A Case Study Analysis of Access in One Ontario College:
Exploring A Strategic Model for Future Directions in Institutional and Program Design

by

Brenda Pipitone

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

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Brenda Pipitone
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the efficacy of applying the Beatty-Guenter model as a framework to assess the delivery of access programming at one Ontario college. The application of the framework as an evaluative lens also illuminates the extent to which the current approach to access programming at that college aligns with the categories of the Beatty-Guenter framework.

This case study includes a literature review with a focus on both Canadian content and College Impact Models as the basis for exploring current practice at one large urban college. The study employs both document and qualitative interview analysis to examine the extent to which the current approach to access programming aligns with the categories of “sorting, supporting, connecting, transforming students and transforming the institution” in the Beatty-Guenter model. The study addresses areas for institutional
investment as well as structural changes needed within institutions to ensure successful access and retention of non-traditional students in the postsecondary environment.

The findings of the study revealed support for the efficacy of the Beatty-Guenter model by the majority of participants interviewed. The greatest alignment to the Beatty-Guenter model was seen with four categories “sorting, supporting connecting and transforming students”, and the least alignment with the “institutional transformation” category. While the model identified gaps in service delivery, further refinements to the model would be necessary to ensure how a more accurate assessment of each category could be determined.

Additionally, the findings identified themes that also impact the delivery of access programming outside the scope of the model. The emergent themes related to both internal factors such as organizational structure, vision and cultural context, and external factors such as role of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in funding and policy directives.

While this study is not generalizable, it provides a small contribution to knowledge in the area of programming and the use of a systematic model of delivery. This knowledge does not lend itself to developing larger principles for generalization, but rather allows for the examination of access programs within organizations, while shedding light on challenges that impede access goals in postsecondary environments.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

According to Jones (2002), "The blessing and burden of qualitative research is [it] carries with it a significant responsibility to tell the stories of those with whom researchers come into contact in the most respectful way possible." (p. 461)

I want to acknowledge the individuals who were part of this study. I have worked diligently to represent your voices and issues accurately and to tell your story in a way that demonstrates the immense respect and admiration I have for the role you play within the college and for the work you do. You hold open the door to a new future, and with your careful stewardship of students’ dreams, you make it possible for so many to see themselves differently and begin to shape lives that for many would be out of reach without your help. You are the cornerstone of the college system and play an essential role to fulfill the promise of access to opportunities, a principle on which the college was founded some fifty years ago.

My thanks and appreciation to my thesis committee for all the guidance and support they offered me throughout this journey. I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Charles Pascal, who both supported and challenged me to look at this process as my unique journey and to believe in my talents and gifts. Thank you to Dr. Catherine Drea, my first faculty mentor in my Master’s Program, who first suggested I consider the PhD program and who also provided wise council and support to me throughout this process. A special thank you to Dr. Katharine Janzen, who provided me with her time, and steady guidance, and whose attention to detail and supportive feedback improved my thesis immeasurably.
DEDICATION

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.” Melody Beattie

My dedication begins with immense gratitude to the many people who have made this journey possible. First to my mother, the strongest woman I have ever known. I am saddened by her loss at this milestone in my life. She would have loved this accomplishment as it reinforces what she held true — we create the life we want to live, and we do that through hard work and a will to make it so. I also dedicate this to my father, whose unconditional love and support have been the foundation on which I have built my life. My father leads by example in his life, and his exemplary model of moral leadership helped me to find my own voice. A special recognition is reserved for my husband, Joe, who supported me enthusiastically throughout this process. His unwavering love, care and belief in my ability to complete the PhD gave me the strength to do so. My three amazing children, Jon, Elyse and Nick, bolstered my spirit, supported my struggle, and their laughter and love gave me my resolve. I feel blessed by each of them for the joy they bring into my life every day.

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I reserve a special place in the dedication for Wayne Poirier, my PhD partner on this journey, who shared writing retreats and every one of the highs and lows that are part of this creative process. He has been my friend for over 12 years, my supporter and my
sounding board, and without our commitment to each other’s success, I would not have finished. I also want to acknowledge my gratitude to Wendy Barnes for the hours of proofreading, editing and cheering me on through what seemed at times an insurmountable task.

I end by saying that this process has tested me completely, it has been enlightening, exciting, daunting, exhausting, humbling and now completely joyful.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Background of the Problem

The purpose of this case study was to examine the efficacy of the Beatty-Guenter model as a framework for current access programming at one Ontario college, Central College (pseudonym) and to examine its usefulness in assessing that College’s access programs. It is important to position this research within a historical context to understand more fully the role of access as a founding principle within the College system and how that role has evolved over the last half century.

On May 21, 1965, the course of higher education in the province of Ontario was changed considerably with the introduction of legislation that enabled the creation of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) (Ontario Department of Education, 1967). The CAAT legislation was the provincial government’s response to the increasing labour market demand for skilled workers and high youth unemployment and was envisioned as an instrument to improve Ontario’s economic position (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986).

The legislation also explicitly envisioned CAAT as a vehicle for social and economic progress for a sector of society that, up until that time, had not had access to a postsecondary education. The Department of Education’s CAAT Basic Documents (1967) outlined three major responsibilities in relation to this access-to-education mandate:

…to provide courses of different levels that would not be suited to the secondary system, to meet the educational needs of graduates of secondary programs apart from those who wished to attend university, and to meet the needs of adults and out of school youth even if they were not secondary school graduates. (p.13)
The Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology legislation was seen as a “major step forward” in delivering the government’s promise of equality of opportunity for all sectors of the population and “the fullest possible development of each individual to the limit of his ability” (Davis, 1967, p.5).

Traditionally, colleges have been seen as enablers of access and as platforms to increase equitable educational opportunity. Levin (2001) also confirmed this view and offered that since the 1960s, the colleges have been viewed as social and educational institutions that respond to their local communities, that offer open-access to postsecondary education (PSE) and that provide comprehensive education and training. Cohen and Brawer (1996) have noted that, historically, the colleges prided themselves on fulfilling the needs of individual students and on serving their local communities and, within the last 10 to 20 years, on meeting the needs of students at the national and international levels as well.

Colleges were created to improve Canada’s economic position and envisioned as instruments of economic and social progress (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986). They were established to be sensitive to labour market demands for skilled workers and have played a significant role in responding both to industry need and to student demand for access to education, and through that education, future employment. Clarke, Moran, Skolnik and Trick (2009) point out:

The publicly funded system of postsecondary education in Ontario...has been largely successful in fulfilling important societal needs in the areas of education, human resource development, and research. Existing approaches, however, are unlikely to be sufficient to address the challenges of the coming decade. (p. 24)
There have been many changes over the last fifty years within the college sector. What remains constant, however, is the role colleges have played in the creation of pathways into education for students who historically have not had access to postsecondary environments. The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (2008) suggested that colleges have continued to successfully provide accessible pathways into education:

Canadian Colleges excel at providing accessible, cost-effective post-secondary education and lifelong learning opportunities for people of all ages. They have a unique ability to reach out and to nurture marginalized populations, young and old, through to graduation. With adequate resources, many more such students could acquire the advanced skills required by employers. (p.4)

Although colleges have a rich history of providing broad access to postsecondary education, the present issues facing college institutions are increasing the difficulty of delivering the programming necessary to support the complexity of current learners.

Over the past decade, colleges have faced an increase in the challenges of learner needs alongside increasing financial constraints and decreasing enrolment due to demographic shifts. A Deloitte report (2012) states:

Colleges have undergone a fundamental shift, as the profile of students entering college today is very different compared to five to ten years ago. Students increasingly require not only more types of support services, but also more intensive and personalized assistance to ensure that they remain in the system until they graduate. (p.2)
Progress has been made in increasing access to postsecondary for non-traditional learners but less success has been realized in increasing those students’ chances of success once enrolled. Lopez-Rabson and McCloy (2013) reported, “in Ontario, less than two-thirds of college students complete their program within twice the prescribed program length” (p.2).

There are well-documented costs of attrition to both the student and the institution (Calder & Gordon, 1995/1996), which confirm that the cost of attrition to the student is reflected in lost fees, increased debt, loss of future prospects of employment and loss of future earnings. The cost to the college can be seen in lost revenue, grants and the costs associated with recruitment and filling empty seats. Fisher and Engemann (2009) suggest that the loss can be on average $4,000 to $6,000 annually for each student who does not progress to completion. There is also the psychological cost to students when they have been unable to obtain the desired educational outcome. The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (2008) suggests dropouts not only suffer financial loss but also loss related to unrealized personal potential and negative impacts associated with failure to achieve.

Given the current demographic shifts, institutional economic realities, and the need to attract, retain and educate more non-traditional students, colleges need to examine how they are structuring their programs to ensure not just greater access but also greater success for non-traditional learners. The extent to which colleges are successful at this task of promoting the persistence and retention of non-traditional students will have direct implications for the provincial-wide labour and skills shortages projected for the coming years as well as for the achievement of social equity goals (Kirby 2009).
Statement of the Problem

The Standing Committee on Human Resources Skills and Social Development (2012) suggests that Canada continues to experience a skills shortage that will dramatically increase in the coming years with the retirement of an aging population, lower birth rates (except among Aboriginal peoples) and, because of the reduction in birth rates, fewer high school students are moving on to postsecondary education. To meet these challenges, the Standing Committee (2012) suggested that training and educational attainment would be required for jobs created in this new reality:

The ability of employers to attract and retain skilled workers will be central to our economic success over the next decade… today there are already hundreds of thousands of unfilled jobs and too often the applicants available for the jobs do not have the necessary education and skill requirements. (p.3)

Dr. Rick Miner, a former Ontario college president and Chair of the Committee of Presidents, Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACAATO, now Colleges Ontario), outlined the crisis that has arisen from the intersection of two events: the rapid aging of the population and the rise of the knowledge economy. “Using Ontario Ministry of Finance data, the projected shortfall in the availability of workers is shown to rise to at least 200,000, and to as high as 1.8 million by 2031, depending on our levels of population growth” (2010, p.1). The Conference Board of Canada (2007) suggested that the province of Ontario will face a shortage of 360,000 workers by 2025, and the sectors that will face the greatest challenges will be small and medium enterprises that traditionally employ underserved and under-skilled workers. Miner’s study findings reinforced the problem for the province of Ontario,
noting that, “We face a future with large numbers of unskilled workers looking for jobs that require skills they do not possess” (p.1).

Kirby (2009) identified the cascading effects of skill shortages in reducing labour market competitiveness and business development in certain provincial areas where not enough skilled workers were available. Skill shortages have caused job losses and have also prevented employers from hiring new workers. Miner (2010) noted that, “Rapidly changing technology, the outsourcing of jobs to overseas companies, and the looming skills shortage all threaten Canada’s long-term prosperity and productivity” (p.1).

According to many observers, the ability to effectively educate and employ future generations of Canadians will continue to dictate the country’s ability to survive and thrive as a successful nation in the new economic paradigm. The Martin Prosperity Institute has suggested that, “In a knowledge economy, it is almost certain that those without a base level of skills will be left behind. We are seeing that now” (Martin Prosperity Institute, 2009, p.44). Thus, new jobs are foundational to the future of the Canadian market and will allow Canada to continue to compete in a global economy. It is clear that building a well-educated workforce has been part of the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs) mandate since their inception in 1965 and reaffirmation of this mandate occurred in the New Charter of 2002.

Kirby (2009) has written about the value of increasing participation and success rates for under-represented groups in postsecondary education. He suggested that these groups of non-traditional learners have the potential to decrease future labour shortages. In the budget submission of 2009, Advancing Opportunity and Prosperity Through Education, Colleges Ontario called on the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
to implement a proactive strategy, noting that, “As Ontario moves forward with its economic strategy, it will be necessary to increase enrolment and produce new college graduates, particularly among socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally under-represented in our postsecondary system” (p.2).

Berger and Mott (2007) suggested that to increase enrolment, the “most obvious solution is to look to those currently under-represented in higher education – low-income Canadians, Aboriginal youth and those whose parents lack postsecondary credentials” (p. 16). Successfully attracting, retaining and educating an increased number within this pool of applicants will require a shift in thinking and action from within the postsecondary sector as well as the resources to ensure the plans can be implemented.

The Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation’s paper, Why Access Matters (2007), argued that, “increasing the participation of under-represented populations is unlikely to occur automatically, without governments and universities preparing to meet the needs of a changing student body and putting in place an adequate system of student support and specialized student services” (p.4).

So many believe that it is a social and economic imperative that postsecondary institutions adopt new approaches to ensure that the open door of access does not become an exercise in creating hope and not fulfilling the promise of graduation for the many who enter college programs and drop out due to lack of effective support to succeed. Students at risk require special supports if they are to overcome the barriers that prevent them from attending and graduating from college, and ultimately joining the skilled labour force.
A review of the literature reveals limited information on theories or models of practice in the delivery of access programming, and even less on the program frameworks or evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs in achieving their goals. There is also scant information on the utilization of any comprehensive strategy that involves engaging both the learner’s needs to achieve academic success and the transformation of the institutional structures to meet those needs. Wallace-Hulecki (2009) notes, “The literature is replete with references to the need for institutions to reconsider traditional models of operation, and to create more integrated and coordinated approaches for addressing the needs of diverse populations” (p.19). Although there is an identified need for this “integrated and coordinated” approach, there is limited documentation of the implementation of this type of approach.

In order to expand enrolment and success in colleges among non-traditional students, higher education institutions have adopted a wide range of programs and services to address barriers these students face. The range of strategies and initiatives implemented can be understood using the Beatty-Guenter model (2005, p. 34). While the implementation of the Beatty-Guenter model has been documented, the literature reveals a lack of evaluative research on the efficacy of the Beatty-Guenter model. In particular, lacking in the literature is an analysis of the efficacy of the Beatty-Guenter model as an evaluative lens to examine current access programming in a large urban college. There are several examples of the adoption of the model as a guiding principle by Kennedy (2007), Johnston (2001), Stewart and Rawhiti (2004), but no evaluation of the efficacy of the model through the lens of the practitioners themselves or of the outcome of the application of the model.
My research addresses this gap in the literature through a case study exploring the efficacy of applying the systematic model created by Dr. Beatty-Guenter, enhanced through the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation’s additional variables, as an evaluative screen to the access programs at one large urban college (“Central College”). It examines the current program delivery and support services for this population of non-traditional learners within a system of institutional services, contrasting the Beatty-Guenter model’s practicality and applicability criteria against the access programs currently in existence at this select college. Additionally, it tests the usefulness of the Beatty-Guenter model for the delivery of access programming to determine what refinement might be necessary to improve the model.

If colleges are to effectively design and deliver programs that meet the needs of non-traditional learners and address the challenges institutions are encountering, more evaluative studies are needed to inform evidence-based decision-making. The research I have conducted on one college’s access program delivery contributes to the dialogue on the requirements for student success for the growing demographic of non-traditional learners. This understanding could inform future planning in the areas of evaluation and effectiveness of programs at this institution, and may well be of interest to other colleges as a new approach to the planning and delivery of access programming.

**Purpose of the Research**

The Beatty-Guenter model (1994) has been referenced in access literature as a systematic model that addresses multiple issues traditionally identified as barriers to students at risk of leaving college. In essence, Beatty-Guenter (1994) suggested that her model is a “typology of retention strategies; it clarifies what various retention strategies
have in common, and how this understanding can be applied in practice and research” (p. 113). The Beatty-Guenter model is a comprehensive framework that is broken into five unique categories of support for students from transition into the institution through to successful completion. The model also addresses both the students’ needs for academic and social integration and the institutions’ need to examine and adjust their approaches to successfully engage, support and retain students.

The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (2009) referenced this model in the literature review as “Postsecondary Student Access and Retention Strategies”. It suggested that Dr. Beatty-Guenter's model was built on Tinto’s departure theory and on an extensive review of community colleges and her research on student retention in British Columbia. The paper went further to say that, “her model has since been applied to university settings in the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand and student retention programs at Red River College in Manitoba and North Island College in British Columbia” (p.9). Johnston, (2001) used the Beatty-Guenter model to identify gaps in student support provision at Napier University in Scotland. Stewart and Rawhiti (2004) applied the Beatty-Guenter model in an analysis of support for Indigenous peoples at the University of Wellington. They found that for Indigenous students, support is concentrated in the “sorting, supporting, connecting, and transforming the students” categories. Recommendations from this work resulted in the transformation of the university, especially from an Indigenous lens. Sutherland, Stewart and Kennedy (2007) used the Beatty-Guenter model to increase collaborative work between the Academic and Student Affairs departments and to guide the adoption of a more holistic approach to practice in a New Zealand university. The University of
Auckland implemented an adaptation of the Beatty-Guenter model as a tool to inform and evaluate its ‘Uniguide’ project, a mentoring and transition program for first year students. In 2005, Red River College in Manitoba adopted the Beatty-Guenter Model as a framework for guiding and balancing its student retention and success initiatives. The Red River College Strategic Plan 2010-2013 suggested that they used “the Beatty-Guenter Retention Strategy Model as a means of guiding and balancing its support initiatives to improving student success” (p.11).

Although Red River College adopted the model as a guiding principle, there was no research I found on the use of the model within this College. Red River College did, however, provide some reflections on the model’s usefulness within its practice. They suggested that the three areas that were most useful in student retention and success were connecting, transforming the student and transforming the institution. These three areas were deemed to be the most important as they allowed for creative approaches such as the engagement of faculty in academic advising with students. This approach increased student/faculty interaction and the students’ integration into college life. The academic advising policy that resulted from this intervention was seen as a way of transforming the institution. Red River College noted that these interventions were difficult to implement, however, as they required planning and the ability for the college sector to examine the barriers that were inherent in their own institutions.

