarly research and documents related to sophomore slump, assessment of attitudes, college-to-career transition, and retention. The research for the literature review was conducted using peer-reviewed articles, academic journals, scholarly books, doctoral dissertations, and research studies.

Sophomore Slump

Graunke and Woosley (2005) conducted a study to explore how sophomores’ experiences and attitudes affected their academic success, as defined by grade point average. The participants were currently enrolled degree seeking students at a predominantly residential Midwest public university, defined as second semester sophomores who had completed between 42 and 47 credit hours. The findings stated that involvement in activities and institutional commitment were not important predictors of
sophomore success, but that motivation and faculty interaction were significant predictors of sophomore success. Therefore, the authors suggested the need to create programs that would increase sophomores’ chances of success at their current institution. It was difficult to determine the types of programs to be created that would increase sophomores’ chances of success, because the study looked at grade point average to define success and did not provide specific examples of the faculty interaction that were successful with engaging sophomores.

An investigation on the applicability of negative effects of the sophomore slump to all student populations was conducted by assessing students’ attendance and grades. The participants were 300 students of which 41% were females enrolled in introductory-level general education courses at a prominent Midwestern research university (Gump, 2007). After the data was monitored and collected over four semesters, the findings revealed “that two-thirds of the students receiving grades of A+ were sophomores, when sophomores made up only one-fourth of the total students” (Gump, 2007, p. 113). The results were inconclusive suggesting that not all college student populations experience and exhibit tendencies of sophomore slump and that low grades and increased absences were not causes or characteristics of sophomore slump with this student population. The author suggested evaluating the roles and expectations instructors’ play to all their students in the classroom. However, the study did not state specifically the method used to analyze the data collected and it did not provide further information about the student population.
Assessment of Attitudes

The Rising STARR Sophomore Program data included archived records of scores that resulted from the administration of the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (Appendix A) and the Academic Motivation Scale (Appendix B). These assessments examined three key attitudes of the program participants: self-efficacy, academic motivation, and career decision-making self-efficacy.

**Self-efficacy.** A study was conducted at five California State University institutions on “first-generation sophomore college student’s academic success as defined by GPA and persistence rates as a function of self-efficacy, gender, ethnicity, generation status, and institution size of college sophomores” (Vuong, Brown-Welty, & Tracz, 2010, p. 53). Of the 6,316 second-year students from the five institutions contacted, 1,291 responded to the survey of which 441 were first-generation, 730 were second-and-beyond-generation, and 120 did not respond to the question about their generational status. The study showed that first-generation college sophomore students did not have different perceptions of their self-efficacy than do second-generation college sophomore students, but that self-efficacy beliefs affect academic success as defined by GPA and persistence rates of first-generation college sophomore students. The authors suggested future research should examine other potential sources of social integration that may affect student persistence as students go through Chickering’s vectors of development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The beliefs that affected first-generation college sophomores were not stated. This information would have provided higher education
institutions with the types of resources that could assist with socially integrating first-generation college sophomores.

Turner, Chandler, and Heffer (2009) studied self-determination theory as it relates to parenting styles, academic performance, self-efficacy, and achievement motivation. The study participants were 264 undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses at a major university in the southwestern United States of which 67.8% were European Americans, 4.9% African Americans, 18.2% Hispanic Americans, 5.3% Asian Americans, 2.7% self-identified as biracial, and 1.1% self-identified as “other.” The researchers found “parenting characteristics such as supportiveness and warmth continue to play an important role in influencing a student’s academic performance even after entering college and that authoritative parenting style significantly predicted academic performance” (Turner, Chandler, & Heffer, 2009, p. 343), however no relation was found for permissive and authoritarian parenting styles. They suggested, “examining the potential ethnic differences in parenting style and academic performance in college students and whether intrinsic motivation and academic self-efficacy moderates the relation between authoritative parenting and academic performance” (Turner, Chandler, & Heffer, 2009, p. 345), as these two areas were cited as limitations in the study.

The longitudinal influence of occupational self-efficacy of career-advancement goals on objective success and on subjective success across 7 years was studied by Abele and Spurk (2009). All participants held master’s degree, 825 women and 1105 men of which 5% are from European countries and the others are German. The findings indicated that gender had no effect on career satisfaction even though women earned less than men did. The “reciprocal influences of career success, occupational self-efficacy,
and personal occupational goals” (Abele & Spurk, 2009, p. 61) were suggested for further study, as personality should be taken into account.

**Academic motivation.** Cokley, Bernard, Cunningham, and Motoike (2001) conducted an examination of the Academic Motivation Scale structure, validity, and consistency with a United States college student population. The Academic Motivation Scale is a questionnaire developed to assess college students’ motivation to determine whether it is intrinsic, extrinsic, or amotivation. Amotivation “is considered the lowest level of autonomy on the continuum of motivation. When individuals are amotivated, they believe their actions are the result of something that is beyond their control” (Cokley, Bernard, Cunningham, & Motoike, 2001, p. 110). The participants were 263 students that consisted of 88 males, 169 females, and six unidentified enrolled in undergraduate psychology courses at a large Midwestern university. The sample included 39 African Americans, 181 European Americans, six European internationals, two Asian Americans, eight Asian internationals, six Latinos, 16 identified as “other,” and five unidentified. The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 49 years. The 28-item Academic Motivation Scale, Academic Self-Concept Scale, and a demographic data form was used and distributed as a packet in class. The findings supported the structure, validity, and consistency examined. However, the authors suggested research be conducted on grade point average, gender, and ethnic differences to understand the role these variables play in academic motivation.

The Academic Motivational Scale was tested across two culturally diverse samples, using undergraduate business students from the United States and Ghana in a study conducted by Akoto (2014). The study re-examined the seven-factor structure of
the scale across two culturally dissimilar samples of business students, providing a cross-cultural comparative test of the measure that supports the validity of the scale within and beyond the Western context. Both countries are similar in that their official language is English, and have similar undergraduate education systems, except that most high school students in Ghana will delay starting college due to limited accessibility. The difference between the countries is that Ghana is classified as collectivist. The participants were 267 United States students that consisted of 58.8% females and 41.2% males, and 262 Ghana students with 40.4% females and 59.6% males. The United States sample was 71.9% sophomores and juniors, and 17.4% freshmen; the Ghana sample was 81.9% freshmen and sophomores, and 11.6% seniors. The mean age for Ghana students was 27.76% and 24.76% for United States students (Akoto, 2014). The results of the study supported the validity of the Academic Motivational Scale beyond the Western setting where it has been developed and utilized. However, the author suggested further study be conducted to increase the generalizability of the Academic Motivational Scale by sampling more students from Western and non-Western institutions.

Hegarty (2010) designed a study to test the validity of the Academic Motivational Scale instrument in the application of self-determination theory to graduate students. The study consisted of 240 graduate students of which 107 were business students (55 females, and 52 males) and 133 education students (34 males and 99 females). The average age of the participants was 28.65 and the average work experience was 6-years (Hegarty, 2010). The study was conducted at a private, urban, university in the northeast United States. The results of the study were not considered valid until further research is conducted with graduate students. However, the study supports that graduate students are
not intrinsically motivated and that education students are more motivated than business students. The researcher recommended online classes be examined with students who prefer that method of instruction.

**Career decision-making self-efficacy.** Career decision-making self-efficacy is the confidence one has in performing career related tasks (e.g., choosing a major, writing a resume, successfully completing the job search, and interview process). Sandler (2000) “examined the persistence of students 24 years of age or older in 2-year and 4-year degree programs by combining data from a survey questionnaire and institutional records” (p. 537). The study concluded that the combination of both tools caused persistence and career decision-making self-efficacy to counterbalance the negative influences. It was suggested that career development programming be implemented and utilized better in undergraduate curriculum to address the different levels of career maturity in students to strengthen their career self-efficacy beliefs of attaining careers in the future.

A study was conducted that investigated the relationship between “the measured and the expressed career decision-making difficulties in a sample of 299 young adults who intended to apply to college or university” (Amir & Gati, 2006, p. 483). The participants were between the ages of 17 and 30 years of age and 35% of the students were of low socio-economic status. The results of the findings were that participants with a career plan had lower career decision-making difficulties, higher career decision-making self-efficacy, and a higher vocational decision-making style in “thinking” as opposed to in “feeling.” The authors suggested examining “the impact of interventions in reducing career decision-making difficulties and the possible indirect effects of such
interventions on the individual’s career decision-making style and career decision-making self-efficacy” (Amir & Gati, 2006, p. 499).

One of the most popular computer-based career planning systems (CBCPSs), DISCOVER, was studied by Maples and Luzzo (2005) to evaluate its effectiveness. The system’s effectiveness was assessed utilizing career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) to understand the career decision-making styles of college students who are career-counseling clients. The participants were college students ranging from 18 to 21 years of age, in which 20 were women and 14 were men who sought out career counseling at a university career center. The findings were in support of the computer-based career planning system enhancing the CDMSE and career decision-making attributional style of college students, after use for approximately 1-hour. The authors suggested conducting research with a “larger sample of participants using multiple measures to tap each of the social cognitive constructs of interest over a more extended period of time that evaluates the efficacy of other computer-based career planning systems (CBCPSs), particularly those that are offered in online and web-based environments” (Maples & Luzzo, 2005, p. 284).

**College-to-Career Transition**

The factors contributing to the difficulties emerging adults experience when adapting to the transition from college-to-career was studied by Murphy, Blustein, Bohlig, and Platt (2010). The participants were 10 individuals who had graduated from college with bachelor’s degrees three or fewer years ago working in an urban northeastern part of the United States. The sample consisted of five men and five women with seven Caucasian, one African American, one Asian American, and one Arab
American, ranging between the ages of 22 and 25 years. They were all employed full-time in the fields of “biotechnology consulting, finance, social services, teaching, engineering, insurance, administrative services, and media services/broadcasting” (Murphy, Blustein, Bohlig, & Platt, 2010, p. 175). The study found that participants’ expectations and experiences played a role in their life satisfaction and transition. The researchers suggested future study to be conducted on sources that are available post-college, such as activities and trainings that can help acquaint recent graduates with achieving the goals of their employers.

Sagen, Dallam, and Laverty (2000) examined the effect of supplementary career preparation experiences on initial employment success. Baccalaureate graduates of the University of Iowa participated in the study. The findings stated, “supplementary career preparation experiences contributed at a very modest level when considered independent of individual characteristics and work experience related to career goals, internships, participation in student organizations, and having career goals influence choice of major were positive influences” (Sagen, Dallam, & Laverty, 2000, p. 762). They suggested future studies include information that would permit direct tests of market condition and employer behavior hypotheses. The majors and the positions of the graduate students was unknown. This made it difficult to identify the careers that required further skill development.

A study about “the stress that occurs when transitioning from college to the workplace” (Hettich, 2010, p. 106) was conducted by Hettich (2010). The participants were baccalaureate recipients who participated in the 2006 National Center for Educational Statistics. The findings stated that the process of moving from college-to-
workplace is stressful for not only students but also educators and counselors who had not yet found a solution to this problem. The author suggested studying the factors that contribute to college students who transition successfully into the workplace. The factors that should be considered are percentage of college students experiencing problems adjusting to the workplace, activities (academic and non-academic) that contribute to a successful transition, workplaces that were identified for being a smooth transition, incorporating aspects of successful programs into career-related campus activities, and helping students whose first experience was negative.

Wendlandt and Rochlen (2008) addressed the three areas that made the college-to-work transition difficult: change in culture, lack of experience and skills, and inflated expectations. The study provided university career counselors with ways they could address these issues such as “addressing pre-entry knowledge and expectations, preparing students with work experience and skills, and providing resources for coping in anticipation and adjustment within the workforce” (Wendlandt & Rochlen, 2008, p. 154). The authors found that following the model they presented could facilitate the college-to-work transition. The authors’ findings did not provide data about the sample size used in the study, the majors of students that participated in the study, and the workplaces the students transitioned to after graduation. The missing information made it difficult to apply the model to a specific setting for application and further research.

