

# Does Working Work?

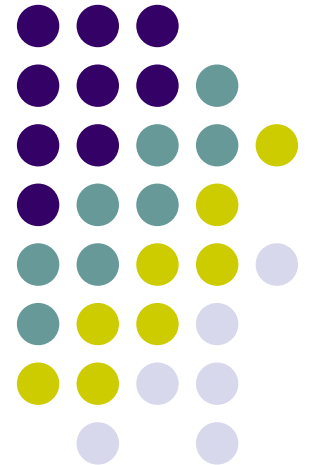
## Using NSSE to Examine the Relationship between Employment and Retention

Shannon M. Tinney, M.A.

Constance A. Pierson

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University of Maryland, Baltimore County



# Background



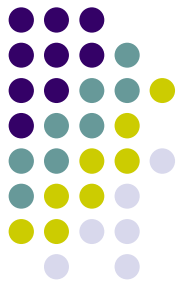
- Student Worker Study (OIR, August 2005)
  - The effect of employment on retention of undergraduates, mixed results
- Extant research: type of employment and time devoted to employment conditions the relationship between work and retention

# Practical Implications



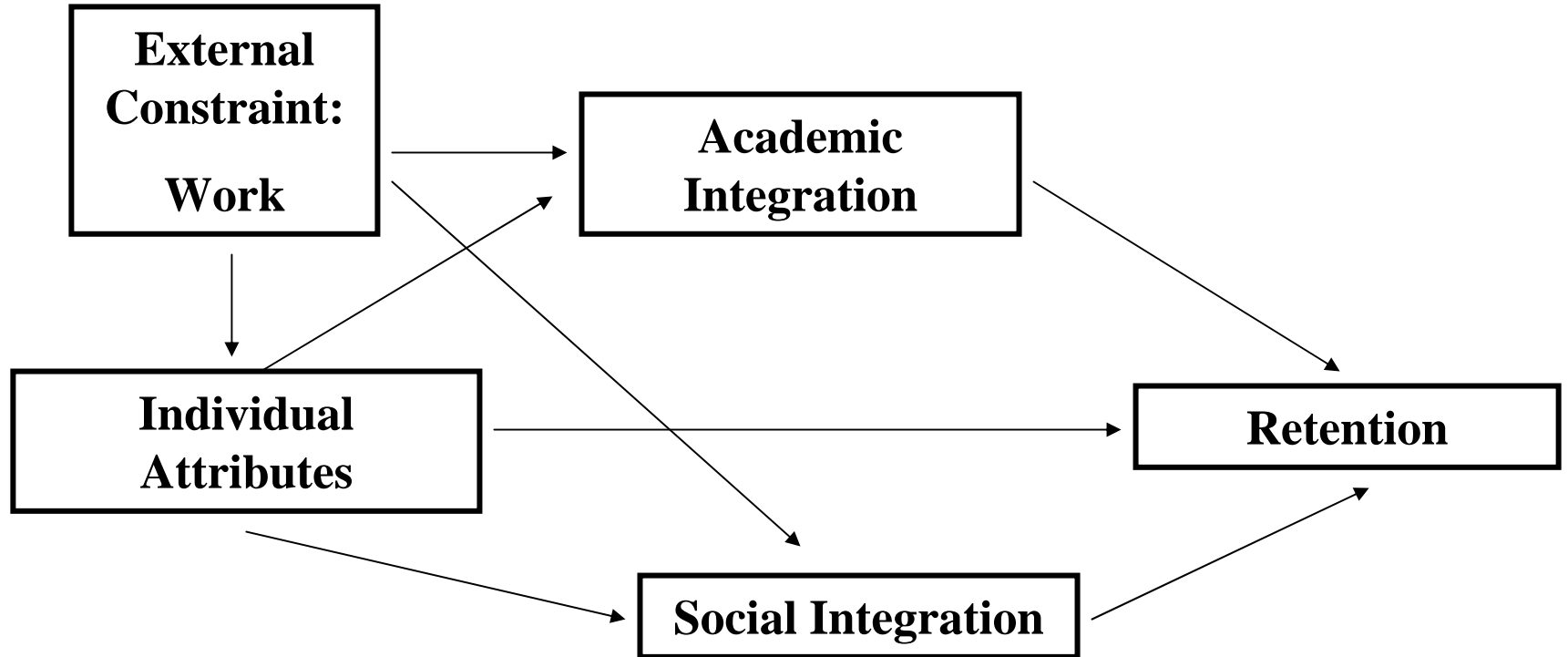
- “Changing American College Student” (Astin, 1998)
  - Demographics
  - Attitudes & values
- UMBC’s student body is emblematic of the “Changing American College Student”
- Supporting students’ multiple roles
- What does “work” mean for a college student?