This model was also referenced in Colleges Ontario’s Deloitte report (2012), Breaking Down Barriers to Student Success, as a way to understand the range of strategies and initiatives that can be implemented to support students at risk. The Beatty-Guenter model has been employed as a framework for retention and student success at
several universities and colleges, but based on my review of the literature, research has never been conducted on the efficacy of this model as an evaluative screen to examine current access programming in a large urban college through the lived experience of the administrators and faculty of those programs.

This research was a case study of one college’s access model and the extent to which it is aligned with a framework developed by Beatty-Guenter (1994). Additionally, it tested the usefulness of the Beatty-Guenter model for the delivery of access programming to determine what refinement might be necessary to improve the model. “Central College” (pseudonym) is an urban college with three distinct campuses. All three campuses have downtown locations in a large urban centre in one of the most culturally diverse cities in Canada. At the time of this study, the enrolment at this college exceeded 29,000 full and part-time students. This college provides comprehensive programming including upgrading, certificate, diploma and degree offerings. This study examined the extent to which the access programs of Central College are aligned with the elements of the Beatty-Guenter model, and identified gaps and challenges within the current Central College framework. Central College participants were asked to assess the potential usefulness of employing the Beatty-Guenter model for future program development and service delivery. Data collection was informed by participant reflections on all aspects of the model. My research tested the perceived value of the Beatty-Guenter framework as a model for an individual Access Division within one college in the Ontario college sector, and has produced interesting conclusions about the model and the additional factors that support or impede the implementation of a more systematic model of program delivery.
Rationale

Research in the field of access to postsecondary education for non-traditional students has primarily focused on the barriers individuals face, and on isolated programs that support individuals to achieve success. Tinto (2006) suggested that research on student attrition is abundant, however, “... less attention has been paid to the development of a model of institutional action that provides institutions guidelines for effective action to increase student persistence and in turn student success” (p.1). Tinto (1993) suggested that institutional action is reflected in a belief in student success as a principle within the institution and an “institutional commitment to students...that springs from the very character of an institution's educational mission” (p.146).

I found, in my own personal work and in the review of the literature limited information on frameworks, theories or models of practice in the delivery of access programming, and even less on the effectiveness of these programs in achieving their goals. There was also scant information on the utilization of any comprehensive strategy that involves engaging the learner’s needs to achieve success and transforming the structures to meet those needs in the delivery of programming that spans the course of a student’s postsecondary experience. The major problem confronting institutions trying to increase access and create inclusive learning environments is not the lack of good ideas, but the inability to implement them successfully (Tierney, 1999).

The narrative on this topic suggests that coordinated and focused interventions have a greater chance of success than individual programs that lack common strategic objectives and central oversight. Kuh (2001-2002) stated that, “Only a web of
interlocking initiatives can over time shape an institutional culture that promotes student success” (p.30).

Berger and Milem (2000) suggested that organizational behaviour, culture and climate are critical to understanding the effect of the campus organization on the student: "Organizational culture represents patterns of organizational behaviour that have become institutionalized as structures…organizational climate represents current perceptions about organizational behaviour that are less permanent and more transitory than the patterns of behaviour that have already become acculturated on campus" (p.275).

The culture of the college and achieving integration or fit, does not come from one interaction, but from a multitude of interactions with individuals and within programs that encourage students to engage further or disengage more. Kuh (2001-2002) stated that, “Just as no single experience has a profound impact on student development, the introduction of individual programs or policies will not by themselves change a campus culture and students’ perceptions of whether the institution is supportive and affirming” (p. 31).

There continues to be a focus in practice on individual learners and their deficits and not on the interface between the learners and the impact on those learners of the institution they learn in. Research has tended to focus on retention and persistence of learners rather than on institutional frameworks that drive integrated programming. Retention efforts have therefore centred on fixing deficits within the learners, not on creating comprehensive programs and environments for success. Tinto (2006) noted that

Though there is a substantial and still growing body of research and theory on the nature of student persistence, we do not yet have a theory of action that provides
institutions and states guidelines for the development of policies, programs, and
practices to enhance the persistence of the students they serve. (p.3)

Birnbaum (1992) suggested that, “Leaders who use a multidimensional
framework are more likely to be successful in creating and sustaining systematic
change than those who enact change through just one dimension” (p.10).

I found much in the literature to suggest that a systematic approach is perceived as
useful, but little about the application of those models to existing programs or
institutional action. There were a few examples of the adoption of a model as a guiding
principle, but no evaluation of the usefulness of the model through the lens of the
practitioners themselves or of the outcome of the application of the model. Tinto (2012)
stated that, “Despite the years of effort on retention, institutions have yet to develop a
coherent framework to guide their thinking about which actions matter most and how
they should be organized and implemented” (p.5).

The Beatty-Guenter model (1994) is one such promising multidimensional
approach for access programming within a postsecondary environment. This model
addresses the needs of the individual, the program, and also the need for institutional
transformation. In 2009, the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC)
expanded the Beatty-Guenter model to include “outreach”. My research has included
this aspect to expand the Beatty-Guenter model in an attempt to make it more
comprehensive. Furthermore, I contrasted the Beatty-Guenter model’s practicality and
applicability criteria against the access programs currently in existence at Central
College, and have ensured that the data collection was informed by participant reflections
on all aspects of the model. This understanding could inform future planning in the areas
of evaluation and effectiveness of programs at this institution, and may well be of interest to other colleges as a new approach to the planning and delivery of access programming.

**Personal Rationale**

I brought to this research a distinct perspective informed by cumulative work experience within the field of postsecondary education, both as a past faculty member within the Ontario college system, and now, as a senior administrator at a College of Applied Arts and Technology. The issue of access to postsecondary education has been a strong interest of mine throughout my career within the college sector. I have seen the changes in both the student populations within the college system and the funding challenges inherent in trying to accommodate an ever-increasing number of students with needs for supports. The Deloitte report (2012) reflects these demographic shifts in the student population within the last decade with an increase in the diversity of the students accessing postsecondary education, including increases in students with mental health issues, learning disabilities, first generation students, Indigenous students, newcomer students and second career students, among others:

It is increasingly becoming the case that these students at risk are a part of the core population of Ontario colleges. As a result, Ontario colleges spend a growing amount funding to support students at risk of not attending or graduating from college, through various programs and services. These programs and services are important to students’ success, but they come at a significant cost to colleges’ operating budgets. (p.1)

As one member of a college system that is faced with this significant challenge, it is important to me to successfully support and educate a growing number of non-
traditional learners within current financial constraints. Institutions need to examine ways
to keep pace with the changing needs of diverse learners and to translate postsecondary
access into graduation and economic benefits for all. Traditional methods and approaches
will not necessarily address this concern. Although there have been many changes to
institutional policies over the last decade as well as the introduction of remediation and
success strategies at many of the colleges in Ontario, I found scant information on the
effectiveness of the frameworks for program delivery employed at colleges to increase
the success of non-traditional learners and therefore I was interested to explore this area.

The research I have conducted on one current college model of program delivery
may inform the dialogue on the requirements for student success for the growing
demographic of non-traditional learners.

Research Questions

The questions posed in this case study are listed below. The data were collected
and organized according to the two main research questions and seven sub-questions.

1. What can be learned about the efficacy of an expanded Beatty-Guenter model by
applying it as a framework to examine one Ontario College’s access programs?

2. To what extent can the Beatty-Guenter model be used to explain gaps in access
programming for non-traditional students and inform institutional transformation
in the Ontario College that is the focus of this study?

Seven Sub-questions

Research Question #1: How does the postsecondary educational institution currently
structure the access programs?

Research Question #2: How is the Access Division integrated within the system of
institutional services?

Research Question #3: What are some of the major successes and challenges that the
Access Division experiences in the delivery of services?
Research Question #4: How would you describe the impact of the access program at your college?

Research Question #5: What model is used in the access programs to organize and provide outreach, connection, support, and transformation?

Research Question #6: What are some implications for the implementation of this or an expanded version of this model?

Research Question #7: Are there changes that would improve it for the sake of evaluating and establishing access programs?

I used a pragmatic approach for this case study methodology, blending historical and current document analysis and face-to-face interviews. The pragmatic approach allows for multiple viewpoints and methods instead of narrowing the view (Rossman & Wilson, 1985). Creswell (2003) suggested that, “the pragmatic approach utilizes the research problem as essential, and all the approaches chosen are applied to understand the problem” (p.11).

**College Impact Models**

Research in the field of access to postsecondary education for non-traditional students has primarily focused on the barriers individuals face, and on isolated programs that support individuals to achieve success. Less attention has been paid to institutional frameworks and models of practice in the delivery of access programming and even less research has been done on the effectiveness of these institutional programs in achieving their goals of improving non-traditional students’ persistence and retention. Tinto (2012) states, “despite years of effort, institutions have yet to develop a coherent framework to guide their thinking about which actions matter most and how they should be organized” (p.5). Until recently, therefore, retention efforts have been centred on fixing deficits within the learners, not on creating comprehensive programs and environments for
success. Tinto (2012) suggests that, “Too often, institutions invest in a laundry list of actions, one disconnected from another... that are situated at the margins of a student's educational life” (p.5).

Astin (1970), Tinto (1975), and Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) were all important proponents of a shift away from this traditional theoretical foundation of individual student success toward college impact models of student persistence and retention. Long (2012) suggests that college impact models examine the process of student development through the lens of the environment in which the student learns and their own personal characteristics. College impact models “are focused on context—how does the environment of the college or university affect the student’s development and how ...the impact of the background and individual characteristics of the student foster or impede development” (p.51).

College impact models developed by Astin (1970), Tinto (1975), Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) examine the effect that college environments (programs, policies, processes, etc.) have on student performance and experience as it relates to engagement, attrition and retention. These models examine the ecological origins of change in student persistence, and the importance of the relationship and impact of institutional influences on student retention. They relate retention to a number of factors beyond the individual’s preparedness and performance and instead look at the institutional experience and culture within the environment as well as the student’s active involvement and engagement in college life as the key drivers of retention (Pascarella & Terenzini 1991; Astin 1993).

Pascarella and Terenzini, (2005) suggested that college impact models of student change focus more “on the environmental and interindividual origins of student change.”
...[and] emphasize change associated with the characteristics of the institutions students attend (between-college effects) or with the experiences students have while enrolled (within-college effects)” (p.18). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) noted that this area of research is focused on theories that examine the environmental or sociological origins of change in college students, and are more focused on the interplay between the institution and the student and less on the individual student’s change. The college impact model suggests that retention is driven by a series of factors: preparedness and performance of the student, the experiences provided to engage within the environment and the active connection to and engagement in college life (Pascarella & Terenzini 1991; Astin 1993). College impact models developed by Astin (1970), Tinto (1975), Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) examined the effect the college environments have on student performance and experience as it relates to engagement, attrition and retention. College impact models assign greater value to the environments in which students learn, and to the programs, processes and individuals they engage with as influencers of change, than more traditional student retention theories do.

Astin’s Input-Environment-Outcome (I-E-O) model (1970, 1984, and 1993) suggested that the combination of inputs, the environment and outcomes provides a logical framework to understand how students engage, succeed and thrive within educational institutions. Tinto’s model (1975, 1987, 1993), which is more systematic in nature, examines the totality of the student experience within the institution. Tinto suggests that the social and academic integration of students within an institution is a strong indicator of persistence or departure. Tinto's focus is on both the individual academic and personal characteristics a student brings, and on the institutional
commitment and nature of the engagement with that student. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) further expanded Tinto’s model by putting greater emphasis on “intraintitutional” influences, including internal influencers, such as faculty and peers, and external influencers, such as family and friends. Retention, therefore, is impacted by a combination of intrinsically linked variables such as the student’s background characteristics, their effort and investment in learning, and is strongly influenced by their interactions with the major structures and programs within the institutional environment. Given that the college impact models focus on the process of change within educational institutions and the impact of the institutional structures, programs and processes on the students, college impact models align significantly with the model which is the focus of this study.

My research tested the perceived value of the Beatty-Guenter framework as a model for an individual Access Division within one college in the Ontario college sector, and has produced interesting conclusions about the model and the additional factors that support or impede the implementation of a more systematic model of program delivery.

Beatty-Guenter’s (1994) model was developed as a retention strategy and presents a comprehensive approach through five categories of support (see Figure 1). Beatty-Guenter argued for implementation of the whole cycle as retention cannot be successful unless all categories are utilized. With the addition of the outreach and awareness component, identified by the Data Readiness Social Research and Demonstration Corporation in my research, the model has taken on an additional facet, making the framework more comprehensive.
**Outreach and Awareness**

Providing information, raising awareness and aspirations through partnership with high schools, elementary schools and community-based agencies identifies students in their communities prior to transitioning to the Postsecondary Institution.

*Source: Data readiness Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (2009, p. 7)*

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Expanded Beatty-Guenter Model**

**Scope and Limitations of the Research**

This case study has included only Central College data, which is a limitation of the work. The purpose of case studies is to gain an in-depth understanding of the case itself rather than a generalization of the findings (Creswell, 2009). The study college is one of the 22 Ontario English language Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs), but these colleges are very diverse in character. Choosing to conduct this study within only one urban College organization eliminated the data and experiences of small or mid-sized urban and rural institutions and institutions outside of Ontario. I recognize fully that the findings of this case study cannot be generalized to the other CAATs or to other institutions. Themes that are identified in the analysis of the data are relevant only to the study college; there has been no attempt to generalize the findings to the Ontario CAATs.
Another limitation of this study relates to the fact that the case study has involved one Ontario college and a small number of interviewed participants. In total, there were 11 interviews, 10 interviews with both faculty and administrators and one interview with the Senior Administrator to set the institutional context, as well as an analysis of 44 internal and external policy planning and evaluative documents. Interviews were conducted with 11 faculty and administrators at this institution and no students participated in this study, thereby eliminating the student perspective. While the findings cannot be generalized, insights gained from the data analysis within the chosen theoretical framework are hopefully of continued interest, not only to the study college, but also to other institutions and researchers as they grapple with similar access issues.

It is also necessary to acknowledge the potential for interpreter bias due to my background and personal interests, and to outline the steps I took to maintain objectivity throughout the study. My background and experience in this area can also be viewed as strengths, as they allow for deep understanding of the context and content being explored. To ensure that bias was controlled for, I made every effort to guard against imposing interpretations of data based on my experience and relationships. I did this by ensuring a framework for documentation and strict adherence to that framework in the collection of all data and constant self-checking during the data collection and analysis phases. I constructed detailed approaches for both the document review and the semi-structured interviews and tested all tools prior to conducting each phase of this work. A research assistant conducted the interviews and acted as a second coder in the analysis once I had established the themes and codes from the interview data to further ensure the objectivity and reliability of the data, and to ensure that distance from the actual subjects was
established. The assistant was trained in the use of the interview guide and signed a confidentiality agreement before receiving any information about the participants or conducting any interviews. Despite these limitations, the depth of the case study and its findings provide valuable knowledge of program and policy approaches in the access field and lead to insights and a potential development framework that may be of interest to other Ontario colleges in the delivery of their access programs.

Summary and Outline of the Remainder of the Chapters

Chapter one has presented an introduction to the study and a statement of the problem situation to be addressed. It has also presented an overview of this case study which includes: the rationale for the research proposed, the theoretical framework that grounds the research and the worldview that guided the research approach. Chapter two examined the historical and current literature on the topic of access to postsecondary education within the Canadian context. I also introduced literature on college impact models and other systematic approaches to program delivery.

Chapter three describes the research design and methodology employed, providing detailed descriptions of methods and procedures, participants, materials and actions taken. Chapter four presents the findings based on the document analysis of college wide and divisional specific documents, as well as the interviews of both the faculty and administrator participants in the study. Chapter five examines the analysis of findings, including an examination of the original questions.

Chapter 6 revisits the limitations of the study and provides a discussion and summary of chapter four and chapter five and provides recommendations in the areas of future practice, policy and research.
Terms and Definitions

Access - Accessibility of an education to a student, including access to appropriate educational institutions, materials and personnel (Analytic Quality Glossary, 2014).

Access Programs - Access refers to preparatory programs that provide students preparation for entry to higher education (Analytic Quality Glossary, 2014).

Advocacy and participatory worldview - is “research inquiry intertwined with politics and a political agenda. The research contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher’s life” (Creswell, 2009, p.9).

College impact model - Focus primarily on “interindividual” origins of student change that are associated with the characteristics of the institutions students attend (between-college effects) and/or with the experiences students have while enrolled (within-college effects) ... ‘college impact’ models focus on the sources of change (such as differential institutional characteristics, programs and services, student experiences, and interactions with students and faculty members) (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, pp.18-19).

Construct validity - Construct validity is the experimental demonstration that a test is measuring the construct it claims to be measuring. “The degree to which a test measures what it claims, or purports, to be measuring” (Brown, 1996, p. 231).

Grounded theory - is a “qualitative strategy in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study” (Creswell, 2009, p. 229).
Non-traditional students - Non-traditional students are those entrants, who may have some of the following characteristics: students who need academic skills preparation, who have been out of formal schooling for an extended period, those traditionally under-represented in postsecondary education like the unemployed, first generation students, first and second generation non-English speaking immigrants, single-parents or students with dependents, and those of Aboriginal or First Nations ancestry, (Deloitte, 2012, p.72).

Postsecondary education - Postsecondary education includes formal educational activities for which high school completion is the normal entrance requirement (Statistics Canada, 2010, p.1).