Retention

Hull-Blanks, et al. (2005) conducted a study about the relationship between four types of career goals—jobs, school, value, and unknown—in relation to retention factors—academic performance, self-esteem, self-efficacy, persistence decision-making,
enrollment, and commitment (Hull-Blanks, et al., 2005). A 100-level university course of 401 first-semester freshmen participated in the study. The course focused on academic success. The study participants included 147 males and 254 females ranging in ages from 17 to 32. Of these students, “315 self-identified as Euro-American, 38 as Latino, 15 as Asian American, 17 as African American, 6 as international, 2 as Native American, and 3 as other” (Hull-Blanks, et al., 2005, p. 19). The findings confirmed previous research that stated the importance of defined goals in retention. Students reported not having an identified job-related goal, dropped out of school. This showed that without defined goals, students were not motivated to continue in school. Value-related goals were reported more by men than women, and job-related goals were reported more by women than men. The authors suggested linking values to specific career options as it would encourage students’ academic pursuit. The study did not state the majors or intended majors of the participants. It also lacked information of whether the participants had enrolled in the university for sophomore year. This would have supported whether the university was successful with retaining the students.

The effectiveness of a program utilizing the Sophomore Peer Counseling Program: Student Satisfaction Survey was examined by Sanchez-Leguelinel (2008). The population of the study was 210 sophomores including 119 women and 91 men ranging in age from 18 to 39 years. Of the participants’ racial and ethnic identities, 36.5% reported Hispanic/Latino, 22.5% Caucasian/White, 21.5% African American/Black, 13.5% other, 3.5% Asian American, and 0.5% Middle Eastern. With regard to participants’ employment status, 22.5% reported worked full-time, 50.0% part-time, and 27.5% unemployed. The study found that satisfaction was greater with the peer
counselor sessions and higher ratings were reported by African American participants than Hispanic/Latino and Caucasian/White participants. Peer counselor sessions received greater satisfaction because of the individualized attention provided and the sessions were a requirement for sophomores to attend. The author suggested further research would be needed to understand the difference within the ethnic minority groups, to develop the validity and reliability of the survey, and to implement a methodology that includes tracking students beyond the academic advisement session to assess the impact of the program on retention. The study did not capture the peers’ perception of their experience in the program with respect to the training they received and the services they provided sophomores. Gaining feedback from the peers would have provided further insight for what made the peer counselor sessions more successful than the workshops and events held by the program.

An investigation was conducted by Talbert (2012) on how academic leaders use the student integration model to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation rates in higher education (Talbert, 2012, p. 22). Vincent Tinto introduced the student integration model in 1975 stating academic and social engagement as the critical factors in student attrition. Tinto identified student engagement at the following four levels that would result in student success: faculty, institution, peers, and external factors such as family. It “theorizes that the social integration of students—such as developing cohesive relationships with students and faculty, maintaining appropriate learning environments, and engaging socially in school activities—increases their institutional commitments, thereby reducing the likelihood of student attrition” (Talbert, 2012, p. 23). The participants were 104 academic administrative leaders and faculty members between the
ages of 30 and 69 employed at a Minnesota state public technical or community college with an employment history of 5 or more years and able to guide students with their education and provide information of how to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation (ERG) rates (Talbert, 2012). An online questionnaire was distributed to the participants using Survey Monkey. The findings provided four strategies for increasing enrollment, retention, and graduation (ERG) rates: (a) a tracking system that reviews failures and successes to identify high-risk students, (b) advertisements, (c) strengthen college readiness for recent immigrants, and (d) teach course planning to minority students (Talbert, 2012). The author suggested additional research to be conducted to monitor and evaluate the methods and programs introduced by academic leaders.

Quatrano (1976) conducted a study about the accessibility of data on undergraduate minority students’ who participated in a work-study program to verify if the qualities gained aided them with classifying their career intentions (Quatrano, 1976). The participants were “111 undergraduate students, 58 females and 53 males. Seventy-seven students identified themselves as Black, 15 as Chicano, 7 as American Indian, 3 as Cuban, 2 as Oriental, 2 as Caucasian, 1 as Boriqua, 1 as Latin American, and 3 as belonging to groups not listed. Students ranged in age from 18 to 28” (Quatrano, 1976, p. 148). Students were provided a 5-question survey that asked to indicate extracurricular activities, grade point average, parental education, financial security, and creativity. The findings confirmed that career expectations of female minority students were classifiable and that those of males were not when using the identical set of discriminating variables (extracurricular activities, grade point average, parental education, financial security, and creativity). Quatrano suggested further research to be conducted with a larger sample
that will address at the relationship between biographic qualities, preferences, career choice, and counseling. The study did not state how the students were selected for the program and their major or career aspirations though they participated in a program specific to healthcare. This information would have provided knowledge as to whether the type of careers the students participated in influenced how they answered the survey.

Jamelske (2008) conducted a study of the impact of first-year experience programs on grade point average (GPA) and retention after 1 year of the fall 2006 students entering the university. The participants were 1,997 full-time students under 20 years of age in a medium-size Midwestern public university enrolled in at least nine credits who remained enrolled at least through the first 2 weeks of the fall semester (Jamelske, 2008).

The sample was 40% male, 92.6% white and the average age was 18.6 years old. Within the sample, 15.7% of the students were low income and 42.3% were first generation college students. The average high school class size among the sample was approximately 300 students and the average high school rank was in the 75th percentile. The average ACT composite score for incoming students was just over 24 and the average English placement test score was nearly 521 (Jamelske, 2008, pp. 379-380).

A survey was distributed to both students and faculty. The findings suggested there is value for student’s taking a first-year experience course as it positively impacts grade point average and retention. It also suggested a positive influence on academic performance and persistence as a result of living on campus. The author suggested
comparing the benefits of the first year experience program to the cost of its use of resources be conducted in detail (Jamelske, 2008).

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a synthesis of the literature in the areas of sophomore slump, assessment of attitudes, college-to-career transition, and retention. Examples of higher education initiatives that addressed the sophomore slump was presented, suggesting the influence faculty has with addressing this retention issue. Assessment of attitudes provided an overview of the instruments used in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program that will be presented as archival data in this study. This section proved the validity and reliability of the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form and the Academic Motivation Scale. The review of college-to-career transition, discussed the need for training programs to prepare students for the workforce. Hull-Blanks, et al. (2005), Sanchez-Leguelinel (2008), Talbert (2012), Quatrano (1976), and Jamelske (2008) stated the importance of setting goals, programming, and tracking as best practices to yield positive results for retention.

The study’s sample population, data collection procedures, external and internal validity, and instruments is discussed in Chapter 3. It provides a rationale for the quantitative method and design chosen.
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative evaluative case study research was to assess the effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program as an intervention to address the sophomore slump. The Rising STARR Sophomore Program is a workforce readiness-training program in a 4-year public college, Baruch College of the City University of New York. The program was initiated by the college’s STARR Career Development Center in 2010 to support sophomore or second-year students with career planning and facilitating access to employer talent pipeline programs. The goals of the program are to: (a) strengthen students’ soft skills and workplace competencies; (b) impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence; and (c) prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time position (Baruch College, 2016).

For sophomore or second-year initiatives to be sustainable over time, universities and colleges need to begin evaluating their programs. According to Gahagan’s (2009) national study of the prevalence and purpose of sophomore-year initiatives, he stated that assessment data needs to indicate more information than students’ satisfaction with the program. He suggested further exploration be conducted to understand the effectiveness of sophomore or second-year initiatives and their impact on students. This would provide data that would change the manner in which colleges and universities address the sophomore slump, a retention issue affecting higher education. To address the problem, this study was designed to answer the following research questions:
1. To what degree does the Rising STARR Sophomore Program achieve its intermediate goals to impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence?

2. To what degree does the Rising STARR Sophomore Program achieve its long-term goals to prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job?

3. Is there a relationship between the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes?

According to Creswell (2014), appropriate research methods and designs ensure the integrity of the research and shape research procedures. This dissertation elaborates on the study’s review of the research method and design appropriateness, discusses the population and sample, and describes the archival pretest-posttest assessments and survey (Appendix C) that was used to collect the data.

Using a case study design allows researchers to study particular programs, subjects, or events for a defined timeframe. According to Creswell (2013), researchers should take the time to address the larger context in which a case study resides. This study represented a single, intrinsic program effect case study because the Rising STARR Sophomore Program is the first and only workforce readiness-training program offered to the students of Baruch College. The type of case study used is explanatory. An explanatory case study focuses on program effects which “examines the outcomes and impacts – both positive and negative and planned and unplanned – of an intervention and seeks to provide explanations by making casual inferences about the reasons for success or failure” (Technical Note Evaluative Case Studies, 2013, p. 3). Using program impact
theory and the logic model, this study assessed the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes. It also assessed whether there was a relationship between the intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes. Figure 3.1 displays the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s logic model.

Evaluation is important to promoting quality of services offered, improving systems, determining successes, the achievement of objectives, and the occurrences of changes. “Evaluations are conducted for a variety of practical reasons: to aid in decisions concerning whether programs should be continued, improved, expanded, or curtailed; to assess the utility of new programs and initiatives; to increase the effectiveness of program management and administration; and to satisfy the accountability requirements of program sponsors” (Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 2010, p. 2). This study’s evaluation related to accountability, which is called a summative evaluation. Summative evaluations are conducted to determine whether program goals are being met by providing a summary on the program’s performance (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). It “measures program outcomes and impacts during ongoing operations or after program completion” (Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 2010, p. 8). This evaluated the Rising STARR Sophomore Program as it continued to operate, looking at its effectiveness on past participants between 2010 and 2013.
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>INPUTS</strong></th>
<th><strong>ACTIVITIES</strong></th>
<th><strong>OUTPUTS</strong></th>
<th><strong>INITIAL (SHORT-TERM) OUTCOMES</strong></th>
<th><strong>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES</strong></th>
<th><strong>LONG-TERM OUTCOMES</strong></th>
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| • Program Manager  
• Grants (Money)  
• Baruch College Meeting/Event/Interview/Location  
• Collaborative Partners  
• Program Curriculum | • Complete program application  
• Discuss experience in group sessions  
• Conduct one-on-one meetings  
• Active recruitment of partners  
• Recruit student participants  
• Participate in partner events and activities  
• Analyze results of assessments  
• Conduct orientation on the program  
• Provide workshops on career development | • # of students applying to program  
• # of students attending group sessions, one-on-one sessions, orientations, and workshops  
• # of partners participating in program  
• # of students recruited  
• # of assessments distributed and completed  
• # of students participated in partner events and activities | • Students learn to:  
• identify leadership programs, internships, part-time positions, and full-time positions that match their skills and interest  
• dress and groom for interviews and while on the job  
• create a resume, complete an application, and interview  
• network with professionals | • Students create a resume  
• Students demonstrate strong interview skills during practice  
• Students apply to leadership programs, internships, part-time positions, and full-time positions that match their skills and interest  
• Students neatly groomed and dressed at events  
• Partners provide feedback from student interaction | • Students obtain leadership programs, internships, part-time positions, and full-time positions related to major, minor, and/or career interests |

Program evaluation has become increasingly important in higher education institutions as their success is being measured (Travers & Evans, 2011). Program evaluation is a management tool used to gather information to solve practical problems and interpret the answer to questions that make decisions about programs. In American education, it can be traced back to the mid-1900s in the influential work of Tyler, the father of educational evaluation who is credited for introducing curriculum standards to education. “Depending upon the intent of the study and what information the study wishes to acquire, a program evaluation may adopt one of three forms: (a) a goal-based, (b) process-based, or (c) an outcome-based evaluation” (Duru-Nnebue, 2012, p. 64). This study used outcome-based evaluation.

The evaluation of a program generally involves assessing one or more of five domains: (a) the need for the program, (b) the program’s design, (c) its implementation and service delivery, (d) its impact, or outcomes, and (e) its efficiency (Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 2010). It “is the use of social research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs in ways that are adapted to their political and organizational environments and are designed to inform social action to improve social conditions” (Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 2010, p. 16). The domain assessed in the evaluation of this program is impact or outcomes.