# Guiding Principles



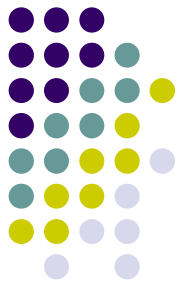
- **Tinto's Interactionist Theory of Student Departure** (1987, 1993): pre-entry attributes, academic and social integration, external constraints, and retention
  - Is employment an *external constraint* impacting undergraduate retention for certain demographic groups?

# Theoretical Model



# Methodology

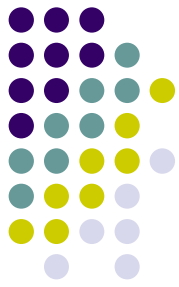
## *Measures*



- Dependent variables
  - 1-year retention (Fall 2003 to Fall 2004)
  - 2-year retention ( Fall 2003 to Fall 2005)
- Independent variables: Employment Status
  - Worked
  - On-campus
  - On-campus PT ( $\leq 15$  hours)
  - Off-campus
  - Off-campus PT ( $\leq 15$  hours)
  - Off-campus FT ( $> 15$  hours)

# Methodology

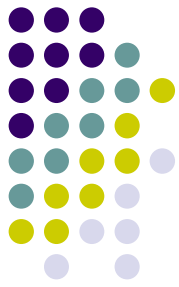
## *Measures*



- Mediating variables: Integration
  - Academic integration ( $\alpha = .74$ ; 11 items)
  - Student social integration ( $\alpha = .76$ ; 9 items)
  - Student-faculty interaction ( $\alpha = .74$ ; 7 items)
- Principal components factor analysis and a reliability analysis was conducted for each scale.
- Factor scores were generated and used in subsequent analyses.

# Methodology

## *Measures*

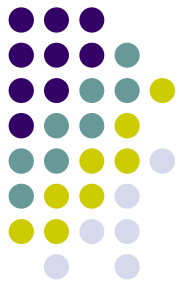


- Controls: Student Demographics
  - Gender
  - Race
  - First generation college (FGC)
  - Major program area (at entry)
  - Dorm status (fall 2003)
  - MD resident
  - First semester GPA
  - Affiliated at Matriculation

**Table 1. Bivariate Relationships between Student Characteristics & Employment Status**

	Worked	On-campus	On-campus (PT)	Off-campus	Off-campus (PT)	Off-campus (FT)
<b>White</b>		-	-			
<b>Black</b>		+	+	-		
<b>SAT (V&amp;M)</b>	-	-		-		-
<b>FGC</b>	+	+		+		+
<b>MD resident</b>	+			+	+	+
<b>Dorm</b>	-			-	-	-
<b>STEM</b>	-			-		-
<b>Undecl/Oth</b>	+	+	+			
<b>AJ 1<sup>st</sup> term</b>				+	+	
<b>Affiliated</b>	-			-	-	-

# Who is more likely to work?



- African-American students—on-campus
- FGC—on and off-campus
- MD residents—off-campus
- Commuters—off-campus
- Students with lower SAT scores—on-campus and FT off-campus
- Unaffiliated students—PT and FT off-campus