Pragmatism - as a worldview arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions. There is a concern with applications—what works—and solutions to problems instead of focusing on methods; researchers emphasize the research problem and use all approaches available to understand the problem (Creswell, 2009, p. 231).

Systemic strategy - is “system-wide: affecting or relating to a group or system as a whole, instead of its individual members or parts” (“Business Dictionary”, n.d.).

Upgrading Programs – “Academic Upgrading Program is a tuition-free program sponsored by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities that prepares students to meet college entry requirements. The Academic Upgrading Program helps people prepare for college or technical training. It serves adults who do not have a high school diploma but whose skills are above the Grade 9 level” (“Adult Learning”, n.d.).
Within-case analysis - is the in-depth exploration of a single case as a stand-alone entity. It involves an intimate familiarity with a particular case in order to discern how the processes or patterns that are revealed in that case support, refute, or expand (a) a theory that the researcher has selected or (b) the propositions that the researcher has derived from a review of the literature and/or experience with the phenomenon under study. (Patterson, 2009,p.2)
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study was to explore the efficacy of one retention model as it related to the current access practices employed at Central College, and additionally, to explore and identify factors which facilitate or impede the adoption of systematic models to effectively develop, resource, manage and improve access programs through institutional transformation. This review examined the current literature on the topic of access in postsecondary education within the Canadian context, with a limited number of documents drawn from the United States and international sources. The review covered both the historical context of access to postsecondary education from 1950 to the present, and a review of implementation of systematic models in the current literature. This literature review did not address individual groups of non-traditional students, but rather the systemic issues and barriers for all groups. The themes I identified in the literature are discussed as follows: current issues, access in postsecondary education definition, historical roots of access, barriers, and models of systematic implementation.

Current Issues

Colleges are seen as enablers of access and as platforms to increase equitable educational opportunity. Levin (2001) suggested that since the 1960s, the community college has been viewed as a social and educational institution that responds to its local community, offering open-access to postsecondary education and providing comprehensive education and training. Cohen and Brawer (1996) were of the opinion that, historically, the community colleges have prided themselves on fulfilling the needs of individual students and on serving their local communities.
The literature review revealed that increasing access to postsecondary education has been an issue since 1950 when a mass system of postsecondary participation emerged. The expansion of access created a connection between a person’s educational attainment and personal income, and fostered the belief that public investment in human capital contributes to economic growth (Jones, 1997).

The transition from elite to mass education that Trow described in 1973 has been underway in Ontario for the past 25 years in varying degrees, as it has been around the world. Using Trow's framework, the benchmark for mass education was surpassed early in 1960 when the population accessing postsecondary education exceeded 15 percent of the total population. Ontario is now getting close to universal education, defined as over 50 percent of the population having attended a postsecondary institution (Clarke, Moran, Skolnik & Trick, 2009). An examination of the data reveals that the level of postsecondary educational attainment in Canada, particularly in Ontario, is very high and is a key factor in the province’s economic growth. According to a 2011 Organization for Economic Coordination and Development (OECD) report, “Canada continues to be among the countries with the most highly-educated labour force in the OECD area. About 50 percent of the working-age population holds a tertiary degree, compared to just 30 percent on average in OECD countries” (OECD, 2010, p.2). Several sub-populations of Ontarians, however, are under-represented among postsecondary graduates. More people may be accessing higher education, but increasingly, the benefits of postsecondary education are not equally distributed among Canadians.
Access at the Postsecondary Level

Universal participation in postsecondary education is important for economic and practical reasons, but it is essential if one believes in the value of social equity. Universal participation requires a postsecondary system that reflects that goal and has the policies and structures in place to ensure that outcome. In Canada, provincial governments have exclusive responsibility assigned to them through the constitution for all levels of education including the postsecondary realm (Constitution Act, 1867). There is no ministry or department of education at the federal level and no overarching vision for education in the country (Fisher et al., 2006). “In the most restricted sense of the term, a true system of higher education would operate as an integrated organizational unit with a single governing body, which would assign specific responsibility for aspects of education and training to each component of the organization” (Dennison, 1995, p.121). Given that a centralized system does not exist in Canada, and that the approach in each province is unique, with few similar features among provinces, it is clear why an educational vision for the nation has not been achieved. Dennison described the system that developed as having “few universally comparable features but which have a number of independent arrangements for dealing with such matters as curriculum, accessibility, student mobility and planning” (Dennison, 1995, p.121). Indeed, it has been argued that in “no other major federated states such as the USA, Australia and West Germany does the federal government have less direct influence on the priorities of postsecondary education than in the case of Canada” (Dennison, 1986, p. 65).

This inability to develop a national strategy for postsecondary education is seen as an increasingly significant stumbling block to achieving national economic and socio-
cultural goals. As a result of the lack of coordination at the federal level, each province and territory has developed postsecondary education in a unique way that often reflects province-specific political or economic pressures. The absence of a coordinated postsecondary strategy is also reflected in the individual universities, colleges and private training institutions that have evolved under provincial guidelines, policies and procedures, but which have different mandates and certainly different responses to the question of universal access to postsecondary education. Given that there is no overarching mandate at the provincial level to ensure equitable access to postsecondary education in Ontario, institutions are free to decide how—and if—they will respond to the educational needs of non-traditional students.

Within the postsecondary system, colleges have historically been seen as advocates and enablers of access and as increasing educational opportunities for those who otherwise would not be able to access education beyond high school. Dennison and Gallagher (1986) suggested that Canadian colleges were also established to meet growing demands from employers for highly-skilled labour and from the growing number of high school graduates who wanted to continue their education. Dennison and Levin (1987) suggested there are five principles which have characterized the development of the Canadian college system, which have remained consistent in many ways over the history of the sector. These common principles may be expressed as follows: colleges were designed to provide open access to educational opportunity, were to be responsive to their local community needs, they were to place emphasis on teaching and skill development through comprehensive programs, and they were to adapt easily to external phenomena like new student profiles or demands of employers. Dennison and
Gallagher (1986) also suggested that most colleges historically have shared the mandate of delivering educational programs focused on skill development that led to sector-specific destinations. They suggested if differences exist among colleges, these typically reflect regional economic landscapes, political climates and whether they were originally conceived of as transfer institutions to the university system.

Canadian society as a whole is seen to be the beneficiary of the development of the college system, because it provides greater access to education and training, leading to employment for large numbers of graduates and economic development for the nation. Colleges receive public funding and are therefore subject to direction from each provincial government, but are to remain responsive to changes in the economy as well as to provide specialized programs to their local communities (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986).

Rogers (2012) suggested that colleges could provide greater access with an increased focus on, “open admission policies, preparatory programs, promotion of diversity, provision of student services, flexibility in scheduling and an emphasis on teaching rather than a university-type research emphasis” (p.165). Cohen and Brawer (1996) proposed that the colleges have prided themselves on fulfilling the needs of individual students within their own communities, providing the skills and training necessary to secure employment. The college system was set up to be sensitive to labour market demands for skilled workers and it has played a significant role in the last fifty years both in responding to that need and shaping the access landscape in education and employment. De Boucker (2005) suggested that ensuring widespread access to higher
education serves two of Canada’s highest goals: achieving a high standard of living for all and sustaining social cohesion.

In 1988, the Council of Regents of Ontario's system of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology was asked to develop “a vision of the college system in the year 2000” (p.1). Vision 2000 Quality and Opportunity, was a comprehensive report that assessed the state of the system at that time to ensure that both issues of quality and enhanced opportunities for participation were addressed, and a vision for the future of the college system for the year 2000 was developed. Within that document, the issues of developing accessible education were examined with a focus on how the college system could increase access and educational support for diverse learners, especially underserved populations.

The document confirmed that the original access vision given to the college system was still a critical role that the colleges needed to play. The text stated that colleges were founded on “the ideals of equality and opportunity and the fullest development of each individual's potential ... and that those ideals must remain as touchstones for the future” (p.28). There was also recognition that while much had been done to improve access and opportunities for non-traditional learners, more, in fact, needed to be done. “Vision 2000 concluded that the colleges should become even more accessible, more need driven, more flexible and open to change, and more community-focused” (p.26).

**Historical Roots of Access to Postsecondary Education**

Trow (1973) described the historical evolution of access in higher education through the development of participation models designated as elite, mass, and universal.
The elite system existed in Canada prior to World War II and was characterized by limited access for a select few who had the financial or social status to obtain it. Trow defined elite education as the preparation of at most 15 percent of an informal “ruling class”. Anisef et al., (1985) described a system where a few of the “haves” were able to continue their education and the rest of the population were employed as manual labourers or in agriculture. This elite system existed until about 1950 when a system of mass postsecondary participation emerged as access to higher education became increasingly available to a larger proportion of Canadians (Guppy, 1984; Harris, 1976). Mass education was defined as the transmission of skills for technical or professional roles for between 16 and 50 percent of the population, and universal education was to be achieved when the population attending postsecondary institutions exceeded 50 percent (Trow, 1973). “Following Trow’s typology, at well over 50 percent of the population taking part in tertiary education, participation in Canada is at the universal level” (Kirby, 2009, p.1).

From 1960 to the late 1970s, there was an enormous expansion of postsecondary participation, driven by high birth rates and a new understanding of the power of education to attain both status and economic gain. Participation rates in higher education have continued to rise since 1990, with many students seeing it as their next logical, expected and necessary step after high school. The current rate, however, appears to be leveling off as Canada’s birth rate decreases and more people reach retirement age, reducing the workforce.

Although rates seem to be at a plateau for traditional students, this is not the case for other groups of Canadians whose participation rates remain well below overall
population participation rates. Taken as a whole, “At present, the system appears to have entered an interregnum between the mass and universal paradigms envisioned by Trow 35 years ago” (Kirby, 2009, p.3). For many disadvantaged groups, there has been limited realization of a mass system of education.

**Definitions of Access**

Anisef, Bertrand, Hortian, and James (1985) outlined two types of access: Type I access and Type II access. Type I access focuses on the actual numbers of people who enrol and participate in postsecondary education. Type II access considers the characteristics of the individual who participates, and takes into account demographic characteristics, such as social and economic factors and other salient features, such as age and educational history. While Type I access may be a suitable way to determine how many students are participating in postsecondary education, this kind of access is limited by an institution’s capacity for enrollment (Anisef et al., 1985; Krahn & Andres, 1999). For example, increases in admissions requirements or in institutional capacity will impact the number of people who can enter from under-represented groups, thereby limiting Type II access. Kirby (2009) suggested that it is necessary to look at Type II access to ensure the Canadian access picture is clear, that is, to examine overall factors and demographic information to ensure that access is not reduced to a head count but rather is Type II access which, as Kirby suggests, is more attentive to issues of equity. Adelman (2007) added to the discussion on the issues of Type I and Type II access with four possible definitions of access. The first definition is threshold access, which he suggested is when a student gains entry into a postsecondary environment. Recurrent access is described as having access to multiple programs or programs that could ladder
into one another. Convenient access is based on access any time or place based on that student’s need. Finally, distributional access is access to a program of the student's choosing. Adelman (2007) suggested that threshold access is the most important definition because it speaks to the actual enrollment of a student who stays long enough to generate a transcript and a record of that student within the college setting. Convenient access and distributional access are influenced by issues of institutional capacity and student preferences, and are therefore not as easy to assess or track.

Kirby (2009) suggested that, with well over 50 percent of the Canadian population taking part in postsecondary education, by Trow's definition, Canada would be designated at the universal level in postsecondary participation. The participation levels of some groups of Canadians, however, are well below that 50 percent level. The other factor that is confounding the move to a universal designation is what Trow saw as the purpose of universal access, that is, “The aim of universal access is toward the equality of the group achievement rather than the individual opportunity and efforts are made to achieve a social, class, ethnic, and racial distribution reflecting the population at large” (Trow, 1973, p.17).

Jones and Field (2013) suggested that

Access to higher education means far more than simply increasing aggregate participation rates; access is about which populations are participating, or more accurately, which are not, what students have access to (in terms of programs and institutions), and whether they are successful in completing their education. (p. 2)

If Trow's (1973) clear directive for equality of group achievement is the standard, the lack of participation of some under-represented groups suggests the system is stalled
between the mass and universal paradigms he envisioned 40 years ago. Trow (1973) noted that

For people from under-represented groups to make the necessary transition to higher levels of education and universal access to be achieved, public policy must more directly address the impediments to postsecondary participation that have existed for those who have traditionally been excluded from this level of education. (as cited in Kirby, 2009, p. 2)

**Recasting an Access Definition for the 21st Century**

Trow's (1973) framework, developed over forty years ago, is bound by its historical and cultural context, which suggests that it is timely to craft a new definition for the 21st century. Adelman's (2007) refinement added to the discussion and advanced the way in which the type of access provided could be quantified. Now, in the 21st century, it is necessary to refine both of these models to consider an access definition that more accurately reflects present realities and an access strategy based on principles of economics, equity and inclusion.

Brennan, King and Lebeau (2007) suggested that if credentialing is the key to improved social status in a society focused on knowledge and achievement, then understanding who has access to this key is central to understanding that society and gaining acceptance in it. “Social transformation can come about if the ‘disadvantage gap’ between social groups is lessened or if the historically advantaged group is replaced by a new group” (Brennan et al., 2007 p.17).

The recasting of an access definition is especially important at present, considering the changing nature of Canada’s population. Canada is currently
experiencing a skills shortage that will dramatically increase in the coming years. The 1996 projection by the Organization for Economic Coordination and Development (OECD) that “more than 70 percent of all jobs in 2012 will require postsecondary education and that the demand for labour will outstrip supply and a new dynamic will emerge in our workforce” (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010, p. 12) now has the attention of business, education and government.

Moreover, there is a strong economic argument that “all Canadians would be better off with the larger and more productive economy that would result if all Canadians were able to participate fully” (Royal Bank of Canada, 2005, p.2). Jones and Field (2013) suggested that “…the most important mechanisms for increasing access and student success take place at the level of the institution or program, there are a range of policy approaches available to governments to directly or indirectly influence access to higher education” (p.3).

The realities that these statistics convey will likely have significant impacts on the enrolment numbers at postsecondary institutions. Colleges and universities will be looking for new applicant pools and logically, enrolment will come from participants who traditionally have not participated in postsecondary education. This new demand will increase the need for the development of a more current definition of access and the transformation of the way colleges deliver and evaluate access programs.

The creation of new public policy will be necessary to shift from the current situation to one of universal access. Having a highly skilled workforce has significant economic benefits and can be seen as an important economic investment. Kirby (2009) suggested that
There is a general public policy consensus on a vast body of evidence that supports the contention that public and private investments in Postsecondary education yield high returns in terms of increased labour market participation, productivity, economic development and innovation. (p.12)

In 1997, the American Council on Education and the Policy Panel on Access were convened to explore whether a new, broader conceptualization of access was required to inform policy, and what that new definition would mean in terms of policy, research, and data collection. Their findings were as follows: “Current conceptualization, definitions, and policies do not adequately link goals for increasing college entry with educational outcomes or process, and current data collection does not adequately describe and explain either the process or the outcomes for students in postsecondary education” (National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, 1997, p.i). The policy panel also felt that the limited number of assumptions associated with current definitions could be useful for policy development and agreed that, “the term access may not need to be redefined, but the study of the concept of access should be broadened to include multiple entry points, college choice, opportunity to succeed, outcomes, and processes” (National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, 1997, p.ii). Panel members agreed that the access process should fundamentally link enrolment with outcomes and should include the process by which those outcomes are achieved. They recognized that there had been success in enrolling a larger number of students from non-traditional applicant pools, but that when it came to retaining this population, the gap between enrolment and retention remained exceedingly high.
The panel advanced five themes that were seen as critical if the concept of access was truly to be reconceptualised. The new definition would need to be inclusive of all learners and include a greater understanding of current student populations. It must take into account how students enter the system and where their education takes place, which is often outside the traditional structures of the classroom. Institutional structures and processes, such as admissions, must also be challenged to ensure they are sufficiently flexible to admit talented students from a variety of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic status backgrounds, and that the decisions do not come down to a prescribed “formula” that is systematically applied to all entrants. The panel also suggested that access must take into account what happens to students after they are enrolled. Tinto advised that “...the point of providing students access to higher education is to give them a reasonable opportunity to participate in college and attain a college degree” (Tinto, 2008, p.71). To help students achieve those outcomes requires a better understanding of how the social and academic engagement and integration of students within higher education institutions shape student persistence.

Tinto (2008) suggested that “access as participation” should be the measure employed to assess student access. He felt that a truer assessment of access is found in how students are engaged within the college post-admission, thereby avoiding the situation where the door that access policy opens becomes a revolving door.

It appears that the definition and concept of access would be enhanced with an increased focus in several key areas supported by the American Council on Education and the Policy Panel on Access (1997). First, ensure that the target population that is being served is included in the definition. Second, become more aware of all providers of
postsecondary education and value other educational experiences in addition to traditional forms of education. Third, extend the definition of access to include enrolment and participation data, to ensure not only that individuals are allowed entry but also that their progress and eventual outcomes are tracked. This adjustment would give a more realistic picture of the investments made at both the individual and institutional levels. Fourth, consider access within a broader framework that includes what occurs prior to entering the system as well as the transition after the student enrols. The themes generated by the American panel resonate with the Canadian experience and reinforce the need to create a clearer and broader definition of access, an issue that is present in most postsecondary institutions.

During the last ten years, Canada’s postsecondary institutions have begun to engage and enrol greater numbers of students from under-represented backgrounds, thereby widening the participation of these groups in many institutions. Given that colleges in Ontario are funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, it is important to look at access from a funding perspective during this time period (2006-2012).