Impact assessment, also known as impact evaluation or outcome evaluation, gauges the extent to which a program produces the intended improvements in the social conditions it address and asks whether the desired outcomes were attained and whether those changes included unintended side effects (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). Measuring program outcomes entails using “observations, records, responses to
interviews and questionnaires, standardized tests, physical measurement apparatus, and the like” (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004, p. 217). This study analyzed records from the program – results from two instruments, as well as responses from a survey using one-group pretest-posttest design.

One-group pretest-posttest design is commonly found in education research that involves measuring a group of subjects (the pretest), introducing a treatment (the independent variable), and measuring the subjects again (the posttest) (Singleton, Jr. & Straits, 2005). Figure 3.2 displays the research design:

\[
\text{GROUP A } \quad O_1 \rightarrow X \rightarrow O_2 \rightarrow O_3
\]


The components of the design represent the following: \(O_1\) is the recorded measurement of the two instruments (Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form and Academic Motivation Scale), pretreatment; \(X\) is the independent variable (Rising STARR Sophomore Program), the group exposed to the experimental variable of which the effects are being measured; \(O_2\) is the recorded measurement of the two instruments (Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form and Academic Motivation Scale), post-treatment; and \(O_3\) is the recorded measurement of the third instrument (survey).

Gahagan, Jr. (2009) stated the importance of assessing data that measures programs intended outcomes than just student satisfaction, because it provides an understanding of these programs that includes satisfaction and learning. This study focused on students’ learning by looking at the intermediate outcomes and long-term
outcomes of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. The intermediate outcomes of the program were obtained from archival data results of the two instruments: Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form and Academic Motivation Scale. This measured whether the program’s goal to impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence were achieved. These data were analyzed to test significant change from pretest to posttest using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The long-term outcomes were determined using a survey. These data were analyzed descriptively to measure the program’s goal to prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job by reporting the opportunities students participated in. The Mann-Whitney U Test, also known as, Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test, was used to compare the relationship between students’ participation in a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job and their motivation, decision-making, and confidence. This measured whether there was a relationship between the program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes.

**Research Context**

The study took place at Baruch College, a 4-year public college of the City University of New York. The college is one of 11 senior colleges within the 24-unit City University of New York system. Its total enrollment as of 2014 is over 18,000 students of which over 14,000 are undergraduate. The college consists of three schools in the following disciplines: Business, Arts and Sciences, and Public Affairs.

One of the support resources available at the college for students is the STARR Career Development Center. It offers the following programs and services: workshops, corporate presentations, information sessions, career fairs, internships, jobs, on-campus
recruiting opportunities, mentoring, career counseling, resume reviews, mock interviews, vocational tests, and special leadership programs. The career center provides services to over 13,000 undergraduate students enrolled in the college’s three schools.

The Rising STARR Sophomore Program is one of four special programs offered by the STARR Career Development Center. At the start of each academic year, the program interviews between 43 to 52 rising sophomores and accepts between 12 to 28 students to participate in the program. Students: (a) attend workshops on general career development topics, such as resume and cover letter writing, interview skills, networking, and job searching; (b) attend an orientation that provides an overview of the program, the role of the program manager, and the expectations of participants; (c) meet with the program manager one-on-one to discuss the student’s career path; (d) meet with the program manager in a group made up of fellow participants to discuss their experience and share ideas; (e) participate in an event that is cosponsored by a corporate supporter of the career center; and (f) participate in an activity that engages the student in an employer interaction. All participants are awarded a certificate for successfully completing the program.

Since its launch in 2010, approximately 111 sophomore students have participated in the program from the start to the end of the academic year and received a certificate of completion. They also met the eligibility requirements of a minimum 3.0 GPA, and enrolled full-time at the college. One part-time staff member in the career center currently manages the program.
Research Participants

The research participants for this study were 26 students of the 63 students surveyed that participated and completed the Rising STARR Sophomore Program from 2010 to 2013. The participants completed the pretest and posttest of the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form and the Academic Motivation Scale. Purposeful sampling was used for this quantitative research study, which made the sampling for this case nonrandom as the participants were selected because they had completed the pretest and posttest.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

This one-group pretest-posttest design used archival data, which includes three assessments: Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form, Academic Motivation Scale, and a survey. These data sources were used to evaluate the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s effectiveness in a higher education institution setting, by assessing the program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes. The intermediate outcomes were obtained from archival data collected from the two assessments that was disseminated as pretest-posttest. Data collection for the long-term outcomes were accomplished by using a survey designed to measure past participant’s ability to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job.

The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996) measures individuals’ confidence in their ability to successfully complete tasks related to making career decisions. It was created by removing 25 items and basing the Likert scale to 5-point from the original questionnaire that consisted of 50 items and was based on a 10-point Likert scale. The 25-item questionnaire covers five
domains/subscales of career choice competence: (a) self-appraisal, (b) occupational information, (c) goal selection, (d) planning, and (e) problem solving. The subscales are rated from 1 (no confidence at all) to 5 (complete confidence). High scores indicate greater career decision-making self-efficacy. Reliability and validity is based on several studies that support and show evidence for the internal consistency coefficient for the five subscales ranging from 0.73 to 0.83, and the coefficient alpha for the total score of 0.97 (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996).

The Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand, et al., 1992) measures an individual’s motivation defined as understanding the reason a person takes part in a particular activity, which in this study was student’s motivation toward academics. It reflects intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that is related to an individual’s perceived reason for taking part in an activity. The Academic Motivation Scale is a 28-item questionnaire scored on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (does not correspond at all) to 7 (corresponds exactly) with seven subscales: three measure extrinsic motivation – (a) external regulation, (b) introjected regulation, and (c) identified regulation; three measure intrinsic motivation – (d) intrinsic motivation to know, (e) intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment, and (f) intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation; and one (g) amotivation. A high score on a specific subscale indicates high endorsement for a particular academic motivation. Several studies support and show evidence for reliability and validity based on Cronbach’s alpha of 0.83 to 0.86, test-retest of 0.71 to 0.83, intrinsic positive correlations of 0.58 to 0.68, and extrinsic positive correlations of 0.45 to 0.50 (Vallerand, et al., 1992).
Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004) noted the efficacy of using surveys to determine the extent of a problem when credible data are lacking. The survey consisted of two parts: part one was designed to develop demographic data using descriptive statistics on the participants (age, gender, race, ethnicity, level of education, major, minor, and cumulative grade point average). Part two consisted of pivot tables, Likert scale questions, and fill-in questions concerning past and current experiences the participants may have had with leadership programs, internships, part-time, or full-time jobs. It also assessed participants’ perceptions of how much the Rising STARR Sophomore Program influenced those outcomes.

In order to assess the validity of the survey, an expert panel of five career center professionals within higher education institutions from local, public, and private community colleges and 4-year colleges were assembled to evaluate the instrument for face and content validity. The career center professionals all have over 5-years of career advising and programming experience. The panel pretested the survey and provided feedback. The survey was accessed online in the same manner as the research participants to maintain consistency in actual research conditions. Adjustments to the survey were made based upon the panel’s recommendations.

**Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis**

The researcher emailed the director of the STARR Career Development Center for permission to use the archival data, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short-Form and Academic Motivation Scale. The director provided written and verbal permission to use the data. The researcher scheduled a visit to the career center and copies of the assessments were provided. The assessments that were provided to the
researcher were of the respondents that consented to participate in this study. The assessments were self-reported by the students.

The survey was provided to 63 former Rising STARR Sophomore Program participants purposefully chosen from years 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. This sampling technique allowed the researcher to obtain data from participants who completed the Rising STARR Sophomore Program and had the opportunity to acquire a leadership program position, internship, part-time, or full-time job. The past participants were provided a timeframe of three weeks to respond to the survey. The researcher in this study provided the program manager of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program with an introductory letter (Appendix D) that was sent to the past participants that included a description of the study, the date and time that the survey would open and close, the link to the survey, and an explanation that the study is voluntary and they can withdraw at any time without damage to their reputation. A notification letter (Appendix E) was sent to the participants with the link to the survey stating that it was open to be completed and the date it would be closed. This was sent a week after the introductory letter was sent to provide the recipients of the email time to review and for the researcher to follow-up on emails that were undeliverable. Notice was given to individuals participating in the opening page of the survey that completion of the survey indicated their consent to participate and that the request for their emails was to match their survey answers with other data from the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. They were also informed that their email addresses would be removed once their survey answers were entered in the research database. A reminder letter (Appendix F) halfway through the 3-week timeframe was emailed to past participants that had not completed the survey. Two days
before the survey closed, a final reminder letter (Appendix G) was sent to the past participants thanking them for their participation and reminding the participants that did not complete the survey to complete it before the deadline. Respondents of the survey were sent an electronic gift of $25 for Amazon.com. This monetary incentive was provided to the past participants to encourage the completion of the surveys, especially from participants who were no longer attending the college.

Participants’ rights related to confidentiality and voluntary participation were guaranteed. Study participants’ identities were concealed by codes to protect against any possible harm, and individuals not involved in the research were not privy to the research data containing participants’ identities. To maintain complete control of the research data, these data were stored in two locations – a private home office and a higher education institution office. In both offices, a secure locked filing cabinet contained these coded data from the surveys and two assessments. The private home office contained a backup of all research data files. Access to the research data was restricted and protected by password and key. These data will be destroyed 3-years after the completion of the study.

The research measures and procedures were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at St. John Fisher College (Appendix H). Additionally, the City University of New York (CUNY) specified requirements on the part of researchers to guarantee participant and site rights, and to assure the integrity of the research. The City University of New York (CUNY) has ethical principles for conducting research with their colleges, by which researchers must abide. These principles incorporate the following standards for research: researchers must complete an online training, consult
with the research site coordinator prior to the research approval being issued, and receive approval from the site coordinator (Baruch College, 2015). After permission was gained from the City University of New York, data were collected and analyzed.

Data analysis entailed analyzing the two assessments (Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form and Academic Motivation Scale) to measure intermediate outcomes and analyzing the survey to measure long-term outcomes. The Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s data was collected using Qualtrics, managed using Microsoft Excel, and exported into SPSS (version 22).

A mean score was calculated for each of the subscales of the career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation measures. The distributions of those scores were screened for normality. The scores were not normally distributed, therefore the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to analyze changes in career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation from the pretest to the posttest. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test (Pett, 1997) compares two groups’ medians that have been paired to determine if there is a significant difference between the groups. The difference must be symmetrically distributed, but not normally distributed and the data must be measured at the interval/ratio or ordinal level (Pett, 1997). This analysis assessed the change in confidence the students had in performing career related tasks (e.g., choosing a major, writing a resume, successfully completing the job search, and interview process) prior to participating in the program through the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form. It also assessed the change in students’ motivation toward academics and whether it is intrinsic, extrinsic, or amotivation through the Academic Motivation Scale. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test explained the intermediate impact of the program and
answered the question of the program’s impact on students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence.

The survey of past Rising STARR Sophomore Program participants was first analyzed using descriptive statistics. Specifically, descriptive statistics were calculated for the demographic variables of age (minimum scores, maximum scores, means, and standard deviations), gender (percentage), racial and ethnic background (percentage), highest education level (percentage), major and minor (percentages were broken down into broader categories such as Business, Arts and Sciences, and Public Affairs), and cumulative GPA (minimum scores, maximum scores, means, and standard deviations). The outcome variables described the opportunities students participated in such as number of leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time jobs (percentage), years participated in leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time jobs (percentage), relation to major, minor, and career interests (percentage), Rising STARR Sophomore Program influenced decision (minimum scores, maximum scores, means, and standard deviations), Rising STARR Sophomore Program prepared students for job interviews (minimum scores, maximum scores, means, and standard deviations), and Rising STARR Sophomore Program prepared student for success (minimum scores, maximum scores, means, and standard deviations).