**Table 2. Bivariate Relationships between Student Characteristics, Integration & 1-year Retention**

	<b>Academic Integration</b>	<b>Student Social Integration</b>	<b>Student-Faculty Interaction</b>	<b>1-Year Retention</b>
<b>Black</b>	+	+		
<b>Asian</b>		-		
<b>FGC</b>		-		
<b>Dorm resident</b>		+		
<b>STEM Major</b>		+		
<b>Undeclared/Oth</b>		-	-	
<b>AJ 1<sup>st</sup> term</b>	-	-		-
<b>On-campus</b>			+	
<b>On-campus (PT)</b>			+	
<b>Off-campus</b>		-		
<b>Off-campus (PT)</b>				
<b>Off-campus (FT)</b>				
<b>Affiliated</b>	+	+	+	
<b>Student Social Integration</b>				+

# Findings

## *Employment, Integration, and 1-year Retention*



- Employment status is related to integration in ways consistent with the literature.
- Student social integration: a positive indicator of 1-year retention after controlling for other factors
- No empirical evidence that academic or social integration mediated the relationship between employment and 1-year retention.

**Table 3. Bivariate Relationships between Student Characteristics, Integration & 2-year Retention**

	<b>Academic Integration</b>	<b>Student Social Integration</b>	<b>Student-Faculty Interaction</b>	<b>2-Year Retention</b>
<b>Black</b>	+	+		
<b>Asian</b>		-		
<b>FGC</b>		-		-
<b>Dorm resident</b>		+		+
<b>STEM Major</b>		+		
<b>Undeclared/Oth</b>		-	-	-
<b>AJ 1<sup>st</sup> term</b>	-	-		-
<b>On-campus</b>			+	
<b>On-campus (PT)</b>			+	
<b>Off-campus</b>		-		-
<b>Off-campus (FT)</b>				-
<b>Affiliated</b>	+	+	+	+
<b>Academic Integration</b>				+
<b>Student Social Integration</b>				+

# Findings

## *Employment, Integration, and 2-year Retention*



- Academic and Student Social Integration: positive indicators of 2-year retention after controlling for other factors
- Academic or social integration did not mediate relationship between employment and persistence.
  - Some evidence that first term GPA partially mediated FGC and 2-year retention
- Employment, integration, and persistence are independently related.

# Findings

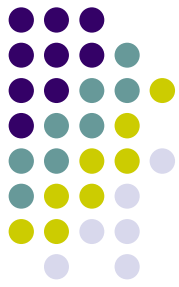
## *Multivariate Analyses: Employment, Integration & Persistence*



- While consistent with the literature that working too many hours off-campus puts students at risk for attrition, these relationships were no longer significant when additional factors were controlled for in analyses.
- There is no evidence of any moderating effects of FGC, MD resident, commuter, or affiliation status on the relationship between off-campus work and 2-year retention.

# Findings

## *Multivariate Analyses: Employment, Integration & Persistence*



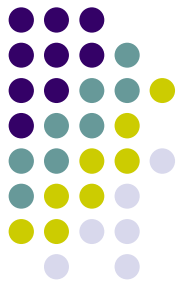
- Affiliation status matters!
  - Affiliated students are significantly more likely to persist over time.
  - Relationships among affiliation status, employment status, integration, and retention suggest the role of finances in the “departure puzzle.”

# Limitations to the Current Study...



- Time sequence of employment and perceptions of academic and social integration could be concurrent
- Better controls for student financial information
- Larger sample size and multiple cohorts of FT/FT freshmen would be more telling regarding the relationships among employment, integration, and persistence
- Use structural equation modeling (SEM)

# Directions for Future Research



- Re-evaluate some relationships using SEM
- Examine these relationships with more senior-level students
- Re-conceptualization of “work”
  - Current project examining applied learning and student success.
- Share with the Retention Assessment Committee and Student Employment Taskforce