Jones and Field (2013) in their paper Increasing Access to Higher Education: a Review of System Level Policy, suggested that the tools have changed dramatically within the last century and there are multiple policy and funding approaches that do impact access to higher education:

By the turn of the century government policies towards access entered a new phase ...in which governments began to reposition higher education (and access to a higher education) as a key component in economic development. In this light,
the push for greater access became linked to the need for highly skilled human resources and governments became increasingly interested in overall participation rates. (p.4)

Jones and Field (2013) stated that, “Policy mechanisms that support increasing access through the use of government funding tools are probably the most commonly used instruments in the higher education public policy repertoire” (p.5). Jones and Field (2013) identified four types of government funding mechanisms related to access which included funding for system expansion and advancement, targeted envelope funding for specific groups of individuals, regulating student costs, especially tuition fees, as well as the provision of financial support directed at individual students. The final type of funding tool utilized is performance based funding.

Kirby (2010) stated that Between 2004 and 2008, governments in six of Canada’s ten provinces carried out comprehensive evaluations of their higher education systems which culminated in the release of official reports on the respective systems" (p.3). All reports indicated the necessity for governments to expand system capacity in college and university programs to meet unprecedented and growing demands for spaces. In addition to the call for the funding of growth, the report emphasized the need for governments “to close or eliminate participation gaps that exist for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups by extending access to all who are willing and qualified to attend” (p.4).

In 2005, Ontario unveiled its plan for postsecondary education in response to the Rae Reaching Higher review (2005) that recommended the need for a skilled workforce and equal access to postsecondary education. This was an example of funding driving an increase in access to postsecondary education. A $6.2 billion budget was to be invested in
Ontario’s universities, colleges, and training programs over the following five years. The bold mandate called for significant enrolment increases in postsecondary education, and included special targeted funding for access, financial assistance, enrolment, outreach and accountability. The government’s stated goal was to use the Reaching Higher investments to improve the access, quality and accountability of the postsecondary education system. Many institutions took advantage of targeted pockets of money available from the Ministry to launch or improve the access and success of students who are considered “at risk”. There have, however, been several challenges to the accurate reflection of this work with any substantial data, and there has been no real accounting of the use and success of the dollars invested.

Competition for this targeted funding through a call for proposal process created some animosity between institutions and unwillingness to share results and resources. Also, institutions were not mandated to gather and report on access and success evidence, and to date, there is no way to ascertain how much this large infusion of funding contributed to access and success for under-represented populations.

The multi-year agreements between the provincial government and the colleges, introduced in 2006 and refined in 2008, were another opportunity to define required access goals, but they did not go far enough in clarifying the expected access results except at the most rudimentary level. As part of these agreements, institutions were expected to participate in the Student Access Guarantee and to assist the Ministry to design and implement a website that would allow students to identify costs and sources of student financial aid. They were also required to assist the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) to complete access-related research and to contribute to the
development of a system to measure and track participation by under-represented groups and mature students. In addition, they were to work with secondary schools to build pathways to postsecondary education and implement strategies to support transition. Finally, they were required to report on enrollment growth according to government sector targets and to provide multi-year access strategies, indicators and results (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2006).

Given these broad parameters, institutions responded accordingly, based on the systems they had available to support the expectations outlined. Many did not have any formal tracking mechanisms in place to collect the necessary data, and the few that received “special envelope” funding mounted a variety of individualized programs, most not supported by any rigorous research. The information collected did not start with a common definition of the under-represented groups and the lack of a research framework and sharing of information made it difficult for any generalization to occur.

A study commissioned by the Canadian Millennium Foundation and conducted by Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (2009) found that postsecondary institutions in Canada do not have the data or mechanisms to collect, track progress and evaluate outcomes for students, and therefore, they cannot fully assess the effectiveness of their access and retention programs for under-represented students. Further, they are not able to identify these students, to link to data previously collected about them, to track them from application to enrolment to graduation, or to measure the effects of a specific program on their success. The report also found that data to establish baseline measures were missing, and the ability to link student information from different databases was limited by the current regulatory and legislative environment.
The SRDC’s assessment of “data-readiness” was collected under four themes: data collection, availability, adequacy and use. This assessment found little commonality in the definitions of non-traditional students, which produced inconsistent reporting on access and participation numbers. The definitions seemed to be changing within the institutions as well as being in flux at the provincial level. There was also limited information collected at point of application on under-represented prospective students, and until recently, no way to track specific student groups, such as First Generation students. Therefore, it was very difficult to collect consistent data with which to define access at a postsecondary level or to assess whether the students enrolled were achieving the desired goals.

Although the Higher Education Quality Council and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities continue discussions and initiatives to advance the state of data-readiness of Ontario institutions, there has been limited progress on that front. The ability to assign common definitions to target populations and to set common evaluation and outcome measures is critical to assess the success or failure of providing universal access, and to gain a better understanding of the pathways in, through, and out of postsecondary education for under-represented students.

Access to postsecondary education is influenced by many factors, and is made more difficult by the absence of a common federal and provincial educational mandate that influences the way access is understood and applied. Furthermore, current definitions of access are based on an outdated model that was constructed over 40 years ago and that does not reflect present realities within the postsecondary sector.
Canada has a very high rate of postsecondary participation for many of its citizens although this is not the case for some groups of Canadians whose participation rates remain well below the universal population participation rates (OECD, 2011). For many under-represented groups, there has been limited realization of a mass system of education. More people may be accessing higher education, but increasingly, access to, and the benefits of, postsecondary education are not equally distributed among Canadians.

In the Rae report, Ontario a Leader in Learning (2005), the message that there is a need for increased access to postsecondary as a way to ensure the health of individuals as well as of the province became evident. The report notes that, “When students drop out of high school and fail to make the transition to higher education, it becomes all the more difficult for them to get better jobs, to see their way to better opportunities” (p.12). According to the Canadian Council on Learning (2005), there is an anticipated shortfall of postsecondary graduates and a subsequent labour market shortage of skilled workers unless participation rates from under-represented groups increase. The Council’s report outlines a trend in the evolving knowledge-based economy where there is an ever-widening gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” in Canada. It concludes that those with low literacy rates and without essential skills will be left behind and will be at great risk of marginalization in the job market and long-term unemployment (Canadian Council on Learning, 2005).

**Definitions of Non-traditional Students**

The term “non-traditional” student emerged in the early 1970s. Prior to that, the student population seeking access to postsecondary education was more homogeneous,
made up mostly of students in their late teens or early twenties, who entered the postsecondary system directly after high school, completed their studies full-time and then pursued employment. In the 1970s, there was a shift in demographics and an influx of non-traditional students who were older, did not follow a path directly from high school, or in fact, had not finished their high school diplomas, entered the system in larger numbers. This trend has continued, and the non-traditional populations now accessing postsecondary education, especially at the college level, make up a significant percentage of the population within some institutions.

Definitions of non-traditional students are inconsistent in the use of terms and vary widely between different countries and in different contexts. Kim (2002) presented three definitions of non-traditional students. The first, identified as the traditional definition, is based on age criteria, which usually considers a population of students 25 or older (Beans & Metzner, 1987). These students are often characterized as having multiple demands outside the academic sphere, both financial and familial, and have little time for extracurricular supports or activities. The increased demands can interfere with their successful completion of academic programs. The second definition identified non-traditional students by using student background characteristics such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Rendon (2000) considers low income, First Generation, and employment status. This more inclusive characterization accounts for the competing demands of work, school, and family and culture that non-traditional students often face. A third definition focused on factors that may increase a student’s risk of attrition (NCES, 1998).
The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (1998) has identified seven risk factors: (1) not enrolling within the same year as completion of high school, (2) attending part-time, (3) being financially independent of parents, (4) working full-time, (5) having dependents other than a spouse, (6) being a single parent, and (7) not having a high school diploma.

Scheutze and Slowey’s (2002) definition included students who are from Socially or educationally disadvantaged sections of the population… those from working class backgrounds, particular ethnic minority groups, immigrants, and ... tends to relate to older or adult students with a vocational training and work experience background, or other students with unconventional educational biographies. (p.302)

Cross (1981) outlined a useful classification of barriers in the dispositional, psychological, situational and institutional areas. She suggested that it was also critical to understand the types of barriers and their cumulative effect and impact on each individual experiencing them. Kim (2002) suggested that, “In many cases, research on non-traditional students should be more accurately labelled as research on adult students, re-entry students, educationally disadvantaged students, First Generation students, or minority students” (p.5).

The Colleges Ontario Report, Assessing the costs and benefits of Ontario college programs and services for at-risk students (2011) defined these students as people who have the potential to not commence or complete their studies, (and who may have some of the following characteristics), students who need academic skills preparation to be successful in their career programs, as well as students who have been out of formal
schooling for an extended period of time. This group also includes students with disabilities and other students from groups traditionally under-represented in postsecondary education. The characteristics the report identified for non-traditional students are: students from low-income families or those with no history of attending postsecondary education, first and second generation immigrants, particularly non-English speaking immigrants, students from single-parent families or with dependents, and those of Aboriginal or First Nations ancestry. In addition to the demographic characteristics, Colleges Ontario identified as being at-risk in the postsecondary system those students who face informational barriers (e.g., lack of knowledge about potential benefits of postsecondary education) and/or advisement deficits, which can result in lack of clarity on career goals.

**Impact of Postsecondary Attainment**

The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (2010), Third Annual Review and Research Plan, stated that Ontario has one of the most highly educated populations in the world, with over 60 percent of Ontarians aged 25 to 64 earning a postsecondary education (PSE) credential. In the Ontario budget speech of 2010, the government committed to raising the goal of postsecondary attainment to 70% by 2020 and to providing access to postsecondary education to any qualified candidate who wanted to attend through the access guarantee. The TD Economic report (2010) stated:

The Ontario Speech from the Throne calling for an increase in the provincial PSE attainment rate from 62 to 70 per cent. This PSE attainment rate aspiration is based on the proportion of Canadians between the ages of 25 and 64 that is projected to have completed PSE by 2020. (TD Economic, p.6)
In his review of Ontario’s higher education system, Rae (2005) indicated that both the standard of living and the quality of one's life are dependent on having access to a postsecondary education. There is a great deal of current evidence to suggest that access to, and success in, postsecondary education has a huge impact on an individual's employment, health and life expectancy, and wide-reaching positive societal impacts.

TD Bank Economics’ report, Investing in a Post Secondary Education Delivers a Stellar Rate of Return (2004), suggested that postsecondary education is considered by many to be the best investment one can make because it increases an individual’s employment opportunities, decreases the duration and likelihood of unemployment and increases lifetime earnings.

Statistics Canada (2010) reported that “the percent of the population employed increased significantly as educational attainment increased, 61.7 percent of high school graduates were employed, compared to 70.8 percent of those with a postsecondary certificate or diploma below a Bachelor’s degree” (p.5). Students who plan to pursue higher education do so for a variety of reasons, with a large number motivated by the financial returns of deciding to pursue a higher education.

The Conference Board of Canada report (2013) suggested that in Canada, “education is seen as the most desirable route to earning a decent living and to enhancing personal growth and happiness” (p.1). OCED’s Education at a Glance (2011) also suggested that “educated people make decisions that lead to healthier and longer lives” (p.137). They also appear to enjoy non-economic benefits, such as improved health and longer life expectancy. Statistics Canada (2008) identified low educational attainment as one factor correlated with the lowest life expectancy in the country. Research by Greenberg and
Normandin (2011) suggested that men and women aged 25 to 34 with postsecondary diplomas have higher health utility index scores than adults with lower education levels. Statistics Canada’s (2006) report on the impact of education on civic engagement found that postsecondary graduates have higher rates of civic participation, pay considerably more taxes, are less likely to receive government subsidies, and commit fewer crimes.

Although there was substantial data in the literature to support the socioeconomic benefit of postsecondary education to the individual and society as a whole, there was no research uncovered that made any direct link between these social and economic benefits and the individual institutions attended or the educational approach employed.

Barton (2008), and Paulson & St. John (2002) suggested that in debates over who should pay for, and who benefits from, investment in postsecondary education, most agree that education beyond high school is both a public and a private good. As a public good, it seems clear that a nation’s economic status depends in part on the quality and quantity of postsecondary education available. (Barton, 2008; Paulsen and St. John, 2002). The statistics about education attainment rates and benefits are positive, but non-traditional students are significantly under-represented in those figures.

Paulsen (1998) suggested that because higher education so profoundly affects an individual’s life course and earning potential, the pattern of access to postsecondary education currently functions either to reinforce or to weaken existing systemic inequalities. Corak, Lipps and Zhao (2003) suggested that income non-traditional students, who often live with lower incomes, stand to gain a great deal in terms of socioeconomic status by securing a postsecondary education, but participate in higher education institutions in fewer numbers than their peers from higher-income sectors,
particularly at the university level (Drolet, 2005; de Broucker, 2005; Berger, Motte and Parkin, 2009; HEQCO, 2010). Using the Youth in Transition survey data, Finnie, Sweetman and Usher (2008) reported that, “31 percent of young Canadians from the bottom income quintile had attended university by age 19, compared to 50 percent from the top quintile” (p. 13). Although this range is of concern, what is more concerning is that these statistical gaps appear to have remained stagnant or widened in recent years.

In Canada, participation rates in postsecondary education are high in comparison to other developed countries, but remain low among under-represented populations. Many Aboriginal, First Generation and low-income Canadians who do not complete high school are at high risk of unemployment and face transitional challenges if they later decide to pursue postsecondary education. The Canadian Council on Learning's (2005) report, A Positive Record an Uncertain Future, the first national overview of postsecondary education, drew upon the research of many postsecondary stakeholders, federal and provincial government departments, ministries and agencies. The report informed Canadians about the extent to which Canada is meeting stated social and economic objectives through postsecondary education. Among the key findings was that a high-quality, affordable, accessible and flexible postsecondary education is essential to achieve Canada's economic and social objectives in the 21st century. The report also recognized that access to, and the benefits of, postsecondary education are not equally distributed among Canadians, and that the postsecondary education sector is still largely designed to respond to the needs of traditional, younger learners. Furthermore, it underlined the pressing issue that two in five adults—or nine million
Canadians—have literacy levels below the minimum considered necessary for success in today's economy and society.

There is a longstanding pattern of individuals from high-income families attending university in higher numbers than individuals from low-income families. Zhao and de Broucker (2001) reported that attendance was 2.5 times greater for youths from families in the highest quartile of income distribution compared to youths from the lowest quartile. A Deloitte report noted that, “While students at-risk are under-represented in the postsecondary educated population, colleges provide a more accessible, and widely accessed, avenue to postsecondary education for these populations” (Deloitte, 2011, p.24).

Colleges are often the first postsecondary institution that non-traditional students access because, unlike universities, they have a number of pathways that allow entry prior to having the requisite credits to enter the postsecondary stream. A recent survey of college administrators from across the province reported that at-risk students currently make up from one-third to three-quarters of their student populations (Deloitte, 2011).

Although there was extensive literature on the benefits of postsecondary education no data was found on the

**Barriers to Access**

In the report, Barriers to Participation in Adult Learning, MacKeracher, Stuart, and Potter (2006) indicated that there is not sufficient knowledge available about how non-traditional adult learners experience barriers to learning, or how institutions can create supportive environments in which these students do not experience these barriers and are free to learn.
Finnie, Mueller, Sweetman and Usher (2009) suggested that the barriers to postsecondary education are often subjectively applied and poorly defined. While not being able to afford postsecondary education is clearly understood as a barrier to participation, there are many other barriers that are less obvious, such as a lack of knowledge about higher education and a feeling that one can aspire to that goal. Finnie et al., (2009) stated:

If we accept this broader perspective of ‘barriers,’ it follows that we need to better understand the numerous factors that affect access and persistence. In short, any factor that determines PSE participation should be of concern, especially if it is related to family background or other factors beyond an individual’s control. (p.3)

The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (2008) suggested that existing literature divides the barriers into three broad types: 1) barriers of information/knowledge or motivation, 2) academic barriers, and 3) financial barriers. Each of these barriers can be sub-divided in many ways, and they do not necessarily operate independently of one another. Nor does every group of non-traditional students share all barriers. Many groups qualify as non-traditional students, each group sharing similar characteristics, yet each unique in its own right. Berger and Mott’s (2007) research report, Mind the Access Gap, identified three main barriers to access to PSE, which support HEQCO’s general categorizations. The barriers identified by HEQCO are Academics, which include performance, preparation and postsecondary requirements; finances, which in a strict sense include access to the funds needed to pay for schooling and related expenditures; informational and motivational
factors, which include career planning, awareness of postsecondary options and financial support. (p.17)

In addition to the individual barriers that students encounter, there is also a body of literature that focuses on the institutional barriers inherent in the system of postsecondary education itself. A detailed examination of the stated barriers finds conclusions in the literature to support the assertion that there are both individual and institutional barriers to access and success for non-traditional students.

**Knowledge Barriers.** Under-represented groups often lack the program, process, and financial knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about postsecondary futures. HEQCO (2008) suggested that access to information, especially about available programs, standards for admission, costs and benefits associated with postsecondary participation and future prospects, is a critical component. “Just-in-time information when and where they need it, helps potential students’ decision-making, both in terms of whether to participate in postsecondary study and what to study” (p.11).