Further analysis brought together the data from the survey and the career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation measures. This analysis was conducted using the Mann-Whitney U Test to determine whether the variables in the intermediate outcomes were significantly related to the long-term outcomes. The Mann-Whitney U Test takes two groups that are independent of one another and compares
group medians to see if they are significantly different from one another (Pett, 1997). This test was used because the mean scores for the subscales on the career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation measures were not normally distributed.

The data met critical assumptions of the Mann-Whitney U Test that require the independent variable be categorical and the dependent variable be at least at the ordinal level, and that the data consist of independent observations from independent groups (Pett, 1997). The categorical independent variables in this study were: whether the student participated in a leadership program (yes/no), internship (yes/no), part-time job (yes/no), and full-time job (yes/no). The dependent variables were the post career decision-making self-efficacy scores and post academic motivation scores. The results indicated whether there were statistically significant differences in career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation between students who participated in each of those professional opportunities and those who did not participate.

These analyses answered the question of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s relationship to acquiring a leadership program, internship, part-time, and full-time job. This measured long-term outcomes.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined the methodology to assess the effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program at Baruch College, a 4-year public higher education institution. The research methodology used for this quantitative evaluative case study was a one-group pretest-posttest design, because a case study design allows for an in-depth study and the evaluation of a particular program to better understand its effectiveness from program participants and multiple statistical analyses. For this reason,
the selected methodology and design was suitable for this research. Chapter 4 presents
the results of the analyses for research questions 1, 2, and 3.
Chapter 4: Results

Research Questions

The purpose of this quantitative evaluative case study was to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. The Rising STARR Sophomore Program, a workforce readiness-training program supports sophomore year or second-year students with career planning, with respect to addressing the sophomore slump, a retention issue affecting institutions of higher education. The research questions answered by this study were:

1. To what degree does the Rising STARR Sophomore Program achieve its intermediate goals to impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence?
2. To what degree does the Rising STARR Sophomore Program achieve its long-term goals to prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job?
3. Is there a relationship between the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes?

This chapter reports the results of descriptive and inferential statistics using this dataset.

Data Analysis and Findings

All data collected were self-reported by student participants who completed the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the
sample participants which included minimum scores, maximum scores, means, standard deviations, and percentages. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was the inferential statistic methodology used to answer research question 1. This included the comparison of median scores, because the data being analyzed had departed from the distributions that used parametric statistics, to nonparametric statistical techniques (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). If a statistical test is run when the assumptions for that test are not met, the results can be inaccurate and misleading. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test is a nonparametric test that can be used when the normality assumption of the Repeated Measures ANOVA test is not met (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). This test is less sensitive to the normality assumption than the ANOVA test (Huck, 2012). Repeated Measures ANOVA compares group means, whereas the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test compares group medians. Research question 2 also utilized descriptive statistics that included minimum scores, maximum scores, means, standard deviation, and percentages. The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to answer research question 3. This is also a non-parametric test suitable for testing the data in this study because of the non-normal distributions of the dependent variables. The statistical analyses were calculated using SPSS (version 22).

**Demographic information for respondents.** The survey was emailed to 63 of the students that participated in the program between the years of 2010 to 2013. Twenty-six responses were received, yielding a 41% response rate. The demographic information of the respondents is presented in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2. Table 4.1 shows the demographics variables in percentages for gender, racial background, highest education level, major, and minor. As shown in Table 4.1, the majority of students were female (53.8%) while the remaining (46.2%) identified as male. More than half the sample
(57.7%) identified as Asian and almost one-quarter (23.1%) identified as White. The remaining identified as Latino/Hispanic (11.5%), Multiracial (3.8%), or chose not to answer (3.8%).

In terms of educational attainment, three-fourths (76.9%) of the sample identified a bachelor’s degree as their highest degree earned. The fact that only one-quarter said they were enrolled in (15.4%) or had completed a graduate degree (7.7%) is not surprising, given the timing of the survey relative to when the students participated in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. The program was for sophomores and the survey was conducted 2-5 years following participants’ sophomore years and not all students would have yet had the opportunity to pursue a graduate degree. In terms of fields of study, almost three-fourths (73.0%) of respondents majored in Business and minored in Arts and Sciences (73.6%)

Table 4.2 shows the demographic variables of age and GPA in scores of minimum, maximum, means, and standard deviation. The minimum age of the respondents was 21 years old, the maximum age was 27 years old, and the mean age was 23 years old with a standard deviation of 1.28 years. The minimum GPA of the respondents was 3.2, the maximum GPA was 3.94, and the mean GPA was 3.65 with a standard deviation of 0.20.

The results in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 showed that the sample consisted of traditional age college students. Students had a GPA of B average or higher, in accordance with requirements to participate in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program.
Table 4.1

*Demographics of Participants’ – Percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Valid %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial/Ethnic Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chose Not to Answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino or Hispanic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Educational Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in Graduate School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2

*Demographics of Participants’ – Minimum, Maximum, Mean, and Standard Deviation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research question 1.** The first research question was to determine whether the Rising STARR Sophomore Program achieved its intermediate goals of increasing
students’ academic motivation and career decision-making self-efficacy for decision making. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used due to the sample size being less than 30 (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). According to the central limit theorem, it is when the sample size reaches 30 that fluctuations in the sample means are less influenced by the sample size and level out (Urdan, 2010). Additionally, the dependent variables in this dataset were not normally distributed. Non-parametric tests such as the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test are appropriate when there is a non-normal distribution (Pett, 1997). The appropriate nonparametric test for comparing related samples, as is done in a pretest-posttest analysis when there are two time points, is the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test (Pett, 1997).

The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form’s 25-items were divided into five subscales: self-appraisal, occupational information, goal selection, planning, and problem solving. The five subscales contained 5-items each that measured decision-making and confidence. The pretest and posttest scores of each subscale was calculated by totaling the responses of each item assigned to its respective subscale with higher numbers reflecting greater career decision-making self-efficacy. Table 4.3 displays the median pretest and posttest scores of the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form. Of the five subscales, a significant change occurred for goal selection ($p = 0.03$) with the median score being higher on the posttest ($Md = 20$) than on the pretest ($Md = 19$). Thus, the Rising STARR Sophomore Program was found to achieve its goal of impacting students’ self-efficacy for goal selection. However, no changes were demonstrated for students’ self-efficacy for self-appraisal, occupational information, planning, or problem solving.
Table 4.3

*Pretest and Posttest – Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest Median</th>
<th>Posttest Median</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Appraisal</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Information</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Selection</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Academic Motivation Scale’s 28-items were divided into seven subscales. The seven subscales contained four items each that measured three types of intrinsic motivation (to experience stimulation, to know, and to accomplish), three types of extrinsic motivation (identified regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation), and amotivation (Vallerand, et al., 1992). The pretest and posttest scores of each subscale were calculated by totaling the responses of each item assigned to its respective subscale and dividing by the number of items in each subscale to obtain the average of each subscale, with higher numbers reflecting greater academic motivation. Table 4.4 displays the median pretest and posttest scores of the Academic Motivation Scale. There was no significant change between the pretest and posttest assessment scores of the participants. These results found that the Rising STARR Sophomore Program did not achieve its goal of increasing students’ academic motivation.
Table 4.4

*Pretest and Posttest – Academic Motivation Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>motivation</th>
<th>Pretest Median</th>
<th>Posttest Median</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation - To Know</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation - Toward Accomplishment</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation - To Experience Stimulation</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Motivation - Identified</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Motivation - Introjected</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Motivation - External Regulation</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amotivation</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When interpreting these non-significant findings, it is important to note the strong possibility of a ceiling effect. A ceiling effect “occurs when a high proportion of the subjects in a study has the highest possible score” (Ra, et al., 2014). The results indicate a ceiling effect because all the scores were at or close to the maximum score possible for each assessment on the pretests. Therefore, there was no room for the scores to increase on the posttests.

**Research question 2.** To answer the second research question, if the Rising STARR Sophomore Program prepared students to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time position, or full-time position, descriptive statistics were used to analyze students’ ratings of how much the Rising STARR Sophomore Program influenced their decision to apply for such programs/positions and how well it prepared
them. Ratings were such that higher numbers reflected a more positive appraisal of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program.

Table 4.5 shows the leadership program(s) that students participated in after participating in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. The table displays the results in percentages. The results show approximately one-quarter of (26.9%) respondents participated in leadership programs. The most common time students participated in this opportunity was during their sophomore year. Students were least likely to have participated in leadership programs during senior year (7.7%) and did not participate in leadership programs post-graduation.

Table 4.5

*Participants’ Involvement in Leadership Program(s) by Academic Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Opportunities</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6 +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Program(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore Year</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Sophomore Year</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Year</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Junior Year</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Senior Year</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Graduation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6 shows the internship(s) that students participated in after participating in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. The table displays the results in percentages. The results show approximately one-quarter of (26.9%) respondents participated in internships. The most common times students participated in this opportunity was during (50%) and after (46.2%) the sophomore year.

Table 4.6

*Participants’ Involvement in Internship(s) by Academic Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Opportunities</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6 +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internship(s)</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore Year</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Sophomore Year</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Year</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Junior Year</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Year</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Senior Year</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Graduation</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 shows the part-time position(s) that students participated in after participating in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. The table displays the results in percentages. The results show 34.6% of respondents participated in part-time positions. The most common times students participated in this opportunity was during (38.5%) and after (30.8%) the sophomore year, and during the junior year (30.8%).
Table 4.7

*Participants’ Involvement in Part-Time Position(s) by Academic Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Opportunities</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6 +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Position(s)</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore Year</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Sophomore Year</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Year</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Junior Year</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Year</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Senior Year</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Graduation</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 shows the full-time position(s) that students participated in after participating in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. The table displays the results in percentages. The results show more than half (53.8%) of the respondents participated in full-time positions. The most common times students participated in this opportunity was post-graduation (57.7%) and they were least likely to have participated in full-time positions during sophomore (3.8%), junior (3.8%), or senior (3.8%) years.
Table 4.8

Participants’ Involvement in Full-Time Position(s) by Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6 +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Opportunities</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Position(s)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore Year</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Sophomore Year</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Year</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Junior Year</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Year</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer after Senior Year</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Graduation</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 shows the relation the leadership programs, internships, full-time positions, and part-time positions had on the respondents’ major and minor. The table displays the results in percentages. More than half the respondents reported that their full-time positions related to their majors (57.7%) and 42.3% of students said their internships related to their major. Respondents showed that they were able to acquire career opportunities that related to their studies.
Table 4.9

Participants’ Involvement in Opportunities in Relation to Major and Minor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Opportunities</th>
<th>Related to Major</th>
<th>Related to Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Program(s)</td>
<td>Internship(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 shows the relation the leadership programs, internships, full-time positions, and part-time positions had on respondents’ career interests. The table displays the results in percentages. More than half the respondents reported that their full-time positions related to their career interests (53.8%). Respondents showed that they were able to acquire career opportunities that related to their interest.
Table 4.10

*Participants’ Involvement in Opportunities in Relation to Career Interest*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Opportunities</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Related to Career Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Program(s)</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship(s)</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Position(s)</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Position(s)</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 describes the respondents’ perceptions of how the Rising STARR Sophomore Program influenced their decisions about applying for leadership programs, internships, and employment, and how well they think the program prepared them for success in the application process and in the positions themselves. The table displays the results in scores of minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. The results show a moderate level of influence on students’ decisions to pursue these types of opportunities (means ranged from 2.56 – 3.00). The program’s effectiveness at preparing them for application/interview processes was slightly higher (means ranged from 2.75 – 3.04). The program’s effectiveness at preparing them to be successful in these opportunities yielded the highest ratings (means ranged from 3.06 – 3.16). Most standard deviations ranged from .90 – 1.09, indicating relatively similar variability between outcomes. However, the standard deviations for preparing for full-time interview processes and full-time success were notably lower (0.77 and 0.68, respectively).
Table 4.11

*Participants’ Involvement in Opportunities in Relation to Influence and Preparation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity Type</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Program(s)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>influenced decision to apply</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared for the application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process/interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared to be successful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internship(s)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>influenced decision to apply</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared for the application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process/interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared to be successful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Part-Time Position(s)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>influenced decision to apply</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared for the application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process/interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared to be successful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full-Time Position(s)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>influenced decision to apply</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared for the application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process/interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising STARR Sophomore Program</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared to be successful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research question 3.** To answer the third research question, if there is a relationship between the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s intermediate outcomes
and long-term outcomes, the Mann-Whitney U Test was utilized. The Mann-Whitney U Test was used due to the sample size being less than 30 (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). According to the central limit theorem, it is when the sample size reaches 30 that fluctuations in the sample means are less influenced by the sample size and level out (Urdan, 2010). Additionally, the dependent variables in this dataset were not normally distributed. Non-parametric tests such as the Mann-Whitney U Test are appropriate when there is a non-normal distribution (Pett, 1997). The appropriate nonparametric test for comparing differences between independent when there are two groups is the Mann-Whitney U Test (Pett, 1997).