Berger et al., (2007) argued that information that can be presented to parents and families as well as to students seems to make a larger impact on decisions to pursue higher education. Terenzini (2004) characterized non-traditional students as being disadvantaged with regards to “knowledge about postsecondary education (e.g., costs and application process), level of income and support, educational degree expectations and plans, and academic preparation in high school” (p. 249). The report from the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, Opportunities for Everyone (2008) suggested that, “Most colleges and institutes indicated that there is generally a lack of awareness about the literacy and adult upgrading opportunities they offer and that
this is a barrier for opening up learning opportunities for disadvantaged and low-skilled learners” (p.31). There appears to be a lack of adequate information on several levels in the preparation of students prior to finishing high school as well as for the older adult interested in returning to school. The Myers and de Broucker (2006) study of Canada’s adult education system concluded that there is generally a lack of easily accessible information about adult learning opportunities in Canada. Although all colleges have websites, they are often confusing, and the pertinent information is not easy to find. This is particularly true for non-traditional students, since frequently these students do not fit the traditional profile and would struggle to locate information that meets their needs. Myers and de Broucker (2006) further suggested that, “Learners often do not know how to get into college in terms of what is required, the programs available to them and the supports and funding they can access” (p.32).

In the document, Access to Postsecondary Education in Canada: Facts and Gaps, Looker (2001) noted that secondary schools were seen as an important source of information about accessing postsecondary opportunities, yet the information provided was often dated, inaccurate or incomplete. She felt that high priority should be attached to providing better, more accessible and more coordinated information about higher education options, including the support offered at postsecondary institutions in the financial, academic and personal domains. These findings support the general body of research that clearly shows that having knowledge about the postsecondary educational environment is a major factor in student motivation and confidence to succeed. Students who have grown up with this knowledge are more likely to be confident about applying to postsecondary institutions. These students are also more
likely to have expectations that they will move from high school to college or university, and therefore become familiar with the idea of this progression.

In her paper, Getting There and Staying There, a study prepared for Alberta Learning, de Broucker (2005) showed a clear gap between what students believe they will gain from education and the reality of higher education. High-school graduates tend to over-estimate tuition, mandatory fees and debt from student loans. Only a third of the students felt they were very aware of their options, which underlines the critical lack of information presented to potential students. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), in their 2009 report, An Examination of Barriers to Pursuing PSE and Potential Solutions, identified that there were major factors that prevent young people from pursuing postsecondary education after high school, and that first among these was limited access to key information. This study concluded that, “The decisions made by students about PSE appeared to be largely impacted by their exposure to information about PSE (e.g., the kind of information they received and the point in time when they received it)” (p.10). The most common solutions proposed by participants were to increase the time spent on the information students receive about PSE options, costs and requirements, and to implement “aptitude careers-PSE” modules into the curriculum. This idea was also supported by Dietsche (2011) in his research and modeling on student engagement and retention.

**Motivation Barriers.** Motivation, or aspiration, for higher education is identified as an important factor that influences participation in postsecondary education. Studies of young people out of high school have identified a lack of motivation as more important than other factors in influencing their decisions not to go on to postsecondary education
Motivation is often hard to determine, and can be given as an answer that may be seen as more acceptable than other factors (Winn, 2002). Frenette’s report (2007) Why Are Youth from Lower-income Families Less Likely to Attend University?, suggested that lack of motivation can be as important a barrier as poor information when it comes to encouraging access to PSE, and described the two as being intrinsically connected. Frenette (2007) stated:

Almost 40 percent of high school graduates who do not enter postsecondary education say it is because they lack interest or a career focus. Similarly, over half of those who drop out of college or university do so because they are not interested in their studies or because they have little career direction. (p.13)

Motivation is tied up with other factors, such as finances, and young people have identified a lack of motivation as more important than other factors in influencing their decisions not to go on to PSE (at least out of high school) (Berger & Motte 2007). Others have noted that motivation is also linked to factors such as parental income, and that individuals from lower-income families are more likely to report not being motivated to go on to PSE (Foley, 2001; Winn, 2002).

**Academic Preparation Barriers.** Being academically prepared to attend a postsecondary institution is a critical component in achieving access and has a strong correlation with persistence and success once a student has been admitted. Students from under-represented groups are often academically under-prepared for college programs and require academic upgrading and contextualized supports to succeed in the postsecondary environment. Students with learning disabilities are also choosing higher education as a destination and are a growing population within this environment. Their
success is determined by the ability of the postsecondary environment to respond in a flexible manner and provide the accommodations that will ensure both the successful transition and persistence of this population of learners.

Brinckerhoff, Shaw and McGuire, (1992); Hildreth, Candler-Lotven and Macke (1994), speak to the challenges of the transition to postsecondary education for many students with learning disabilities. Students are often expected to assume instantly the role of independent learners and self-advocates for their academic accommodation needs, when in the past, that responsibility may have been shared with parents or guardians. The institution must recognize the balance that will encourage this independence, while at the same time ensuring the students receive the supports they need to become autonomous individuals who are self-directed and responsible for their decisions in their academic and personal choices.

HEQCO (2008) found that non-completion of high school and delayed (non-sequential) completion are also factors that contribute to postsecondary participation. High school non-completers who return to school and then move on to post-secondary education find it more difficult to return to and complete their education than students who have not experienced that delay in their education.

Finnie et al., (2008), in the paper Who Goes?, presented a framework for examining participation in postsecondary education which suggests that students from low-income backgrounds tend to be less prepared than their peers from higher-income backgrounds, a phenomenon that affects access as the entrance requirements become more stringent within institutions. Similarly, Fortin (2005) used a simple supply and demand explanation to compare the market for university education in Canada and the
United States. She argued that reduced government contributions to institutions limit the supply of spaces available, and this becomes a binding constraint which limits access to these institutions. Spaces that come at a premium are often given to the most academically qualified individuals.

**Financial Barriers.** Financing a postsecondary education is a large investment and one that many students do not fully understand. Lack of financial resources is often identified as a barrier to education. Usher (2005) suggested it is not only a lack of information, but also myths about the costs and benefits that create barriers to postsecondary education. “In general, students tend to over-estimate the costs of education and under-estimate the benefits and this mis-estimation grows inversely with income” (p.11). Usher’s (2005) research demonstrated that, in terms of finances and financial aid barriers, Ontario students are paying fees above the national average and this discrepancy remains true even after tax credits and grants to students are applied. Tuition seems to be a major barrier to considering higher education, especially when costs are not offset by increases in financial aid. Dynarski (2003) found a significant negative relationship between net price and postsecondary participation. De Broucker (2005) summarized the key factors affecting whether low-income Canadians choose to get a postsecondary education. Financial consideration did play a role in determining access to postsecondary institutions and, “Those from high-income families are two to three times more likely to go to university than young people from low-income families” (p.12). De Broucker concluded that although financial support is important, loans and bursaries would not overcome the multiple barriers these students experience. Many students are reluctant to take on huge debt without some sense of a
future that includes a high-paying job. Financial assistance is available for high-need individuals, but the grants and scholarships of the past have shifted to student loans and limited bursaries reserved for full-time students only.

In his paper Who Gets What?, Usher (2005) presented an examination of the government’s financial aid mechanisms and showed that in 2005, the Government of Canada spent over $4 billion in transfers to individuals for the purpose of postsecondary education. Half of this money was given out in need-based loans and grants and the other half in a universal assistance program for any citizen to access. The study uncovered that...need-based assistance is only slightly progressive; 40 percent of all assistance goes to students from families with above-median incomes, while universal assistance for students in need is outright regressive, with over 62 percent of assistance going to students from families with above median incomes. (p.iii)

Given the tremendous need for financial support for low-income students to access postsecondary education, this approach is inconsistent with the government’s plan to help low-income families. Recommendations from the Price of Knowledge: Access and Student Finance in Canada study were to start sending the message early in the child’s education that there would be support for low-income families to send their children to postsecondary education (Berger, Motte, & Parkin, 2009). Recommendations also called for a targeted approach to the distribution of funds and a true acknowledgement that financial aid alone is not enough to help students reach their goals.

What is needed is a comprehensive and systematic plan that addresses all the barriers described prior to application and supports students throughout their educational endeavours. Berger and Motte (2008) asserted that, “Barriers to
postsecondary education are rooted in an individual’s life circumstances —
circumstances that encompass family and socioeconomic status — and manifest
themselves well before the age of 18” (p.45). Consequently, Berger suggested that
governments should adopt a life-course approach to increasing participation that sees
postsecondary education as an essential component of an educational pathway that begins
in early childhood and continues into adulthood.

**Institutional Barriers.** Rawls (1971) suggested that postsecondary institutions
are one of the societal structures that have power over the way they distribute
fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social
cooperation. “Taken together as one scheme, the major institutions define men’s rights
and duties, and influence their life-prospects, what they can expect to be and how well
they can hope to do” (p.12).

In their policy paper, Breaking Barriers a Strategy for Equal Access, Ontario
Undergraduate Student Alliance (2011) defined institutional barriers as “the structural or
cultural aspects of postsecondary institutions that may make it difficult for under-
represented groups to gain entrance to the postsecondary system and succeed once
attending” (p.4). Billingham (2009) suggested that the access movement could contribute
more to social justice and equity education if there was more focus on the structures that
exist in institutions of higher education at the curriculum level, approaches to learning
and the definitions of ability itself, rather than a focus simply on admitting more people
into an already barrier-laden system. The systems within postsecondary environments are
often based on the way in which traditional students move through their educational
journeys and reflect little understanding of the unique, and often complex, experiences of non-traditional students’ lives that do not fit into a “one size fits all” structure.

To fully address the question of institutional barriers, it is important to discuss the concept of systemic inequality. Williams (2004) defined systemic inequalities as “those that are reliably reproduced over time along the lines of social group differences even in the absence of patterns of overt or intentional discrimination on the part of identifiable social agents. Such group-patterned inequalities extend across an array of social domains, including income” (p.4). Because individuals in these groups are less likely to pursue higher education, and given that one of the critical factors in pursuing higher education is whether your parent had achieved a postsecondary degree, the children of these individuals will also be less likely to go on to higher education. Williams argued that “This can create a vicious cycle that reproduces both educational underachievement and low earning potential from one generation to the next” (p. 5).

Cross (1981) developed a classification of factors that create barriers to adult learning activities with a focus on institutional barriers, listed below. These factors operate both prior to and throughout the learning activities. Institutional factors – also referred to by Fagan (1991) as structural factors – consist of limitations inherent in the methods institutions use to design, deliver and administer learning activities, methods that are frequently “biased against or ignorant of the needs of adult learners” (Potter & Ferguson, 2003, p.8). These institutional factors include, but are not limited to:

- the availability and quality of information about learning opportunities and services delivered at times suitable for the adult learner
- the level and type of credentials required for admission to learning opportunities
• the quality and complexity of admission and registration procedures
• the timing, scheduling and sequencing of learning opportunities
• the attitudes of administrative staff and instructors toward adult learners
• the quality and availability of essential support services for learners including
  library computer resources, advising and counselling services. (p.3)

Kirby (2009) suggested in his paper, Widening Access, that policies that relate to
program attendance requirements, and the lack of on-line, part-time or self-paced options
create barriers for the many people who have to work, or who are caregivers to young
children or elderly parents. Course scheduling policies may also present a barrier to
student learning when classes are only offered at times some students cannot attend. This
is especially true for working students or students with child care issues. Myers and de
Broucker (2006) argued that the lack of flexibility in admissions requirements that may
focus exclusively on grades achieved in high school, with no value given to prior learning
experiences, often deters potential non-traditional students. These access issues are
further complicated by lack of relevant services such as daycare, and by inadequate
housing, racism and discrimination.

Low-income students have to support themselves financially, and as such, often
do not have the money to participate in extracurricular activities or unpaid internships,
which would increase their networks of new colleagues and introduce them to potential
employers and expanded learning opportunities.

Kirby (2009) suggested that re-orienting the processes and procedures within the
postsecondary education system is necessary to accommodate non-traditional learners,
but acknowledges that it will not be an easy task, especially since academic systems, particularly at the university level, are based on longstanding dictums and traditions.

The literature review provided a wealth of information on the barriers to access, but little on systemic institutional issues or on models to effect the institutional transformation that needs to occur to address these barriers. Tierney (1997) suggested that the issue confronting institutions is not a lack of ideas, but a lack of models and an inability to implement them successfully.

Models of Systemic Implementation

Tinto (2012) in Completing college: Rethinking Institutional Action, suggested that, despite years of research and experience, there has yet to be a systematic framework developed to guide thinking about which interventions matter most, and how to implement a holistic approach that is central to the mission and does not reside at the margins of a student's experience.

Postsecondary institutions are “multi-target” structures with complex internal and external drivers. Most consist of several campuses, each with its unique dynamics and functions. These systems frequently operate quite autonomously, and may have different values across the different campuses. To create an intervention that would respond to unique structures would require a framework that incorporates both culture and the ability to respond to individual institutional dynamics (Aldrich and Pfeiffer, 1976; Berger and Milem, 2000).

Research has suggested that coordinated and focused interventions have a greater chance of success than individual programs that lack common strategic objectives and central oversight do. Birnbaum (1992) suggested that “leaders who use a
multidimensional framework are more likely to be successful in creating and sustaining systemic change than those who enact change through just one dimension” (p.10). These same principles apply to the implementation of any systematic strategy for access programming at any college. Unless there is a vision and objectives for what is to be achieved, and a strategy and framework to drive them, it is hard to understand how any institution can move beyond working with individual students and the faculty who teach them.

Astin (1970), Pascarella (1985), and Tinto (1975) developed “college impact models” to examine the effect that college has on students, especially in the areas of engagement and retention or attrition. College impact models are a good framework in which to situate the discussion of systematic frameworks of intervention within the area of access for non-traditional students. Tinto's (1975; 1987; 1993) theory of student departure presents a comprehensive college impact model, that like Astin’s (1970; 1984; 1993) I-E-O model, (inputs, environment, outcomes) suggests that students enter college with a host of individual characteristics which impact their experience in the institution and can ultimately influence their outcomes. These background characteristics, which Astin described as the inputs, include family, parental education level, parental expectations, high school characteristics, high school academic achievement, academic ability, race and gender. The environment, he suggested, is the totality of the experiences the students have while attending the institution, including the people, culture, programs, process and what occurs while attending. Outcomes are identified as what the students have gained in skills and attitudes and their behaviour after their college experience (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).
Tinto's model takes a more interactive view that spans the entire life cycle of a student's involvement with an institution and is more systemic in nature. There is a specific focus on how the social and academic engagement and integration of students could be used as predictor of student persistence or departure. Tinto's model can be used as a platform to develop a more systematic approach for access programming since it focuses both on the individual academic and personal characteristics the student brings, and also on the institutional commitment and nature of the engagement with that student, from the first point of contact to the ultimate outcome of success or departure. If the student's commitment to graduate from that institution and the institutional expectation and experience offered are strongly aligned, that “fit” will enhance the student’s integration into the institutional culture. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) defined this integration as “the extent to which the individual shares the normative attitudes and values of peers and faculty in the institution and abides by the formal and informal structural requirements for membership in that community or in subgroups of it” (p. 54). Pascarella developed what he called a General Model for Assessing Change, which expanded Tinto's model by putting greater emphasis on “intrainstitutional” influences, both those internal to the institution, such as faculty and peers, and external influencers, like family and friends. He suggested that change occurs as a result of five main variables that are intrinsically linked, with each influencing the others in powerful ways. The first two variables are the student’s background and pre-existing characteristics and organizational features, which influence the third, which is the experience of the environment. He suggested that the first three variables together influence the fourth variable, the frequency of student interaction with the major influencers on campus, the
faculty and other students. The fifth variable is the quality of effort exerted by the student, coupled with the environment in which the effort occurs. Change is, therefore, “a function of a student's background characteristics, interactions with major socializing agents, and the quality of effort invested in learning and developing” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 57).

The models proposed by Astin, Tinto and Pascarella were largely developed using sample groups of traditional postsecondary students. Bean and Metzner (1985) developed a conceptual model for non-traditional student attrition that differs from Astin, Pascarella, and Tinto in its emphasis on the strength of the institutional environment as the socializing agent for students, and its suggestion that the external environment has a much greater impact for this population of students. They concluded that, while attending college, non-traditional students experience environmental factors that differ from those experienced by traditional age, full-time, residential students. For non-traditional students, the environmental influences include “(a) less interaction in the college environment with peers or faculty members and less interaction through extracurricular activities and the use of campus services, (b) class-related activities very similar to traditional students, and (c) much greater interaction with the non-collegiate, external environment” (Bean & Metzner, 1985, p.6).

All authors consistently addressed the student's unique characteristics in conjunction with what the institutions offer the student and the interplay of the two dynamics. The fit between individual characteristics and institutional expectations will significantly impact the student’s integration into the institution’s culture.
Programs/Services Currently Offered by Colleges

The Deloitte Report (as cited in Colleges Ontario, 2011), Assessing Costs and Benefits of Ontario College Programs and Services for Students At-Risk, stated that Ontario’s college administrators believe that in recent decades, colleges have focused on widening the participation of non-traditional students. Because of the access barriers they face and the challenges to persist and graduate once enrolled, non-traditional students are considered to be “at risk”. This new focus has resulted in a considerable investment in programs that cater to this population and, consequently, colleges report a shift in their organizational mandates and core business to attract and support at-risk students.

The programs that identified specific supports provided to non-traditional students were characterized in the following four categories: specialized recruitment and marketing, initial and ongoing orientation, individual and group advising, and a series of offerings in the areas of academic support and retention activities. The scope and scale of these programs differs greatly across institutions – some have entire areas dedicated to this work, while others have a series of programs. At most colleges, these programs are housed in different divisions with little cross-divisional collaboration. The target populations of all these divisions may be the same group of non-traditional students, but divisions often deliver programs in isolation, and are not necessarily working with one another.