The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form consisted of five subscales: self-appraisal, occupational information, goal selection, planning, and problem solving. The five subscales contained 5-items each that measured decision-making and confidence. The Academic Motivation Scale consisted of seven subscales that contained four items each that measured three types of intrinsic motivation (to experience stimulation, to know, and to accomplish), three types of extrinsic motivation (identified regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation), and amotivation (the belief that results are beyond one’s control) (Vallerand, et al., 1992). The posttest scores of each assessment was calculated along with the total number of respondents that acquired a leadership program, internship, part-time position, or full-time position. Table 4.12 displays the median posttest scores of the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form and Academic Motivation Scale in relation to leadership programs, internships, part-time positions, and full-time positions. There was no significant relationship between the intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes. These results
found that the students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence did not relate to students attaining career opportunities. When interpreting these non-significant findings, it should be noted that it is hard to find significance even when it is there when the groups being compared are unevenly sized because the uneven group sizes drain statistical power. Given the uneven group sizes between those who attained internships (22 respondents; 84.6%) and full-time positions (15 respondents; 57.7%) and those who did not attain internships (4 respondents; 15.4%) and full-time positions (8 respondents; 30.8%), the non-significant findings for that outcome should be interpreted with some caution. Additionally, as with the tests for changes from pretest to posttest, the potential of a ceiling effect should be considered, because the scores for career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation do not have a lot of variability. Therefore, it is possible students would be selected for these career opportunities with or without participating in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program, because they are already motivated and confident as a result of GPAs of 3.0 and higher.
Table 4.12

*P*-values for Mann-Whitney *U* Tests Between Intermediate Outcomes and Long-term Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Leadership Program(s)</th>
<th>Internship(s)</th>
<th>Part-Time Position(s)</th>
<th>Full-Time Position(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Appraisal</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Information</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Selection</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Motivation Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation - To Know</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation - Toward Accomplishment</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation - To Experience Stimulation</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Motivation - Identified</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Motivation - Introjected</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Motivation - External Regulation</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amotivation</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Results**

The first research question’s analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between the pretest scores and posttest scores of the Academic Motivation Scale. This answered the question that the Rising STARR Sophomore Program did not increase students’ motivation. However, no decrease (or slump) was observed either. The analysis revealed one significant difference between the pretest scores and posttest scores of the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form. This answered the question that the Rising STARR Sophomore Program increased students’ career decision-making self-efficacy in goal selection. The lack of change from pretest to
posttest for most variables must be interpreted with some caution due to the likely presence of a ceiling effect.

The second research question explored the perceived impact the Rising STARR Sophomore Program had on influencing students to apply to leadership programs, internships, part-time positions, and full-time positions, and in preparing students for the application process/interview and success in leadership programs, internships, part-time positions, and full-time positions. The results showed that students perceived the Rising STARR Sophomore Program as having a moderate influence on their decisions to apply for such opportunities and moderately prepared them for the application process/interview and to be successful in leadership programs, internships, and full-time employment.

The third analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between students who attained a leadership program, internship, part-time position, and full-time position, and those who did not in terms of their career decision-making self-efficacy or academic motivation. This answered the question that there is no relationship between the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes.

Implications of these findings, limitations of this study, and directions for future research are discussed in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the results of this evaluative case study that assessed the effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program as an intervention to addressing the sophomore slump. Further, the study’s limitations and future research prospects as they relate to sophomore or second-year program development are presented. Seven sections comprise this chapter: (a) overview of the study; (b) implications of the findings; (c) recommendations for program practice; (d) limitations of the study; (e) recommendations for future research; (f) application and direction of sophomore or second-year initiatives; and (g) conclusions of the study.

Overview of the Study

This research is pertinent to the literature on program outcome studies of workforce readiness-training programs in higher education. The data on assessment of sophomore or second-year initiatives will shed light on the retention issues affecting higher education institutions.

Retention is a major concern for institutions of higher education as they are under scrutiny to demonstrate the value of a college education. Sophomore or second-year students in particular are a concern as they depart from the college for reasons such as poor grades, the need for an environment of support and learning, and the need for degree programs that yield higher results for career opportunities. Therefore, the initiatives that universities create to support sophomore or second-year students are important.
Baruch College’s STARR Career Development Center implemented the Rising STARR Sophomore Program for sophomores as an intervention to address sophomore slump. The goals of the workforce readiness-training program are to (a) strengthen students’ soft skills and workplace competencies; (b) impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence; and (c) prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job. Given the purpose of the workforce readiness-training program, it needs to be effective in engaging and preparing sophomore students for employer talent pipeline programs. The effect and impact this program has had on training and preparing sophomore students for leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time careers in areas related to their studies was unknown. Without assessment and evaluation data, it was difficult to determine whether the Rising STARR Sophomore Program is effective in achieving its intended goals.

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program, beyond students indicating their satisfaction, and to exam if students are learning from the initiative. To understand the effectiveness of the program and its impact on students, data that measured students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence were collected. This was to determine if the effort to facilitate student’s access to career pathways, such as employer talent pipeline programs offering leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time jobs was successful.

Implications of Findings

This section provides meaning to the data gathered and presented in Chapter 4. The findings of the research are assessed and discussed in terms of professional practice and scholarly understanding. The first research question was answered using Wilcoxon
Signed Ranks Test, the second research question was answered using descriptive statistics, and the third research question was answered using Mann-Whitney U Test. Full details of these analyses were presented in Chapter 4, with key findings discussed in this chapter.

**Finding 1.** The purpose of research question 1 was to determine whether the Rising STARR Sophomore Program is achieving its intermediate goals to impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence. Results from the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test found significant changes in goal selection. No significant changes were found for the other career decision-making self-efficacy subscales or for the academic motivation subscales.

Having defined goals was found to motivate students to continue in school, whereas students who did not have identified job-related goals dropped out of school (Hull-Blanks, et al., 2005). This is important to retention as students with identified goals are more likely to remain at the college in which they are enrolled. As such, the significant increase in goal selection for Rising STARR Sophomore Program participants is an important indicator that the program played a role in overcoming any potential sophomore slump and increasing the odds of students remaining in school.

However, the lack of significant increases in the other measures of career decision-making self-efficacy and in academic motivation is, at first glance, disappointing. There are two important factors to keep in mind when interpreting these non-significant findings. First, to the extent that the Rising STARR Sophomore Program seeks to prevent a sophomore slump, the fact that career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation did not decrease is a positive finding as it is evidence that a
slump did not occur. Second, the participants in the program are required to have a minimum GPA of 3.0 to participate in the program. Students scored high on all pretest measures, indicating that they are already high in career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation when they begin the program. So the best that can be expected is that career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation do not decrease.

These findings suggest that the program may benefit from the staff clarifying the underlying logic and goals of the program. If the program is intended to increase career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation, then it may be more logical to recruit students who are lower in career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation to begin with, as may be the case with students who have lower GPAs. If the program is intended to maintain career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation, then the current enrollment criterion of a GPA of 3.0 can be continued.

**Finding 2.** The purpose of research question 2 was to determine whether the Rising STARR Sophomore Program is achieving its long-term goals to prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job. Results indicated that the program achieves its goals with preparing students for opportunities in leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time jobs. Students were also able to relate the opportunities they acquired to their major, minor, and career interests.

The positive impact career preparation experiences have on undergraduate students as they transition from college to the workplace was discussed by Sagen, Dallam, and Laverty (2000) as being successful. Hettich (2010) and Wendlandt and Rochlen (2008) also support the preparation of students transitioning into the workplace to consist of activities that address skill building and expectations.
Participants in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program reported that the program influenced their decision to apply to leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time jobs and prepared them for these opportunities. They also indicated that the program prepared them to be successful in these opportunities. These findings suggest that the program was able to engage sophomore or second-year students and connect their major and minor degree programs to career opportunities. This prevented students from slumping during their sophomore year and addressed the issue of retention that institutions of higher education state as a problem. The Rising STARR Sophomore Program was also successful with transitioning students into the workplace during and after college.

Finding 3. The purpose of research question 3 was to determine whether there is a relationship between the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes. Results from the Mann-Whitney U Test found no relationship between students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence and attaining a leadership program, internship, part-time, and full-time job. Again, however, these non-significant findings must be interpreted in light of the high career decision-making self-efficacy, academic motivation, and GPAs of the students at the start of the program. It may be that these students are ones who would have likely attained these professional development positions regardless of whether or not they participated in the program due to their GPAs of 3.0 and higher. Without a comparison group of similar students who did not participate in the program, it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions about the impact of the program on attainment of professional development positions.
These findings suggest that the Rising Starr Sophomore Program clarify the profile of students that would benefit most from participating in the program. The program should determine whether students would benefit most who are lower in career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation and have lower GPAs, or students with high GPAs and do not struggle with career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation.

**Recommendations for Program Practice**

For the Rising STARR Sophomore Program to remain sustainable, its ability to articulate how it will support institutional goals and gain acceptance campus-wide is needed. The program evaluation report (Appendix I) will be provided to the STARR Career Development Center communicating the results of the assessment.

This study has laid a foundation for the possibility of creating a model that might serve to assist administrators as they decide whether and how to install sophomore or second-year experience initiatives. Good program design is a cyclical process that garners a variety of stakeholder perspectives and continually assesses and enhances aspects of the initiative using theory, research, and practice.

Administrators of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program may want to re-examine the GPA requirement for participating in the program. The goal of the program is to increase students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence, but there was little change in these outcomes. This may be due to students who have a GPA of 3.0 or higher already being high in these areas, whereas students with lower a lower GPA may have more room to grow in career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation. This is a programming issue, targeting students that are at the top and not the students
that may benefit most from the program. However, if the goal of the program is to maintain students’ motivation, then the program may be effective. Therefore, it is suggested that the target population and the logic of the expected outcomes be addressed so that the goals, population, and measurements are better linked.

A recommendation would be to consider the need for a comprehensive evaluation framework, which would provide ongoing information to allow the Rising STARR Sophomore Program to make adjustments as a result of changing needs, conditions, and generational differences. “A comprehensive approach to evaluation includes a program profile, a logic model, formative and summative requirements, quantitative and qualitative data collection requirements, evaluator-created instruments that have face and content validity, reliable and valid standardized instruments, consideration of internal and contextual factors, and a reporting strategy” (Allen, 2008, p. 204).

Limitations

This research study used a quantitative evaluative case study design. The case study design allows for the evaluation of a particular program for a defined timeframe. In this research, the Rising STARR Sophomore Program was evaluated over the timeframe of the program’s first four of operation. However, there are two major limitations to the current evaluation.