To use any college impact model as a foundation for the development of a systematic model of access programming, the unique challenges and features of non-traditional students must be central to the structures and implementation of the model. Any model of systematic intervention to improve access must include both these factors,
as neither the impact of one or the other alone will determine outcomes for non-traditional students at the postsecondary level. The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (2008) report, Opportunities for Everyone, proposed a model (Figure 2), which provides a framework for the delivery of programs and services that would address disadvantaged and low-skilled learners who they described as

....learners who may be marginalized, unemployed or employed in low-wage jobs or who may not have completed high school or are under-prepared for postsecondary level programs at colleges and institutes. These would include learners enrolled in literacy, adult upgrading/adult basic education, college and career preparatory and access programs. (p.i)

In this model, there is an effort to coordinate the delivery of services based on the student’s life cycle from first contact to graduation, and it is clear that this menu of services could be adapted for each college’s local context. These services are identified and delivered within the context of the different processes or events a student is engaged in from recruitment and admissions, through the student’s training and educational programs, to graduation. This model is also tied to the communities from which the students have come, and is supported by a robust network of partners.

Each step within the framework was connected to the next, allowed for a smooth transition through the college process and reflected the optimum approach to service delivery to disadvantaged and low-skilled learners. Promotion and recruitment were seen as vehicles to raise awareness about what the college had to offer and to communicate the opportunities available within the communities that these students come from. This approach was to be delivered in conjunction with partner organizations, which also built
connections with literacy and adult upgrading programs and postsecondary program departments.

Admission and assessment were identified as areas where many students encounter significant challenges, and the need to address the bureaucracy was identified as stumbling block to many new incoming students. Wrap-around services were identified in this report as key to meeting the needs of disadvantaged learners by providing inclusive service offerings to students who traditionally attend postsecondary environments with both a host of aspirations and many challenges to overcome. The contributing institutions identified a wide range of services that should be available either through the college itself, or through partnerships and referrals to community, social and health services agencies. These services are important for those learners in upgrading and preparatory programs, however, they are also key to assisting learners in postsecondary level programs who may be facing challenges such as personal, health or mental health difficulties, a learning or physical disability, or lack of financial resources (p. v).

Colleges Ontario’s Opportunities for Everyone (2008) report summarized potential programs that, if funded, could make a difference to under-represented groups. The report noted that Ontario colleges already support large numbers of non-traditional students, and attract more students from lower socioeconomic groups than the university sector does.
The research reviewed in the 2008 College's Ontario Final Report referenced above suggests that a coordinated systemic approach that looks at the needs of non-traditional learners, and also creates institutional responses to those needs, is the approach that holds the most promise for success in the education of under-represented groups. The Colleges Ontario report (2008) suggested that colleges would see an increased demand for this type of program delivery in the future and know that they would need to develop more programs to address the demand for integrated services:
Integrated approaches that combine literacy, adult upgrading and postsecondary courses, and tie in employment readiness training and the required support services are essential to facilitate transitions and enhance opportunities for success. The delivery of student services must turn to more proactive approaches that engage learners at the beginning of their programs and follow through to facilitate their transition into the world of work. (p.vi)

Opportunities for Everyone (2008) documented innovative and alternate program delivery methods from outreach and promotion, to preparatory programs, to transition and employment programs and models. Although the issue of a systemic approach was again identified and supported, the document was missing details and plans of how this might be implemented. The Colleges Ontario report also lacked a call for a system-wide assessment of access program delivery, or for the development of a comprehensive plan to address the issues clearly identified in this work.

**The Beatty-Guenter Model**

As previously noted, the Beatty-Guenter model (1994), addresses both the needs of the non-traditional learner as well as some of the structural changes needed in institutions to ensure successful access and retention in the postsecondary environment. Institutions could employ this model as a way of adjusting their own practices to be more supportive of non-traditional learners. The model addresses areas for institutional investment, and describes five categories around which to structure interventions: “sorting, supporting, connecting, transforming students, transforming institutions”. A full description of each segment of the model follows below, including an outreach
component suggested by the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) in the 2009 research conducted for the Canadian Millennium Foundation.

**Outreach Strategies.** The literature reviewed indicated general consensus about the role early outreach and awareness building play in helping young people understand the benefits of a postsecondary education. Perna and Swail (2001) suggested that intervention programs should be designed to provide non-traditional students “with the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge and confidence, aspirations and preparedness for college early enough in the schooling to influence the educational attainment” (p.6). “Outreach and awareness strategies are those designed to promote accessibility for under-represented students by encouraging positive attitudes toward PSE through outreach and awareness programs in partnership with high schools, elementary schools and community-based agencies” (Canada Millennium Foundation, 2009, p. 7).

If colleges were to embrace the notion that recruitment and retention of under-represented students is essential, it would mean that work would begin while students were still in high school, preferably in the early years, to create the sense of postsecondary as a possibility. Without this notion firmly embedded, these students do not see this future as possible for themselves. Creating the possibility of a postsecondary future depends on three critical steps: creating the aspiration of postsecondary education, navigating the processes involved, and developing a supportive transition to the postsecondary institution (Engle, et al., 2007).

Since preparation for postsecondary education begins early in high school when critical course choices are made, early engagement and outreach are essential to ensure that students develop a sense of their potential, know the opportunities available to them
at the postsecondary level, and understand the steps they need to take to get there. These early introductory steps build comfort and familiarity with the new environment. A focus on informing and building capacity to disseminate critical information to guidance and high school teachers is necessary to ensure that the systems in which these young people are being educated are able to support and develop students’ educational aspirations (Engle, et al., 2006). The creation of peer support groups (Harris, Blue, & Griffith, 1995) and support networks are useful tools, “where older students can guide potential students and first year peers through the college maze” (Rinn, 1995, p. 13). Knowing that there are support networks on campus before applying to a college can assist students in the academic and personal transition to college.

Interactions with a postsecondary institution help to develop trust and credibility, and they build relationships that can sustain the transition from the community to college and allow for support once students are enrolled. This relationship is best cultivated when students are in the early high school grades, as they and their families begin to explore what it could mean to go to a postsecondary institution. Repeated outreach efforts in high schools that focus on engaging students, rather than direct recruitment efforts, increase student comfort levels and allow them to be more open to the idea of planning for their futures. This targeted approach is particularly important for students who may not see themselves as college or university students, and who, therefore, would be less likely to attend general college information sessions. Terenzini et al., (1994) found that many students expressed a desire to connect to and become attached to their institution. Helping students to find their place in postsecondary education and become successful depends on the individualized support and intervention they receive early in the transition process.
This support also helps to orient and integrate students who can otherwise feel isolated and unprepared.

**Sorting Strategies.** “Sorting” as described by Beatty-Guenter, attempts to group students into appropriate subsets. These strategies may include pre-entry strategies, the admissions process, assessment on entry, mechanisms to monitor student attendance and progress, and profiling “at risk” students. Emphasis is on the importance of matching students based on certain characteristics to the "best fit" program. “The strategies in this category [sorting] tend to involve the identification of student characteristics in order to create strata that can be matched with appropriate and targeted retention techniques” (Beatty-Guenter, 1994, p.114).

Creating smaller groups within a population of students, based on what they need, allows a match of interventions to need, as opposed to sorting based on a structured application cycle. Accepting the offer of admission and enrolling is just the beginning of completing a course of study. Nielson (1996) suggested assessment test scores are one way that students are sorted coming into a postsecondary environment. This approach has also been a way to identify students who are at greater risk of dropping out. Choy (2001) stated that there is a need to look at the capacity of institutions to help students persist and to remain enrolled and focus on the needs of the individual students in the completion of their programs. Early engagement and meaningful contact with all students at the critical juncture of enrolment and a focus on providing individual support can have an impact on the students’ desire to continue and commit to the institution and their course of study. Thayer (2000) notes that studies have shown that the greatest proportion of students who leave are likely to do so within the first semester.
Thus, early retention strategies are key in the student’s experience. Creating networks within the postsecondary setting that include a single point of contact to identify and address difficulties that students may encounter, as well as to identify available resources, is essential to ensure that problems get addressed early and that solutions offered are viable.

**Supporting Strategies.** “Supporting” strives to ease students’ problems with aspects of everyday life. Creating deliberate interventions that provide students with much needed support helps to ensure that they can remain enrolled and juggle their often complex and complicated lives. Fostering supportive personal networks is essential for student well being, persistence, and success at college. Stallard (2015) suggests that all people have a universal need for belonging in order to thrive. When students have these needs met through supportive personal connections at college, they do better both academically and socially. Research has shown that students who cannot connect with the academic and/or social communities at postsecondary institutions are more likely to drop out (Hanover Research Council, 2010). Through personal connection they begin to feel more at ease which, in turn, can improve the level of engagement and satisfaction with their experiences at college:

Students’ success at college is affected by problems they encounter in their lives outside of school...the retention strategies that are considered under the heading of supporting are those that reach out to support the students in their lives outside the realm of college. (Beatty-Guenter, 1994, p.118)

The defining characteristic of supporting strategies is that they connect students with resources both within the college and in their own communities to support them to
stay in school. The support also helps the students to problem-solve issues. Further, finding ways to connect students to their institution through programs that increase student-faculty and student-peer interactions helps to maintain strong connections between the institution and the student.

**Connecting Strategies.** If students do not experience what Tinto (1993) described as academic integration or “fit,” they are at risk of dropping out. Tinto stressed the importance of integrating individuals into a campus, both academically and socially, so that they believe they belong there and are less likely to drop out. Focusing on low-risk activities in a low-risk environment where students are able to familiarize themselves with the expectations of college and the demands of course work, as well as be introduced to student success strategies, will increase their chances for long-term success. Tinto suggests that, “Retention requires that a student see him or herself as belonging to at least one significant community and find meaning in the involvements that occur within that community” (p.8).

The greatest gains in retention rates will result from focusing not only on the selection process, but also on the student-environment interaction after college entry. Thayer (2000) Hillman and Murrell (1993) suggested that, “The decisive single factor in affecting college outcomes is the degree to which students are integrated into the life of the campus, interact with faculty and peers, and are involved in their studies” (p.3). The provision of meaningful activities on campus, including part-time employment opportunities, help students to develop a sense of belonging and to experience themselves as making a meaningful contribution to the community, as well as gaining valuable work experience and financial support. Employment allows students to spend more time on the
college campus, and students employed on-campus during their first or second year have substantially higher graduation rates and a stronger affinity to their institutions than those not similarly employed (Cermak & Filkins, 2004).

**Transforming Students.** Once a student has made the transition to the postsecondary environment, he or she needs to integrate into that system. Focused strategies that address students’ self-concept, motivation and academic skills preparedness are essential, especially for students who have not had a history of academic success. Beatty-Guenter (1994) states that

… transforming involves strategies intended to effect changes in students, such as remedial education or career counselling, or changes in institutional character, such as curricular reform or instructional professional development. Three important retention techniques fit into the transforming category that target students: (a) learning assistance programs, (b) remedial education programs, and (c) career counselling programs. (p. 122)

As summarized by Terenzini (2004), the evidence is reasonably clear that non-traditional students as a group have a more difficult transition from secondary school to college than their more traditional peers do. Not only do these students confront all the anxieties, dislocations and difficulties of any college student, but their experiences often involve substantial cultural, as well as social and academic transitions. Offering supportive programs at this time becomes critical. Academic supports and skill development courses in the area of student success can help to support academically underprepared students. Building confidence in students’ academic achievements supports future success.
Dietsche (2011) suggested that the critical factors that seem to help students remain within a course of study are when students believe they are achieving their goals and when they are actively engaged in their programs and with their faculty, both within and outside the class. If students have clarity about their career choices and value the programs they are in, they are more likely to be retained. Retention in the second and third years of a student's program of study will be stronger if the institution ensures that the student experience includes services that encourage engagement with faculty, opportunities to access services that are focused on student needs, program value, and an investment in proactive services and early warning protocols.

**Transforming Institutions.** Transforming an institution that enables non-traditional students to overcome barriers they may face in accessing postsecondary education depends on the ability to examine institutional practices from a systemic point of view. Striplin (1999) suggested that, “All aspects of the experience should be considered from the initial experience with the college to the structures they encounter in the curriculum as well as the faculty and staff group they interface with” (p.12).

As the community college adopts these strategies, it seeks to transform itself from a gatekeeper of higher education into a facilitator of higher education. It seeks to transform (a) a laissez-faire attitude with regard to students’ success to a more directive attitude, (b) a ‘shopping mall’ educational institution to a learning community, and (c) a reproducer of the class structure of society to an equalizer. (Beatty-Guenter, 1994, pp. 123-124)
These changes require institutional commitment at the leadership level to ensure institutional transformation is part of the mission, vision and values and gets acted upon throughout the organization. Everyone in the organization needs to see their work as infused with this mandate so that each individual becomes a supporter of success, a problem identifier and a problem solver. Successful transformation requires mapping processes that support, or hinder, access to the institution and a commitment to integrate adjustments to systems to align services to student needs. Understanding and policy development at a government, institutional and individual level are required to ensure that the current operational education paradigm is transformed, and that a new paradigm, which supports non-traditional learners, is implanted. The primary focus of these strategies is the examination of policies and procedures at the structural level of the postsecondary institution itself. It is an assessment of the way in which the institution modifies its approaches to create a welcoming and supportive environment for under-represented groups.

In the literature review and environmental scan conducted by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation Report on the Data-Readiness of Post-Secondary Access and Retention Programs for Under-Represented Groups (2009), four qualities were revealed to be at the core of transformational initiatives that foster institutional adaptation to under-represented groups. The first was clarity of vision and values within the institution relating to student success that can be seen in the mission, in the leadership, in the investment in staff positions as well as in the orientation and professional development of all staff. The second quality was a commitment to improve programs through evaluation, which included the collection and analysis of data and
rigorous evaluation systems that could track data over time. The third quality was a sense of openness to innovation and flexible responses based on student needs, seen in both the administration and front line staff approach to policy and deadlines. Most notable in these transformation efforts was a fundamental attitude of considering the students’ needs in making decisions. The fourth quality was the ability to “build bridges” that could span different groups within the institution, both on the administrative and academic sides, and between the institution and external partners in the community. These networks were founded on communication strategies between departments and administrative services to share information obtained through early warning systems and safety nets.

Beatty-Guenter (1994) suggested that the appeal of institutional transformation strategies is that they do not focus only on student retention, but also improve all aspects of the teaching, learning and working environment at the college. Although the four qualities Beatty-Guenter identified are at the core of transformational initiatives that foster institutional adaptation to under-represented groups, any reference to the cultural climate of institutions and how cultural sensitivity or diversity training play any part in the transformation of the organization, were lacking. The fact that these aspects did not appear as core qualities suggests that what was being looked at was a purely structural, or process, framework and not one that included the impacts of the systemic racism that exists in most traditional educational organizations. Non-traditional students encounter many difficulties with the systems in colleges, but frequently the most debilitating to their success are the often unintentional cultural biases or uninformed attitudes of staff and administrators toward them. The flexibility to address student need, and the
willingness to consider that need with a lens of cultural awareness, is critical for under-represented populations to make successful transitions into postsecondary institutions.

The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation’s report (2009) on data-readiness used the expanded Beatty-Guenter framework to examine the collection of data at PSE institutions on access and retention programs for lower-income youth, Aboriginal and First Generation students. The study findings indicated that there was a great deal of work occurring in the area of access and retention for under-represented students, yet no institution was collecting the data necessary to fully assess the effectiveness of its access and retention programs. The successful institutions studied in the report tended to be transformative, had a purposeful and coordinated strategy, had implemented innovative programs and strategies, and had a commitment to evaluate the impacts of these investments with systematic data collection, standardized questions and centralization of data. The final factor was investment in institutional infrastructure in the form of a resourced position to coordinate the collection and dissemination of data and undertake strategic planning to address institution-specific access and retention challenges.

Research results suggested that a coordinated, systematic approach that looks at the needs of the population of non-traditional learners and creates institutional responses to those needs, is the approach that holds the most promise for success in the education of these groups. The transformation of the educational institutions at their core is seen as an essential component for any long-term progress in the area of access.

Outline of remaining chapters

Chapter one articulated an overview of this research, which included the problem situation, the purpose of the research and the rationale for the research proposed. It also
included both the theoretical framework that has grounded the research and the worldview guiding my thinking. Chapter two provided a literature review to further inform this research. Chapter three provides an overview of the research design and methodology, and provides the methods and procedures used as well as detailed information on the research design, participants, materials and actions I took. Chapter three develops the research by keeping present the research question posed in Chapter one: What can be learned about the current state of access programming in colleges by applying the expanded Beatty-Guenter framework as an evaluative filter to one community college's Access Division in an urban college in Ontario? Chapter four presents the findings from the research conducted, including the document analysis of college-wide and divisional specific documents, and the interviews of both the faculty and administrator participants within the study. Chapter five presents an analysis of the findings of chapter four, with an examination of the both the primary and secondary questions as they relate to this thesis. Chapter six includes a brief summary and discussion of the research and provides recommendations on policy, practice and further research.
Chapter Three: Methodology

This was a case study of Central College’s (pseudonym) access model and the extent to which it is aligned with the systematic model developed by Beatty-Guenter (1994). The study applied the Beatty-Guenter model below as an evaluative screen to the access model employed at this Ontario college to ascertain the applicability of the Beatty-Guenter model as a framework for service delivery.

Outreach and Awareness

Providing information, raising awareness and aspirations through partnership with high schools, elementary schools and community-based agencies identifies students in their communities prior to transitioning to the Postsecondary Institution.

Source: Data readiness Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (2009, p. 7)

Figure 3: Conceptual Framework of the Expanded Beatty-Guenter Model

Research Design

Case Study Approach. I utilized a case study design for this research as I wanted to gain insight into the usefulness of the Beatty-Guenter model when examined through the lens of the faculty and administrators in one access program. Stake (1995) suggests that this approach is employed when the researcher is seeking to provide insight into an issue or to help to refine a theory, both of which I proposed to do.
This case study was used as the vehicle for understanding the participants’ thoughts about the Beatty-Guenter model within their setting. The case study approach was appropriate for this research as it allowed for a detailed examination of one college division and its particular contexts and processes in an effort to provide insight about the usefulness of this model. Although the case study method has been criticized for its inability to generalize findings, there is merit in the use of case studies. Yin suggested case studies be used as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1984, p. 23). This study was conducted within a “real life” context, that of the study site, where the boundaries and context of the study program were not immediately apparent or clear, and multiple sources of data were employed which were identified as central to the case study approach. Yin further suggested that a case study is the natural vehicle when the nature of the research requires a focus on a present situation or event that needs to be examined thoroughly and in an in-depth manner.

This research is also well-suited for a case study design as it is the study of one unit within one division within one college and, therefore, could be considered a bounded system. Creswell (2002) suggested that “bounded” means that the case is “separated out for research in terms of time, place, or some physical boundaries” (p. 485). Creswell also stated clearly that the unit of analysis can be “a program, events, or activities” (Creswell, 2002, p. 485). Stake (2000) suggested that the primary purpose of a case study is to help advance understanding. Additionally, case studies are an ideal methodology when a complete, in-depth investigation from multiple points of view is required to understand the system in place (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). Creswell (1998) suggested that the
investigation itself consists of a “detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61). This research study was well aligned with these definitions since the inquiry was conducted with participants who are currently delivering access programming and whose multiple inputs and perceptions were central to the data and to increasing my understanding of the access programming that was in place.

The case study design approach was oriented toward applying an external framework (i.e., the Beatty-Guenter model) to existing programs, with the intent to test the validity of the Beatty-Guenter model within one college's Access Division. This research was positioned within the lived experiences of key informants in the division in the Ontario College, which was the focus of this study as well as within current economic and political climates with respect to access. The data I collected were from several levels of the organization and different perspectives, inherent in each participant's interpretation of the framework and of the program design, were documented.

One of the challenges of using a single case study method has to do with establishing external validity. Stake (1995) suggested that generalization can be more intuitive, and argued for what he called a “naturalistic” generalization. He felt that the data generated by case studies would often resonate experientially with a broad cross-section of readers, thereby facilitating a greater understanding of the phenomenon. I made no attempt to generalize the findings to the larger college sector. This information may have resonance, however, for readers who work in this field, and therefore will contribute to a greater knowledge and understanding.
Site Selection

The study college site was chosen because it is located in the centre of a large Canadian city of over two million people. “Central College” (pseudonym) is an urban college with three distinct campuses in downtown locations in a large urban centre in one of the most culturally diverse cities in Canada. At the time of this study, the enrolment at this college exceeded 29,000 full and part-time students. This college provides comprehensive programming including upgrading and transition to work programs, apprenticeship training, as well as over 150 certificate, diploma and degree offerings. Central College has historically drawn over 60 percent of its student body from non-direct entrants, that is, people who have not come directly from high school. This large population of non-direct students is comprised of many people who would be considered non-traditional students. Central College has had a large access program for the last thirty years, and has invested in the development of this area over the years. This College, and the Access Division within it, are large and comprehensive enough to ensure that a sizeable amount of data could be collected. This division constitutes 6.7 percent of the College's student population, and provides both upgrading and entry-level programs, as well as postsecondary programs.

Participant Selection

I purposefully selected participants who had in-depth knowledge of the topic of interest based on their work in the access area; they were a cross-section of individuals from both the administrative and faculty leadership at the College, including senior administrators, middle managers and faculty within the division. I interviewed a total of 11 participants for this study. Ten of these interviews were with administrators and faculty members. Of the ten in-depth interviews, five were with administrative staff, and
five were with faculty. In addition to the core group of faculty and administrators, I sent a letter outlining this research project in some detail to the Senior Administrator, requesting administrative consent (Appendix A) as well as participation in an interview.

The invitation to participate (Appendix B) was sent to both the administrative and faculty group within this area, chosen from a publicly available list of permanent employees who were working at the College in that division, had passed their probation period, and had worked within that division for at least two years. The invitation to participate instructed the recipients to contact the research assistant listed on the letter directly to book their interviews if they were interested in participating in the study. The research assistant signed a confidentiality agreement before any contact was made with any of the participants in this study. Five (71%) of the seven administrators on the list and five (28%) of the 18 faculty on the list contacted the research assistant and agreed to participate. There were no other participants who volunteered to be part of the study. All ten participants contacted the research assistant, returned the signed consent and scheduled an interview. The selection approach was consistent with other qualitative studies where the approach is non-random, purposeful and small (Merriam, 1998).

The research assistant validated that all volunteer participants met the criteria of currently working within this area and that they were either a full-time faculty member or administrator on the employee list and had at least two years of full-time experience within that division. The research assistant assigned a number to each participant who had confirmed interest in participating, and that number was utilized to document interviews and transcripts going forward, thereby ensuring that I would have no knowledge of the identity of the participants. The research assistant secured the list of codes associated with the names and no other person had access to that list. All
participants who volunteered signed a letter of consent for participants (Appendix B) prior to the interviews, and they reviewed the letter of consent once more and established that each person interviewed had given explicit consent before the interview process began.

I assumed that interviewing both the faculty and the administrative groups would provide different perspectives that would be useful in the exploration of this model. The administrative group would bring a broader college perspective to the evaluation of the model and focus on its usefulness at the institutional level, and the faculty would bring the rich experience of engaging and teaching the population of non-traditional learners, and provide a lens to evaluate the impact of this model on the success of the learners. The inclusion of both participant groups ensured that both perspectives would be represented even though the representation of the administrator group outweighed the perspectives of the faculty group, which had a participation rate of 28 percent.

I cross-referenced the administrative and faculty responses to the Beatty-Guenter model, to see if any differences exist between the two groups. Patton (1990) suggested including different groups of individuals who the researcher has determined to have different perspectives, will thereby make it possible to “more thoroughly describe the variation in the group and to understand variations in experiences while also investigating core elements and shared outcomes as well as programmatic variation and significant common patterns within that variation” (Patton, 1990, p.172).

**Data Collection and Recording**

I collected and analysed multiple sources of data to gain a holistic understanding of the key informants’ points of view, and the features of the model that currently exist within each of their areas of responsibility. This case study relied on two sources of data
collection, (1) document analysis, and (2) semi-structured interviews of two key informant
groups at the study site.

I employed several approaches to collecting the information relevant to this study,
including reviewing archival and current data, examining current operational and
strategic documentation, and ensuring that the information was both detailed and
accurate. Yin (1994) suggested that multiple approaches to data gathering compensate for
the weakness inherent in a single approach to data collection and analysis and can be
used to complement each other. I collected and triangulated data from multiple data
sources, archival material, current strategic documents at both the College and divisional
level as well the data from ten in-depth interviews with both administrators and faculty
from the Access Division.

Schwandt (2007) suggested that “Triangulation is a means of checking the
integrity of the inferences one draws. It can involve the use of multiple data sources,
multiple investigators, multiple theoretical perspectives, and/or multiple methods” (p.
298). He also suggested that the use of triangulation “…is often wedded to the
assumption that data from different sources or methods must necessarily converge or be
aggregated to reveal the truth” (p. 298).

I conducted data collection in two phases: Phase one: document analysis, and
Phase two: two sets of semi-structured interviews that were audio recorded, transcribed
and validated. The data from the two sets of interviews (one with administrators and the
other with faculty) was triangulated with the document analysis comparing and
contrasting the data from each of the three sources because Yin (2003), suggests that this
strategy also enhances data credibility.
Phase 1: Document Analysis. The objective of document analysis in this study was to examine relevant sources of data and information in the public domain related to the College division under review that also reflected issues pertinent to the themes of access and programming for non-traditional students. I reviewed all relevant publicly available documents and electronic text that had any relationship to the Access Division. I examined 44 documents and conducted a review of all relevant, current and publicly available archival documentation as well as the current web content on the College website.

I reviewed documents over a six-year time span (2006-2012), noted the sources of the data, then classified data contained in these documents into major categories and case examples (Appendix F).

I constructed a list of all potential documents referenced above and created an electronic case study database to log and store documents for analysis. This approach allowed me to consistently document each item for constant comparison with the interview data and case study materials. I used this process to establish a well-organized collection of the evidence base, as suggested by Rowley (2002).

This documentation strategy strengthens the potential to replicate the research, increases the transparency of this research, and established an evidence trail. I examined the historical underpinnings of the present day role of access programming at Central College, using the following themes and categories:

- current model of access delivery, structures and framework
- internal program model, frameworks and theoretical underpinnings
- program design, evaluation and outcomes
- major challenges, shifts in government policy
• funding models
• level of integration with the whole college

**Documents Analysed, Questions and Sources of Data**

Table 1 below outlines the documents analysed, the questions that were considered and the sources of data for all questions.

**Table 1. Document Analysis Questions and Sources of Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions considered for historical context and theme generation</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What conclusions can be drawn about the historical roots of the current programs?</td>
<td>Archival data from the period 2006-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What conclusions can be drawn from analysis of this source?</td>
<td>Mission statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what audience was this document addressed?</td>
<td>Board of Governor meeting minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the main content of the documents and do they reflect any aspect of the model?</td>
<td>Program review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What themes emerge from each document? Is there a consistent theme that can be reflected in any aspect of the model?</td>
<td>Strategic planning documents, contracts, minutes, program manuals, publications, marketing material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What evidence from the source supports conclusions?</td>
<td>Business plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What conclusions can be drawn from analysis of this source?</td>
<td>Divisional missions, vision and goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Division-specific Documents**

Documents produced by sources inside the division and meant for broad public consumption or for planning or evaluation purposes:

• marketing materials
The divisional level documents provided insight into the division’s structure and perceptions about its work. I analysed 44 documents and categorized in the following way. I organized the accumulated document data into a case study database as suggested by Yin (2003), to ensure a systematic collection of the data and to increase the reliability of the document trail by producing a chain of evidence on all materials collected.

Documents produced by sources outside the division and meant for broad public consumption that I analysed were:

- College calendars 2006 – 2012
- Annual reports 2006 – 2012
- College newspaper 2006- 2012
- Multi-year accountability 2006- 2012
- Strategic mandate 2012

The college level documents provided insight into how the College was identifying or branding itself as well as the descriptions of the work of the Access Division within the College. I took the same approach to the analysis of the external documents as I did with the internal documents, examining each document individually looking for significant information that identified the Access Division and noting how the division was being identified or described. I also identified any changes in the
descriptions of this division over time or items described that would align with any of the Beatty-Guenter categories. I then compared the similarities and differences between these two sets of documents.

Phase 2: Interview Data. The research assistant collected the data on my behalf for this phase through semi-structured interviews of approximately one hour with each person from either the faculty or administrative group, using a pre-set list of questions. I created these questions from the literature I had reviewed and the categories identified in (Appendix D). The pre-set list of questions sent to the participants prior to their interviews was used as a guide, as all interviews were to be conducted in a semi-structured conversational way. I developed a checklist for the interviewer to gather the information in a reliable way and to ensure uniformity in the data collected. All questions were asked in the same way and in the same order to ensure some consistency of delivery. The questions and a document containing the Beatty-Guenter category definitions were sent to the consenting participants in advance to prepare them for the interview (Appendix C). The category definitions document aligned to the category definitions within the Beatty-Guenter model (1994) and all examples used were taken from her original work (Appendix E). The research assistant asked each participant for signed consent to audio record prior to beginning the interviews (Appendix B). The interviews began with broad questions and gradually moved to more specific, detailed questions, with appropriate prompts to the interviewee’s responses (Appendix D).

Interviews were conducted by the research assistant and audio-recorded with the participants’ consent, with the overall aim to gain an understanding of the perceptions of faculty and administrators about their current program model.
Eleven individuals participated in an interview process. The senior executive responded to the first four questions at the College-wide level and shared her opinion on the model under review. Her responses were analysed separately and then compared to the answers given by the participants within the division to assess if there were any notable differences or similarities in the answers. The Senior Executive was only asked questions one through four and the data collected informed the sections on the College’s view of access within the institution.

The remaining ten respondents participated in audio-recorded interviews of approximately one hour and were asked the full seven interview questions in the same order, with some minor differences in the follow-up questions based on where the conversation led the interviewer. There was some variation in how participants interpreted the questions, and the semi-structured interview format allowed for this variation. The interview questions began with an exploration of the division and the way in which its programs were structured, as well as an examination of the successes and challenges participants experienced in the delivery of their mandate. The interview questions then focused on the Beatty-Guenter model and the usefulness of this approach to the delivery of programs to non-traditional learners. There were also questions that related to identifying the limitations of the model and the implications for its implementation. During the interviews, all participants were shown the Beatty-Guenter model and asked to identify any of the features of the model that they felt were applicable in their context. In addition to gathering these data, participants’ impressions of the usefulness of the Beatty-Guenter model in their current practice were also solicited and participants were asked to provide an assessment of each category of the model, and a rating of the elements that might already be in use within their division.
The interviews were audio recorded and the research assistant made notes in addition to the transcript and these notes were reviewed with each of the transcripts. The completed interview recordings were transcribed by a transcription service who signed a confidentiality agreement. The participants received copies of their own transcripts to check for accuracy and to identify any content they wished to revise. The participants were instructed to inform the research assistant of any changes they wished to make. All changes were made prior to my review and analysis of any of the transcripts. Two participants asked for minor grammatical changes to their transcripts, but these did not change the content.

**Instrumentation**

**Establishing Credibility.** Creswell (2009) suggested that reliability and validity must exist in the data collection process as a critical component of establishing credibility. Therefore, I employed the following approaches to the collection and analysis of the data to increase credibility of the data I was collecting. Based on Yin’s (2003) suggestions to increase reliability of data, I documented all processes throughout the stage of collecting and storing the data, and developed a case study database to house the information collected.

I developed the interview questions and guide in advance of the interviews so that there would be time to review each with the research assistant who was conducting the interviews. The interview questions were based on the literature reviewed and the Beatty-Gunter framework. The interview guide covered the purpose of the interviews, a process for implementation, and also included the data collection approach and how to ensure confidentially and informed consent. This guide was used by the research assistant while conducting the interviews (Creswell, 2009).
The interview questions were vetted for content validity by an external reviewer who has over twenty years of professional experience in research design and data collection. The pilot testing of the interview guide was conducted by the research assistant with three staff members who were not part of this study. The three staff members were asked to complete a mock interview using the interview guide and the draft questions to ensure that the questions flowed logically, were easily understood and were not leading in any way. All improvements as a result of the pilot testing informed the selection of the final set of questions used in the research study. The purpose of conducting a pilot test of the instruments and data collection method was to identify and correct problematic areas prior to the actual interviews.

The interviews were conducted by a research assistant on my behalf who had no connection to this topic or to the area in which the study was being conducted, which helped to guard against bias in the collection of the information. I did not conduct the interviews myself since there is a longstanding professional working relationship between the individuals within this study and myself. Having the research assistant conduct the interviews prevented any real or perceived coercion or undue influence. The use of a third party research assistant provided distance between the participants and me and allowed the participants to more objectively assess the model. Interview questions were distributed to all participants prior to the interviews (Appendix D), all interviews were transcribed and sent to the interviewees for review, revision or confirmation, and where indicated, changes to the transcripts were made by the research assistant, which increased the reliability of the procedure as Gibb (2007) suggested.

I also employed “cross checking” as a technique to increase reliability of data by utilizing the research assistant to validate the codes I used to collect and code the data and
establish the themes. Creswell (2009) recommended that “a single researcher find another person who can cross check their codes to establish intercoder reliability” (p.191). Triangulation of data was also used to increase the validity of the study. As Creswell (2009) suggested, “If themes are based on converging of several sources of data or perspectives from participants then the process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study” (Creswell, 2009, p. 191).

Data Analysis

Both document and interview analysis were used in this case study; the interview analysis was more directly aligned with the model under review than the document analysis because of the focus on the application of the Beatty-Guenter model. Although both the interview and document analysis provided relevant information within this study, the interviews provided greater context and a richness and depth to the data collected.

**Phase 1: Document Analysis.** Document analysis allowed me to examine information that described this unit written by both individuals within the unit and also documents written by others within the institution. Special focus was placed on common themes that emerged within the documents and the time period in which the documents were produced. Using multiple sources of data reduced the likelihood of misinterpretations and established a clear sequence of information that provided both depth and connections between ideas and an understanding of context.

I conducted a qualitative case study analysis and compared the findings to the expanded Beatty-Guenter model (Figure 1). I examined documents for information on current program offerings and identified commonalities between what was being offered
and the expanded Beatty-Guenter model. I then highlighted any gaps in the information and examined each area identified for alignment to the model and/or an area of potential growth. I sorted data in many ways, deliberately looking for conflicting data in the documents or changes in the way that the program was described over the period of time under review.