First, the size of the study was small with 26 of the 63 past student participants responding to the survey. Although this is a favorable response rate, the sample size itself limits the external validity (or generalizability) of the sample. The small sample size was the result of limited archival data, programmatic changes, and inconsistency of records. The archival data was limited to only 63 program participants who completed
the pretest and posttest of both assessments: Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short-Form and Academic Motivation Scale. Changes to the program occurred after year four of operation; the STARR Career Development Center discontinued the incorporation of the assessment, Academic Motivation Scale in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. This discontinuation of the Academic Motivation Scale, limited the sample size as the program has had over 100 participants over its 6-years of operation. The records were inconsistent as there were past program participants within the 4-years of operation that were not included in the sample size because their pretest or posttest for one of the assessments was missing.

The second major limitation is the lack of a comparison or control group. The research questions focus on the impact of the program on identified outcomes. However, without a comparison or control group it is impossible to conclude whether increases or maintenance of motivation, decision-making, and confidence would have occurred without participation in the program. Similarly, the relationships between motivation, decision-making, and confidence and attainment of professional development opportunities can only be tentatively described without a group of comparable students who did not participate in the program to compare to.

**Recommendation for Future Research**

The first recommendation would be to conduct this research again with a larger sample size. To attain a larger sample size of past student participants responding to the survey, there a few recommendations to consider: (a) distribute the survey during the academic year when students are on campus and checking their school email; (b) provide the option for the survey to be completed in the career center should students walk-in
before or after attending classes or come in for other services; and (c) look at the pretest and posttest scores for the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short-Form assessment, as it will include more of the program’s past participants throughout its 6-years of operation.

A second recommendation for future evaluation of the program would be to have a comparison or control group with the same profile as that of the program participants. The comparison or control group would provide information on the program’s impact. The information would be attained by engaging the sophomores that apply to participate in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program but are not accepted with the incentive that they would be accepted in to the program their junior year. A survey would be distributed to the students that would provide information about their experience attaining career opportunities such as leadership programs, internships, part-time positions, and full-time positions. A comparison or control group would make it possible to determine whether the Rising STARR Sophomore Program prevents the sophomore slump, maintains or increases motivation, decision-making, and confidence, or impacts attainment of professional opportunities.

As a third recommendation, the scope of evaluation of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program can be expanded by measuring additional outputs of the logic model including workshops, one-on-one meetings with the program manager, group meetings with fellow participants, co-sponsored events by corporate sponsors, and activities that engage students in an employer interaction. This could be done by developing surveys to assess the more immediate impact of each of these activities. Then those ratings can be analyzed for whether they relate to the attainment of professional development
opportunities. This would require more data collection. Caution should be exerted to avoid survey fatigue among participants. Additionally, it would require that the database compile the data for students longitudinally.

**Application and Direction of Sophomore or Second-Year Initiatives**

Through the Rising STARR Sophomore Program, Baruch College has addressed the problem of the sophomore slump. Baruch College shifted to incorporate the sophomore or second-year experience in its retention efforts. This shift has proven to be successful. The results of this study indicate that the program was able to resolve students’ educational and occupational goals, and keep them incorporated in the intellectual and social life of the institution. These were stated as the major reasons for students to depart institutions of higher education.

Though students’ feedback indicated that their experience in the program allowed them to be competitive, engaged, and self-motivated; the data was not able to prove this through the assessment tools used by the program. However, interviewing the program participants to determine the extent to which students attributed their development and attainment of a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job would provide clarification to the findings on the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. Their initiative to take responsibility for their careers proves the program to be successful, as all respondents stated being influenced by the program to attain a career opportunity and being prepared for the interview/application process and to be successful in the position as a result of participating the program. Students self-reported that the Rising STARR Sophomore Program helped them; this proves that their success is related to the program by providing them with access to employers through the various events.
Employers screen candidates who have desired basic characteristics, specialized skills, and high GPA. Within this candidate pool, employers then select those with desired qualifications. Employers’ perspective of students’ preparedness for the opportunities they hire them for could prompt collaborations of existing services. Such collaborations may include shared cost or specialized resources to: monitor and improve services; market to companies with similar profiles as to attract corporate funders, private foundations, or state and federal government grant awards; and keep up with changing trends of the varying industries that will assure attention is given to program participants being a fit for the program. Program participants possess different abilities, experiences, and preferences that can impact outcomes. The Rising Starr Sophomore Program is effective in bolstering students’ skills and knowledge to meet industry demands in relation and provide perspectives that can be shared, compared, and contrasted for positively affecting the generalizability of a sophomore or second-year experience workforce readiness-training program for other higher education institutions.

The Rising STARR Sophomore Program supports workforce readiness-training programs to be a successful retention tool to addressing the sophomore slump. Data from this study indicates that the Rising STARR Sophomore Program provided support to sophomore or second-year students as they navigated their sophomore or second-year in college. This assessment indicated that respondents were retained at the college, satisfied with the program, and engaged. The results demonstrate that it contributes to the mission of the college and can be sustained over time pending further assessment and program adjustments.
Workforce readiness-training programs can be life changing when students from low income, first generation, and multicultural backgrounds become aware of how they can benefit from participating and also be provided with access to employment that will make them successful (Duru-Nnebue, 2012; Wind, 2013). This study is important because future sophomore or second-year program participants from low income, first generation, and multicultural backgrounds may benefit from participating in future workforce readiness-training programs that more adequately meets their specific needs. Students who enter the world of work early and complete a degree program will increase their life earnings, improve the quality of their lives, and enjoy better health benefits (Duru-Nnebue, 2012; Wind, 2013). More than half the students reported that they attained a full-time position related to their major and attributed this as a result of participating in the program. Students obtaining full-time employment related to their major upon graduation is positive for both the college and the student. The college is able to prove that a degree obtained from their higher education institution provides results of employment. Students benefit through employment after graduation that will allow them to remain to address debt obtained during this time and see the return on their investment of attending college. These benefits and advantages may also be passed on to their future generation. Therefore, the Rising STARR Sophomore Program should make an effort to target and market to low income, first generation, and multicultural backgrounds who can go on to attain academic and career success from the program.

Conclusion

Retaining college students is a top priority for many higher education institutions. They often look to current trends to increase retention rates, especially as they relate to
sophomore or second-year students. According to research, this group of students are not provided with services that are specified, prevalent, and focused. This study assessed a workforce readiness-training program designed for sophomore or second-year students at Baruch College. While there were few distinctions that could be made due to lack of adequate representation, the data shows that students who interacted with the Rising STARR Sophomore Program reported high rates of motivation, decision-making, and confidence with respect to career success. They attributed their success to the program.

This study was important because it addressed gaps in sophomore or second-year research with respect to addressing the sophomore slump. The results of this study can be generalized to a program with a population whose profile is similar and not to students who are academically lower performing, because this population is not represented in the sample. Scholarly research on the effectiveness of sophomore or second-year initiatives in a 4-year higher education institution setting is scarce. This research was unique because the study assessed the effectiveness of a workforce readiness-training program as an intervention to address the sophomore slump. As higher education institutions learn to operate in a more competitive environment, assessment data is becoming the norm. Therefore, the use of a program effect evaluation was appropriate and the results of this study added knowledge to the development of effective workforce readiness-training program practices in higher education institution settings.
References


http://www.naceweb.org/knowledge/career-readiness-competencies.aspx


Appendix A

Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale – Short Form
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**Instructions:** For each statement below, please read carefully and indicate how much confidence you have that you could accomplish each of these tasks by circling your answer according to the key.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No Confidence At All</th>
<th>Very Little Confidence</th>
<th>Moderate Confidence</th>
<th>Much Confidence</th>
<th>Complete Confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Find information in the library about occupations you are interested in.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Select one major from a list of potential majors you are considering.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Make a plan of your goals for the next five years.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Determine the steps to take if you are having academic trouble with an aspect of your chosen major.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Accurately assess your abilities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Select one occupation from a list of potential occupations you are considering.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Determine the steps you need to take to successfully complete your chosen major.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Persistently work at your major or career goal even when you get frustrated.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Determine what you ideal job would be.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Find out the employment trends for an occupation over the next ten years.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Choose a career that will fit your preferred lifestyle.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Prepare a good resume.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Change majors if you did not like your choice.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Decide what you value most in an occupation.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Find out about the average yearly earnings of people in an occupation.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Make a career decision and then not worry whether it was right or wrong.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Change occupations if you are not satisfied with the one you enter.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Figure out what you are and are not ready to sacrifice to achieve your career goals.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Talk with a person already employed in a field you are interested in.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Choose a major or career that will fit your interests.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Identify employers, firms, and institutions relevant to your careers possibilities.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Define the type of lifestyle you would like to live.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23. Find information about graduate or professional schools. & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5  
24. Successfully manage the job interview process. & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5  
25. Identify some reasonable major or career alternatives if you are unable to get your first choice. & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5
Appendix B

Academic Motivation Scale

**WHY DO YOU GO TO COLLEGE?**

*Using the scale below, indicate to what extent each of the following items presently corresponds to one of the reasons why you go to college.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does not correspond at all</th>
<th>Corresponds a little</th>
<th>Corresponds moderately</th>
<th>Corresponds a lot</th>
<th>Corresponds exactly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHY DO YOU GO TO COLLEGE?**

1. Because with only a high-school degree I would not find a high-paying job later on.
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things.
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. Because I think that a college education will help me better prepare for the career I have chosen.
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. For the intense feelings I experience when I am communicating my own ideas to others.
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. Honestly, I don’t know; I really feel that I am wasting my time in school.
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. For the pleasure I experience while surpassing myself in my studies.
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. To prove to myself that I am capable of completing my college degree.
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. In order to obtain a more prestigious job later on.
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. For the pleasure I experience when I discover new things never seen before.
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like.
    - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. For the pleasure that I experience when I read interesting authors.
    - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. I once had good reason for going to college; however, now I wonder whether I should continue.
    - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. For the pleasure that I experience while I am surpassing myself in one of my personal accomplishments.
    - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. Because of the fact that when I succeed in college I feel important.
    - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. Because I want to have “the good life” later on.
    - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. For the pleasure that I experience in broadening my knowledge about subjects which appeal to me.
    - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(17) Because this will help me make a better choice regarding my career orientation.
(18) For the pleasure that I experience when I feel completely absorbed by what certain authors have written.
(19) I can’t see why I go to college and frankly, I couldn’t care less.
(20) For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities.
(21) To show myself that I am an intelligent person.
(22) In order to have a better salary later on.
(23) Because my studies allow me to continue to learn about many things that interest me.
(24) Because I believe that a few additional years of education will improve my competence as a worker.
(25) For the “high” feeling that I experience while reading about various interesting subjects.
(26) I don’t know; I can’t understand what I am doing in school.
(27) Because college allows me to experience a personal satisfaction in my quest for excellence in my studies.
(28) Because I want to show myself that I can succeed in my studies.

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Appendix C

Attitudes on Impact of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program for Sophomore Students

Title of Study: “The Effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program on Sophomore Slump.”

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program (RSSP). The study will assess whether the program was effective in strengthening participants’ soft skills, motivation, decision-making, and confidence in gaining employment.

Procedures: You will be asked to complete a short questionnaire about your ability to obtain leadership programs, internships, part-time, and/or full-time jobs. The questionnaire consists of 43 questions and will take approximately 20 minutes or less. Questions are designed to determine whether you were able to enter the workforce based on your participation in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. Your responses to the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form and the Academic Motivation Scale while in the program will be reviewed as well.

Risks/Discomforts: Risks are minimal for involvement in this study. However, you may feel emotionally uneasy when asked to provide your email address based on your participation in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. Your email address will be deleted before the reports are run.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits for participants. However, it is hoped that through your participation, researchers will learn more about the effectiveness and impact of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program.

Confidentiality: All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than the primary investigator listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until it has been deleted by the primary investigator.

Compensation: You will receive a $25 gift certificate to Amazon.com as compensation for your participation in this study.

Participation: Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your academic status, GPA, or standing with the university. If you desire to withdraw, please close your Internet browser and notify the principal investigator at this email: lmo07748@sjfc.edu.
**Questions about the Research:** If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Lisa O’Connor, at 917-880-1335, lmo07748@sjfc.edu.

**Questions about your Rights as Research Participants:** If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher; you may contact Dr. W. Jeff Wallis, 201-988-2853, 29 Castle Place, New Rochelle, NY 10805, wwallis@sjfc.edu. Or contact the director of St. John Fisher College’s Institutional Review Board, Dr. Eileen Lynd-Balta, 585-385-7368, elynd-balta@sjfc.edu.

I have read, understood, and printed a copy of, the above consent form, and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.
   a) Yes   b) No

My email address is ____________ (Please note: Your email address will NOT be shared without your permission and will only be used for the purposes of this research study.)

Please answer the following questions:

**Part I: Demographic Questions.**

1) What is your current age? ____________

2) What is your gender?
   a) Male
   b) Female

3) Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background?
   a) Asian
   b) Black or African American
   c) Latino or Hispanic
   d) White
   e) American Indian or Alaska Native
   f) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   g) Multiracial
   h) Other ____________
   i) Choose Not to Answer

4) What is your highest education level achieved to date?
   a) Junior in College
   b) Senior in College
   c) Bachelor’s Degree
   d) Enrolled in Graduate Student
   e) Master’s Degree
   f) Doctoral Degree
5) What is/was your major?
   a) Accountancy
   b) Actuarial Science
   c) Arts and Sciences Ad Hoc Major
   d) Biological/Natural Sciences
   e) Business Communication: Business Writing
   f) Business Communication: Corporate Communication
   g) Business Communication: Graphic Communication
   h) Communication Studies
   i) Computer Information Systems
   j) Economics
   k) English
   l) Finance
   m) Financial Mathematics
   n) History
   o) Industrial/Organizational Psychology
   p) Journalism: Journalism and Creative Writing
   q) Journalism: Business Journalism
   r) Management
   s) Marketing Management
   t) Mathematics
   u) Music (including Management of Musical Enterprises)
   v) Philosophy
   w) Political Science
   x) Psychology
   y) Public Affairs
   z) Quantitative Methods and Modeling
   aa) Real Estate and Metropolitan Development
   bb) Sociology
   cc) Spanish
   dd) Statistics and Quantitative Modeling
   ee) Statistics
   ff) Other

6) What is/was your minor?
   a) American Studies
   b) Art
   c) Asian and Asian American Studies
   d) Black and Latino Studies
   e) Business Writing
   f) Chemistry
   g) Chinese
   h) Communication Studies
   i) Comparative Literature
   j) Computer Applications in Business
k) Economics
l) Economics and Finance
m) English
n) Entrepreneurship
o) Environmental Sustainability
p) Film
q) French
r) Global Studies
s) Hebrew
t) History
u) Human Resource Management
v) Humanities
w) Information Studies
x) Information Technology and Social Responsibility
y) International Business
z) Italian
aa) Japanese
bb) Jewish Studies
cc) Journalism
dd) Latin American and Caribbean Studies
ee) Law
ff) Law and Policy
gg) Marketing
hh) Mathematics
ii) Music
jj) Natural Sciences
kk) New Media Arts
ll) Operations Management
mm) Philosophy
nn) Physics
oo) Political Science
pp) Psychology
qq) Public Affairs
rr) Quantitative Methods and Modeling
ss) Real Estate
tt) Religion and Culture
uu) Sociology
vv) Spanish
ww) Spanish-English Translation
xx) Statistics and Quantitative Modeling
yy) Survey Research
zz) Theatre
aaa) Women's and Gender Studies
bbb) Other

7) What is/was your cumulative GPA? ____________
Part II: Background Questions.

8a) In order to answer the questionnaire, consider leadership programs to include:
   - Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO)
   - America Needs You (ANY) formerly New York Needs You
   - INROADS
   - Management Leadership for Tomorrow (MLT)
   - Other organizations similar to the above.
   Leadership programs does not include student clubs or organizations.

   Using this definition, are/were you participating in a leadership program(s)?
   a) Yes   b) No

   Note: If you are or were not involved in a leadership program, please skip questions 8b – 8i, and go to question 9a.

8b) How many leadership programs did you participate in during or after the Rising STARR Sophomore Program (RSSP)?
   a) 1    b) 2    c) 3    d) 4    e) 5    f) 6

8c) When did you participate in the leadership program(s)?

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<th>Leadership Program 1</th>
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8d) In what industry (banking, education, pharmaceuticals, etc.) is/was the leadership program related to? ____________
8e) Did the leadership program(s) relate to your major, minor, or career interests?
   a) Yes   b) No

8f) How did the leadership program(s) relate to your major, minor, or career interests?

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8g) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program influenced my decision to apply for the leadership program(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree  b) Disagree  c) Agree  d) Strongly Agree

8h) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program prepared me for the application process/interview for the leadership program(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree  b) Disagree  c) Agree  d) Strongly Agree

8i) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program prepared me to be successful in the leadership program(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree  b) Disagree  c) Agree  d) Strongly Agree

9a) Are/were you participating in an internship?
   a) Yes   b) No

Note: If you are or were not involved in an internship, please skip questions 9b – 9i, and go to question 10a.

9b) How many internships did you participate in during or after the Rising STARR Sophomore Program (RSSP)?
   a) 1   b) 2   c) 3   d) 4   e) 5   f) 6 or more

9c) When did you participate in the internship(s)?
9d) In what industry (banking, education, pharmaceuticals, etc.) is/was the internship related to? ___________

9e) Did the internship(s) relate to your major, minor, or career interests?
   a) Yes    b) No

9f) State the internship to which the following statements relates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My major relates to the internship</th>
<th>Internship 1</th>
<th>Internship 2</th>
<th>Internship 3</th>
<th>Internship 4</th>
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<th>Internship 1</th>
<th>Internship 2</th>
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</table>
9g) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program influenced my decision to apply for the internship(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree  b) Disagree  c) Agree  d) Strongly Agree

9h) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program prepared me for the application process/interview for the internship(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree  b) Disagree  c) Agree  d) Strongly Agree

9i) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program prepared me to be successful in the internship(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree  b) Disagree  c) Agree  d) Strongly Agree

10a) Are/were you participating in a part-time position?
   a) Yes  b) No

Note: If you are or were not involved in a part-time position, please skip questions 10b – 10i, and go to question 11a.

10b) How many part-time positions did you participate in during or after the Rising STARR Sophomore Program (RSSP)?
   a) 1  b) 2  c) 3  d) 4  e) 5  f) 6 or more

10c) When did you participate in the part-time position?

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<tr>
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<th>Part-Time Position 1</th>
<th>Part-Time Position 2</th>
<th>Part-Time Position 3</th>
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</table>
10d) In what industry (banking, education, pharmaceuticals, etc.) is/was the part-time position related to? ____________

10e) Did the part-time position(s) relate to your major, minor, or career interests?
   a) Yes     b) No

10f) How did the part-time position(s) relate to your major, minor, or career interests?

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<th>Part-Time Position 1</th>
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My major relates to the part-time position
My minor relates to the part-time position
My career interest relates to the part-time position

10g) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program influenced my decision to apply for the part-time position(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Agree   d) Strongly Agree

10h) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program prepared me for the application process/interview for the part-time position(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Agree   d) Strongly Agree

10i) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program prepared me to be successful in the part-time position(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Agree   d) Strongly Agree

11a) Are/were you participating in a full-time position?
   a) Yes     b) No

Note: If you are or were not involved in a full-time position, please skip questions 11b – 11i.

11b) How many full-time positions did you participate in during or after the Rising STARR Sophomore Program (RSSP)?
   a) 1     b) 2     c) 3     d) 4     e) 5     f) 6 or more
11c) When did you participate in the full-time position(s)?

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11d) In what industry (banking, education, pharmaceuticals, etc.) is/was the full-time position related to? ____________

11e) Did the full-time position(s) relate to your major, minor, or career interests?
   a) Yes
   b) No

11f) How did the full-time position(s) relate to your major, minor, or career interests?

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</table>
11g) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program influenced my decision to apply for the full-time position(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree  b) Disagree  c) Agree  d) Strongly Agree

11h) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program prepared me for the application process/interview for the full-time position(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree  b) Disagree  c) Agree  d) Strongly Agree

11i) The Rising STARR Sophomore Program prepared me to be successful in the full-time position(s).
   a) Strongly Disagree  b) Disagree  c) Agree  d) Strongly Agree
Appendix D
Introductory Email

Dear Rising STARR Sophomore Program Alumni,

You are invited to participate in a research study titled “The Effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program on Sophomore Slump.” This study is being conducted by Lisa O’Connor and her research committee from the Department of Education at St. John Fisher College. The purpose of this study is to exploring the effectiveness and impact of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program (RSSP) to facilitate sophomores’ access to employer talent pipeline programs offering leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time jobs. Additionally, the study will explore the program’s ability to strengthen sophomores’ soft skills and workplace knowledge to meet industry demand, as well as, influence on students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence.

In this study, you will be asked to complete an electronic survey. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. The survey should take only 20-minutes to complete.

This survey has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of St. John Fisher College. There are no risks associated with participating in this study. The survey collects your email address to relate your information with previous data from the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. However, your email address will be deleted before the reports are run to maintain all of the response in the survey confidential.

While you will not experience any direct benefits from participation, information collected in this study may benefit the profession of program evaluation in the future by better understanding how career planning can address the sophomore slump.

If you have any questions regarding the survey or this research project in general, please contact Lisa O’Connor at lmo07748@sjfc.edu or her advisor Dr. W. Jeff Wallis at wwallis@sjfc.edu. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB of St. John Fisher College at elynd-balta@sjfc.edu or 585-385-7368.

By completing and submitting this survey, you are indicating your consent to participate in the study. Your participation is appreciated.

Please click on the survey link below and provide us with your feedback no later than March 28, 2015.

(direct access link)

Thank you for your cooperation!
Appendix E

Notification Email

Dear [Student’s First Name],

It’s your turn! Please take a few minutes to provide your feedback about the Rising STARR Sophomore Program that you had participated in by clicking the link below:

(direct access link)

Rest assured that your responses are compiled confidentially; data will be reported to the STARR Career Development Center after the survey is closed and analyzed without any reference to you individually.

Thanks in advance for your participation.
Dear [Student’s First Name],

A gentle reminder…Monday, March 28 is the last day to access the online feedback form.

Please take a few minutes to provide your feedback about the Rising STARR Sophomore Program that you had participated in by clicking the link below:

(direct access link)

Rest assured that your responses are compiled confidently.

Thanks in advance for your participation.
Appendix G

Final Reminder Email

Dear [Student’s First Name],

Last call…the feedback form closes on Monday, March 28.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey if you have not done so already, by clicking on the link:

(direct access link)

Thank you!
May 6, 2016

Lisa O’Connor
St. John Fisher College

Dear Ms. O’Connor:

Thank you for submitting your research proposal to the Institutional Review Board.

I am pleased to inform you that the Board has approved your Expedited Review project, “The Effectiveness of the Rising Starr Sophomore Program on Sophomore Slump” and as part of the review approves the use of the pre-existing pre/post survey data from the STARR Career Center at Baruch College. You must use the revised consent form (see attachment with the stamped approval) that notifies the participants of the following: “Your responses to the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form and the Academic Motivation Scale while in the program will be reviewed as well.”

Following federal guidelines, research related records should be maintained in a secure area for three years following the completion of the project at which time they may be destroyed.

Should you have any questions about this process or your responsibilities, please contact me at irb@sjfc.edu.

Sincerely,

Eileen Lynd-Balta, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

ELB:jdr
Appendix I

The Effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program on Sophomore Slump

Program Evaluation Report

Lisa-Ann M. O’Connor
August 2016
The Effectiveness of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program on Sophomore Slump

Program Evaluation Report

Executive Summary
Research suggested that there is a need for higher education institutions to focus on retaining sophomore students, as many struggle with sophomore slump. The term sophomore slump is “widely used to describe students who lack motivation, feel disconnected, and flounder academically” (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006, p. 18). To address this matter, some institutions of higher education have invested resources into sophomore year or second-year initiatives to retain sophomore students, but the lack of reported assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of sophomore year or second-year initiatives in higher education institutions is an issue.

The most cited initiatives that universities created to support sophomore year or second-year students are leadership development, academic advising, and career planning (Gahagan, Jr., 2009). The Rising STARR Sophomore Program is a sophomore year or second-year initiative that supports career planning by engaging sophomore students through career-related activities to identify job-related goals. The program also addresses the growing industry needs of employers who collaborate with the career center in preparing and hiring students for leadership programs, internships, part-time, and full-time careers related to their major.

This program evaluation report of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program provides an insight into the effectiveness of this program as an intervention to address sophomore slump and how elements of this program might be useful to educators who are planning similar programs. The program’s effectiveness was assessed using a one-group pretest/posttest design, with program theory and logic model as a framework.

Program Description
Baruch College is a four-year public college of the City University of New York. The college is one of 11 senior colleges within the 24-unit City University of New York system. Its total enrollment as of 2014 is over 18,000 students of which over 14,000 are undergraduate. The college consists of three schools in the following disciplines: Business, Arts and Sciences, and Public Affairs.

One of the support resources available at the college for students is the STARR Career Development Center. It offers the following programs and services: workshops, corporate presentations, information sessions, career fairs, internships, jobs, on-campus recruiting opportunities, mentoring, career counseling, resume reviews, mock
interviews, vocational tests, and special leadership programs. The career center provides services to over 13,000 undergraduate students enrolled in the college’s three schools. The Rising STARR Sophomore Program is one of four special programs offered by the STARR Career Development Center.

The STARR Career Development Center of Baruch College of the City University of New York (CUNY) initiated the Rising STARR Sophomore Program in 2010 as an intervention to address the sophomore slump. The program’s approach is to develop the career and leadership skills of sophomore students in an effort to engage and retain them at the college.

This program came about because of feedback the career center received from students that they desire stronger career readiness skills earlier in their academic development, as well as, their government, nonprofit, and Fortune 500 employer partners. Their employer partners articulated that their recruiting efforts had expanded to target sophomores to fill their employment pipeline, a change from their traditional approach, which had focused on juniors and seniors.

**Project Objectives and Activity Plans**

The goal of this program is to bolster student’s skills and knowledge through didactic and applied experiences to meet industry demand. The program attempts to accomplish this by addressing the skills and knowledge gaps of sophomores, while strengthening their retention efforts in clarifying their career goals and facilitating access to career pathways. It also increases collaboration with faculty members and other stakeholders across the college (e.g., academic advisors, key administrators, etc.) to assist the participants of the program. This provides better-prepared students entering employer talent pipelines, which is also an opportunity to support employer partners in their efforts to engage students earlier in their academic development and increase the institution’s profile.

The goals of the workforce readiness-training program are to (a) strengthen students’ soft skills and workplace competencies; (b) impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence; and (c) prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job. The Rising STARR Sophomore Program focuses on connecting students early with career opportunities through six components. Students:

1. attend workshops on general career development topics, such as resume and cover letter writing, interview skills, networking, and job searching;
2. attend an orientation that provides an overview of the program, the role of the program manager, and the expectations of participants;
3. meet with the program manager one-on-one to discuss the student’s career path;
4. meet with the program manager in a group made up of fellow participants to discuss their experience and share ideas;
(5) participate in an event that is cosponsored by a corporate supporter of the career center; and
(6) participate in an activity that engages the student in an employer interaction.
All participants are awarded a certificate for successfully completing the program.

Evaluation Plan and Methodology
Using program impact theory and the logic model, the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes was assessed, as well as, whether there was a relationship between both outcomes. This evaluation focused on answering the following questions:

(1) To what degree does the Rising STARR Sophomore Program achieve its intermediate goals to impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence?
(2) To what degree does the Rising STARR Sophomore Program achieve its long-term goals to prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job?
(3) Is there a relationship between the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes?

The intermediate outcomes of the program were obtained from archival data results of the two instruments used in the program: Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (Appendix A) and Academic Motivation Scale (Appendix B). This measured whether the program’s goal to impact students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence were achieved. These data were analyzed to test significant change from pretest to posttest using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The long-term outcomes were determined using a survey (Appendix C). These data were analyzed descriptively to measure the program’s goal to prepare students’ to acquire a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job by reporting the opportunities students participated in. The Mann-Whitney U Test, also known as, Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test, was used to compare the relationship between students’ participation in a leadership program, internship, part-time, or full-time job and their motivation, decision-making, and confidence. This measured whether there was a relationship between the program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes.

Results
Process and Outcome
The program evaluator emailed the director of the STARR Career Development Center for permission to use the archival data, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short-Form and Academic Motivation Scale. The director provided written and verbal permission to use the data. The program evaluator scheduled a visit to the career center and copies of the assessments were provided. The assessments that were provided to
the program evaluator were of the respondents that consented to participate in this evaluation.

The survey was provided to 63 former Rising STARR Sophomore Program participants from years 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. This allowed the program evaluator to obtain data from participants who completed the Rising STARR Sophomore Program and had the opportunity to acquire a leadership program position, internship, part-time, or full-time job. The past participants were provided a timeframe of three weeks to respond to the survey. Respondents of the survey were provided an electronic gift of $25 for Amazon.com. This monetary incentive was provided to the past participants to encourage the completion of the surveys, especially from participants who were no longer attending the college.

All data collected were self-reported by student participants who completed the Rising STARR Sophomore Program.

Using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, the first question revealed that the Rising STARR Sophomore Program did not increase students’ motivation and no decrease (or slump) was observed. However, one significant difference between the pretest scores and posttest scores of the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form was revealed. This answered the question that the Rising STARR Sophomore Program increased students’ career decision-making self-efficacy in goal selection.

The data collected from the survey was analyzed descriptively to measure the second question. The second question explored the perceived impact the Rising STARR Sophomore Program had on influencing students to apply to leadership programs, internships, part-time positions, and full-time positions, and in preparing students for the application process/interview and success in leadership programs, internships, part-time positions, and full-time positions. The results showed that students perceived the Rising STARR Sophomore Program as having a moderate influence on their decisions to apply for such opportunities and moderately prepared them for the application process/interview and to be successful in leadership programs, internships, and full-time employment.

The third question used the Mann-Whitney U Test which revealed that there was no significant difference between students who attained a leadership program, internship, part-time position, and full-time position, and those who did not in terms of their career decision-making self-efficacy or academic motivation. This answered the question that there is no relationship between the Rising STARR Sophomore Program’s intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes.
**Successes and Barriers**

There are two major Barriers to the current evaluation:

1. The size of the study was small with 26 of the 63 past student participants responding to the survey. Although this is a favorable response rate, the sample size itself limits the external validity (or generalizability) of the sample. The small sample size was the result of limited archival data, programmatic changes, and inconsistency of records. The archival data was limited to only 63 program participants who completed the pretest and posttest of both assessments: Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short-Form and Academic Motivation Scale. Changes to the program occurred after year four of operation; the STARR Career Development Center discontinued the incorporation of the assessment, Academic Motivation Scale in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program. This discontinuation of the Academic Motivation Scale, limited the sample size as the program has had over 100 participants over its six years of operation. The records were inconsistent as there were past program participants within the four years of operation that were not included in the sample size because their pretest or posttest for one of the assessments was missing.

2. The lack of a comparison or control group. The research questions focus on the impact of the program on identified outcomes. However, without a comparison or control group it is impossible to conclude whether increases or maintenance of motivation, decision-making, and confidence would have occurred without participation in the program. Similarly, the relationships between motivation, decision-making, and confidence and attainment of professional development opportunities can only be tentatively described without a group of comparable students who did not participate in the program to compare to.

**Conclusions**

Retaining college students is a top priority for many higher education institutions. They often look to current trends to increase retention rates, especially as they relate to sophomore or second-year students. According to research, this group of students are not provided with services that are specified, prevalent, and focused. This program evaluation assessed a workforce readiness-training program designed for sophomore or second-year students at Baruch College. While there were few distinctions that could be made due to lack of adequate representation, the data shows that students who interacted with the Rising STARR Sophomore Program reported high rates of motivation, decision-making, and confidence with respect to career success. They attributed their success to the program.

This evaluation was important because it addressed gaps in sophomore or second-year research with respect to addressing the sophomore slump. The results can be
generalized to a population with a similar profile and not to students who are academically lower performing, because this population is not represented in the sample. Scholarly research on the effectiveness of sophomore or second-year initiatives in a four-year higher education institution setting is scarce. This program evaluation was unique because it assessed the effectiveness of a workforce readiness-training program as an intervention to address the sophomore slump. This assessment added knowledge to the development of effective workforce readiness-training program practices in higher education institution settings being successful with addressing the sophomore slump.

**Recommendations**

For the Rising STARR Sophomore Program to remain sustainable, its ability to articulate how it will support institutional goals and gain acceptance campus-wide is needed. This report has laid a foundation for the possibility of creating a model that might serve to assist other administrators how to install sophomore or second-year experience initiatives. Good program design is a cyclical process that garners a variety of stakeholder perspectives and continually assesses and enhances aspects of the initiative using theory, research, and practice. This section contains a discussion of recommendations for future research and recommendations for practice:

1. To conduct this evaluation again with a larger sample size. To attain a larger sample size of past student participants responding to the survey, there are a few recommendations to consider:
   a) distribute the survey during the academic year when students are on campus and checking their school email;
   b) provide the option for the survey to be completed in the career center should students’ walk-in before or after attending classes or come in for other services; and
   c) look at the pretest and posttest scores for the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale Short-Form assessment, as it will include more of the program’s past participants throughout its six years of operation.

2. Have a comparison or control group with the same profile as that of the program participants. The comparison or control group would provide information on the program’s impact. The information would be attained by engaging the sophomores that apply to participate in the Rising STARR Sophomore Program but are not accepted with the incentive that they would be accepted in to the program their junior year. A survey would be distributed to the students that would provide information about their experience attaining career opportunities such as leadership programs, internships, part-time positions, and full-time positions. A comparison or control group would make it possible to determine whether the Rising STARR Sophomore Program prevents the sophomore slump, maintains or
increases motivation, decision-making, and confidence, or impacts attainment of professional opportunities.

(3) The scope of evaluation of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program can be expanded by measuring additional outputs of the logic model including workshops, one-on-one meetings with the program manager, group meetings with fellow participants, co-sponsored events by corporate sponsors, and activities that engage students in an employer interaction. This could be done by developing surveys to assess the more immediate impact of each of these activities. Then those ratings can be analyzed for whether they relate to the attainment of professional development opportunities. This would require more data collection. Caution should be exerted to avoid survey fatigue among participants. Additionally, it would require that the database compile the data for students longitudinally.

(4) Administrators of the Rising STARR Sophomore Program may want to re-examine the GPA requirement for participating in the program. The goal of the program is to increase students’ motivation, decision-making, and confidence, but there was little change in these outcomes. This may be due to students who have a GPA of 3.0 or higher already being high in these areas, whereas students with lower a lower GPA may have more room to grow in career decision-making self-efficacy and academic motivation. This is a programming issue, targeting students that are at the top and not the students that may benefit most from the program. However, if the goal of the program is to maintain students’ motivation, then the program may be effective. Therefore, it is suggested that the target population and the logic of the expected outcomes be addressed so that the goals, population, and measurements are better linked.

(5) Consider the need for a comprehensive evaluation framework, which would provide ongoing information to allow the Rising STARR Sophomore Program to make adjustments as a result of changing needs, conditions, and generational differences. “A comprehensive approach to evaluation includes a program profile, a logic model, formative and summative requirements, quantitative and qualitative data collection requirements, evaluator-created instruments that have face and content validity, reliable and valid standardized instruments, consideration of internal and contextual factors, and a reporting strategy” (Allen, 2008, p. 204).

References


**Appendices**

Appendix A – refer to pg. 87 of study.
Appendix B – refer to pg. 90 of study.
Appendix C – refer to pg. 92 of study.