Table 2 below outlines how the documents analysed and the interview questions aligned with all questions.

| RQ# 1. How does the postsecondary educational institution currently structure the access programs? | Document Analysis phase one  
- program review  
- organizational charts  
Interviews phase two  
- Faculty and Administrators  
- Q # 1 Interview Guide |
|---|---|
| RQ# 2. How is the access program integrated within the system of institutional services? | Document Analysis phase one  
- strategic planning documents, contracts, minutes, program manual,  
Interviews phase two  
- Faculty and Administrators  
- Q # 2 Interview Guide |
| RQ# 3. How would you describe the impact of the access program at your college?  
  a. What data are currently collected in your programs?  
  b. What are the student outcomes? Short term/long term? | Document Analysis phase one  
- evaluations  
- long term retention and graduation rate  
Interviews phase two  
- Faculty and Administrators  
- Q # 3 Interview Guide |
| RQ# 4. What are some of the major challenges that the Access Division experiences in the delivery of services? | Interviews phase two  
- Faculty and Administrators  
- Q # 4 Interview Guide |
| RQ#5 What model is used in the access programs to organize and provide outreach, connection, support, and transformation | Interviews phase two  
- Faculty and Administrators  
- Q # 5 Interview Guide |
| RQ # 6. What are some implications for the implementation of this model or an expanded version of this model? | Interviews phase two  
Faculty and Administrators Q # 6  
Document Analysis phase one  
- strategic planning documents |
| RQ # 7. Are there changes that would improve it for the sake of evaluating and establishing access programs? | Interviews- phase two  
- follow up questions  
Document Analysis phase one  
- strategic planning documents  
- business plans  
Interviews phase two  
Faculty and Administrators Q # 7 |

I established a coding system for analyzing all document material and to identify themes arising. The document material was numbered and the date retrieved and the location where the material was found was identified. For example, archival material was coded 1a. arch/ date, while website material was coded 2a.web./date. I coded each interview using the number assigned and themes were identified by particular categories for each of the repeated ideas. I applied this system throughout my review of the data.

Special focus was placed on common themes that emerged within the documents and the time period in which the documents were produced. Using multiple sources of data reduced the likelihood of misinterpretations and established a clear sequence of information that provided both depth and connections between ideas and an understanding of context. Themes aligned with the Beatty-Guenter model and other themes that emerged, but were not central to the model, were identified for further analysis. Four interview transcripts were then reviewed and coded separately by the research assistant using the themes I generated, which provided an external check for consistency of the themes and a “cross checking” of the codes I employed. I then compared the results of the two findings, looking for consistency and differences in the results achieved. There was a great deal of consistency in how the transcripts were scored.
and no new themes emerged that had not already been identified. I used this technique to improve the assessment of the text and also to identify that the themes generated and codes assigned had some reliability.

**Phase 2: Analysis of Interview Data.** The analysis of all the interview transcripts provided a clearer understanding of to what extent the activities identified within the division aligned to the Beatty-Guenter framework. The patterns and themes identified by reviewing the transcript repeatedly line-by-line allowed me to gain a general sense of the participants’ views and understand what they might be saying (Creswell, 2009). I was also able to identify text where reference was made to one of the categories in the Beatty-Guenter model and document where the informants were identifying alignment to the Beatty-Guenter model. Through this process, I also identified all other themes that were present but appeared to be separate, recurrent issues within the data.

I interviewed a total of 10 key informants and a Senior Executive of Central College. Using case study analysis, I compared the interview data against the expanded Beatty-Guenter model (Figure 1) looking for examples of congruence as well as mapping any gaps identified by the participants. I reviewed all interview transcripts in detail numerous times and made notes while reading each interview, both to begin the process of identifying the themes that emerged and to develop the coding of theme identifiers. During this process, I continued to remain open to any new themes and insights that were emerging. Common themes were identified in participant descriptions, as well as in information gleaned from the available historical documentation. Examples of common themes included the population of the learners served and the programs that were delivered, and a focus on one program rather than the division as a whole.
Comparison of diverse data collected. I compared and contrasted the multiple sources of data collected, including interview transcripts, document reviews and archival data, looking for similarities and differences in the responses from faculty and administrators as well as emergent themes. I noted patterns that were identified, as well as conflicting information. The interviews and theme analysis, as well as statistical data on populations served and enrolment numbers, allowed for richer detail in analysis.

Document analysis, the first phase of the study, included a review of all relevant publicly available documents and electronic text, as well as an analysis of the content and structure of each document. Document analysis was an ongoing process throughout the implementation of the case study. I reviewed the documents for the common elements within the data that had “issue-relevant meaning” (Creswell, 1998, p. 154) or significance for the study. As these elements were recognized, I noted them to determine if they would continue to be seen in other documents or within the interviews. This process of looking for multiple instances of similar themes was identified by Creswell (1998) as categorical aggregation.

I used document analysis to confirm and clarify the College’s position on access and participation, as reflected in the documents that it produced over a six-year period. Choosing documents over a time span allowed me to explore the history and evolution of this division as well as the more recent information that the division produced. I examined institutional mission statements, agreements, calendar offerings and articles written for the College’s publications to provide a picture of commitment and consistency in the institution’s presentation of access issues, and of the policies that may have influenced program direction and decision-making. I also examined marketing materials at the College and program levels to assess how access issues were presented to external
audiences. Other documents reviewed included College and divisional strategic and operational plans, ministry and funder reports, and program reviews and planning documents.

To ensure a logical methodology for the selection and analysis of the materials, I used questions from the Data Collection and Analysis framework by Finnegan (2006) to guide the collection and examination of documents. These questions helped me establish relevant sources the principles of selection, and ensured that I examined all relevant aspects of the documents. Having selection principles helped to guard against seeing the documents as factual, rather than then the perspective of the document’s author within the context of the audience they were writing for (Finnegan, 2006).

I selected each document with a specific purpose in mind. At the institutional level, archival documents provided the history and development of access programming at the College. The marketing materials for that time period presented an opportunity to look at the image the College was presenting to the public and potential students related to access, and to explore how that image might have been created for its intended audience. I also examined the documents for words associated with the Beatty-Guenter typology and for any examples of the stages identified within that framework.

The divisional level documents provided insight into the division’s structure and perceptions about its work. I recognized that these documents would reflect the work experience of their authors and the context, including intended audience, in which they were written. I identified themes that reflected the Beatty-Guenter typology within the described work of the Access Division for later comparison with the interview data.

Document analysis included a formal description of all documents identified in Table #1 and electronic text as well as an analysis of the content and structure of each
document. I attached a code related to the theme and classification to each document for further comparison with the semi-structured interview responses. I also analysed elements in the documents that were consistent, or inconsistent, with the model under examination.

Methodological Assumptions

There are some methodological assumptions inherent in the case study approach. The primary way that data were collected and analysed in this case study was through human participants. I assumed there may be influence on the analysis of the data that would need to be guarded against with safe guards put into place to reduce my own bias and to ensure the accurate portrayal of the participants’ views. I assumed that the faculty and administrators interviewed volunteered out of interest and from a position of free will. I also assumed the interviewees in this study would respond honestly given that they were not identified nor asked to judge their present working environment, only to reflect on the model presented to them. I further assumed that the reality that each individual participant shared in the interview was one that they constructed from within, and filtered through, their own experiences so no one perspective could be considered more accurate than another. I assumed that the documents I found and analysed were a reasonable representation of the work of this institution and that they were current and accurately reflected the practice within the institution and divisional area.

Limitations

Many of the limitation of this study were outlined in the section on Scope and Limitations in Chapter one but it is important to note two further limitations to ensure the
limits of the study are clearly presented. An additional limitation of this study is that the information gathered is not generalizable. However, generalization is not typically the goal of case study research and was not my intent in selecting this method for my study. As well, the relationship with the participants in the study and my knowledge of Central College was also a potential limitation, leading to the decision to engage a research assistant to conduct the interviews to increase the neutrality and reduce any potential bias in the data collection process. Not being able to conduct the interviews myself limited my ability to see the whole picture and gain the benefits of the nonverbal information available in interviews as well as selection of the probes that were asked in follow-up questions. Although I was unable to glean these data, I feel the distance from the participants was necessary to remain as objective as possible in the analysis of the information.

**Ethical Issues/Considerations**

To ensure that the data were collected in an ethical matter, all recorded data have been kept confidential and secure. No participants or groups are identifiable and no personal information was requested or included in the study. Non-identifiable codes were used for all transcripts and the research assistant is the only one who held the participant list linking the codes to the individual participants.

Administrative consent was obtained from the College and the study was approved by the University of Toronto Research Ethics Review Board as required, as well as by the Ethics Review Board of the institution where the case study was conducted. These approvals were obtained prior to data collection. The letters specified how interviews were to be conducted and how the document analysis would be done. Potential participants were clearly informed about the voluntary nature of this study and
the steps taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of all participants and for the institution as a whole. Participants were informed ahead of time, and were reminded at the start of each section of the data collection, that they could decline to answer any question they did not feel comfortable answering without explanation or penalty of any kind. Furthermore, they were informed that they could withdraw from the study by contacting the research assistant at any time should they not want to continue. Participants were informed that if they were to withdraw before the data were aggregated, their data would be removed from the study completely and none of the information they had provided to that point would be used. None of the participants withdrew from this study.

Before sending the transcripts to me for analysis, the research assistant removed all identifying information and each participant received their transcripts to confirm any changes that would be required. Two grammatical changes were identified and changed and then the transcripts were released to me.

The observation notes, transcripts, notes and journals are all stored in a locked filing cabinet in my office, accessible only to my thesis supervisor and me. All identifiable digital data were encrypted consistent with University of Toronto policy. The audio recordings were destroyed immediately after transcription, and the coded transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet accessible only to my thesis advisor and me for five years, after which all transcripts will be systematically destroyed.

**Summary of Chapter Three**

Chapter three has provided an in-depth discussion of the methodology that I employed in this study. I have outlined the case study research designed to test the perceived value of the Beatty-Guenter model for access programs within Central College.
The chapter outlined the participant selection, the data collection methods and the limitations inherent in the collection and analysis of the data. I also addressed ethical considerations, with emphasis on the voluntary nature of the study and the safeguards to ensure anonymity.

Chapter four presents the findings from the research conducted, including the document analysis of college-wide and divisional specific documents as well as the interviews of both the faculty and administrator participants within the study. Chapter five presents an analysis of the findings of Chapter four, with an examination of the both the primary and secondary questions as they relate to this thesis. Chapter six includes a brief summary and discussion of the research and provides recommendations on policy, practice and further research.
Chapter Four: Presentation of Findings

I employed document review and interview analysis to gather the necessary information to inform the overall and secondary research questions that guided the research for this thesis. This case study relied on two sources of data collection, (1) document analysis, and (2) semi-structured interviews of two key informant groups central to this study, that is, the faculty (F) and administrators (A). The data from both the interviews and document analysis were examined separately and then were compared and contrasted to identify the themes that were generated.

College Level Documents Analysed

College Mission Statement. I examined the current College mission statement to ascertain if access was featured in the description. There was an 180-word statement that described the mission at a high level, followed by four core values. There was a significant focus on teaching and learning, as it was identified in the introduction as well as a core value. Employment, career and accountability also featured prominently in this document. There was one reference to access in the mission statement, and it was not represented as one of the core values for this College. The Senior Executive interviewee was the only one who commented on the College’s mission statement and core values. They suggested that that the role of colleges have changed substantially since 1987 and that this College was no exception. The College was viewed by this administrator as a comprehensive college with the primary goal to support its students to be successful in their academic programs and to help them to successfully transition into the careers of their choice.

When asked about the Access Division in particular, this senior administrator felt that the programs from the Access Division “fulfilled a portion of the College mandate
they are preparing this population of learners for employment and the economic
development of society, helping people either to gain entry into their careers or move on
to further postsecondary” (A8).

**College Calendars.** My review of the College calendars between 2006-2012
revealed few changes in the access program offerings listed, but showed that the division
had three name changes during that period: from Preparation for College and Work in
2006 to the Access Centre in 2007 when the English as a Second Language division
(ESL) was moved to another area within the College, to the Centre for Preparatory and
Liberal Studies in 2009 to reflect the addition of the Liberal Studies division within a new
divisional framework.

The calendar description changed slightly over this time period from a focus on
the individual, “recognizing students’ unique needs” and....“academic and social
excellence where no one is left behind” (Calendar, 2006, p.180) to a greater focus on
academic skills and employment. The 2010 calendar identified a new focus on
developing students’ skills and the workplace: “Students with the tools and skills to
achieve their career and life goals...facilitate entrance and successful outcomes in their
chosen area of postsecondary study as well as within the workplace” (Calendar, 2010, p.
221). The program description in 2010 reflected a move to more outcomes-based
learning, and providing more focus on skills and employment rather than access and
academic pathways. The alignment to the “supporting” category of the Beatty-Guenter
model is present in year 2006 to 2009 but in 2010, a shift away from supportive learning
to skills achievement was noted.

**Website Content Review.** I performed an advanced Google search on Central
College's website employing the search filters of time, document construction and key
words ("access", "transition", and "non-traditional students"). This resulted in the retrieval of three documents. The search looked for documents on the public website published between the years 2006-2012 that were presented in PDF form.

The search yielded the following documents:

- Annual Reports 2007-2012
- Multi-year Accountability Agreement 2006-2012
- Strategic Mandate 2012

There were no direct links to the Access Division or any documents that linked to the programs or areas under review. The documents retrieved will be discussed in the section on strategic documents.

**Annual Reports.** I reviewed the 2007-2012 Board of Governors Annual Reports in detail for examples or statements that would align with the Beatty-Guenter model. The 2007 Annual Report focused on assisting non-traditional learners to make the “transition to postsecondary education, supporting students from the start and reaching out for opportunity” (p.2). In 2008, the Annual Report featured one student's story of moving from poverty and unemployment to success through education. The reports from 2009 to 2010 shift from a focus on the individual success of students to the academic and social excellence found in the programs the College delivers. By 2011 and 2012, the Annual Reports made little direct reference to access but rather shifted the message to “Attracting and selecting learners with potential to succeed” (p.3). The messages in these later reports are about the need to “Advance program quality, currency and relevancy and expand pathways to further education, including degree completion” (p.4). This change of messages in the Annual Reports was also reflected in the marketing material produced at
the same time. In this period there was also an increase in material about the degree offerings at this College.

**Multi-Year Accountability Agreements.** I reviewed the Multi-Year Accountability Agreements (MYAA) from 2006-2012 on specific populations within this College. The MYAA was developed by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities of Ontario to track strategic, system-wide performance indicators. All Ontario postsecondary institutions were required to report on their commitments on access, quality and accountability. The Multi-Year Accountability Agreements, created by the government in collaboration with institutions, although positive as a response to institutions’ needs for stable and predictable funding to ensure better planning, did not go far enough in clarifying what access outcomes were expected, except at the most rudimentary level.

A review of this College's MYAA information suggests that there was a strong attempt to focus on access, transition and support of groups of non-traditional students which aligns closely to several categories in the Beatty-Guenter model, however, these initiatives were identified as being delivered specifically for identified populations and not as a college-wide, systematic approach. During this period of time there appeared to be an attempt to align the institutional access activities with the government priorities tied to funding target groups. There was no documentation to suggest that an examination of the program models or the implementation of a more systematic student focused framework had been considered or implemented. A model such as the Beatty-Guenter could have provided some direction and support during this period of realignment.
A review of this College’s MYAA found strong indicators of commitment to access for the select target groups it was required to report on: Aboriginal, First Generation and students with disabilities. The MYAA report indicated the development of a new Aboriginal Action Plan for 2008-2009 based on extensive internal and community consultation, hiring of Aboriginal elders, the opening of Native Student Centre and hiring Aboriginal student tutors to support Aboriginal students. There was also indication of new marketing materials and outreach initiatives in the community specifically focused on this demographic, which included the development and delivery of a community-based General Education elective for Aboriginal women, in partnership with Native Women's Resource Centre.

First Generation projects included the “LEADS” initiative 2009-2010, which referenced the development and delivery of a more holistic approach, based on a model of outreach, transition and retention of First Generation students that had been cited as a best practice and adopted by other colleges and universities for the transition and support of this group of students. The First Generation report cited a more integrated approach, which involved support delivered across divisions for this specific population of learners:

A dedicated cross-college transition team offers ongoing supports to FG Students. The team is comprised of staff members from all the areas that shape students’ experience, the Registrar’s Office, Student Association, Campus Life, Student Affairs, Athletics, Bookstore and Student Success. This broadened network of key institutional contacts works to further ease the transition to the postsecondary environment. (MYAA, 2010 p.7)
For students with disabilities, there was indication that the numbers of students served had grown substantially and that the resources allocated were strained. There was again a focus on transition activities and a focus on supporting identified groups of students through a new counselling model:

Disability Services runs a highly successful Summer Transitional Program in August for new students with learning disabilities (LD) and their parents. This is a multi-day event in order to orient LD students to GBC and facilitate a smooth transition into postsecondary education. In partnership with Career Services, Disability Services ran a two-day conference near the end of the winter semester, educating and assisting students with disabilities to become further prepared for employment and support them to become job ready graduates. (MYAA, 2009/2010, p.7)

There was no explicit record of a systematic approach or of an integrated model to deliver the access mandate, but rather a series of initiatives and outcomes listed for each separate population of students. All initiatives reported increased numbers of students being served between 2006 and 2010, and additional initiatives being added during this period for students for all three groups of identified students (Aboriginal, First Generation and students with disabilities).

Given the broad parameters of the MYAA, this institution seems to have responded based on the programs it already had available to meet the expectations outlined by the government at that time. Formal tracking mechanisms to collect the necessary data seem to have been limited, and since the reportable outcome was about individual groups, the funding structure encouraged the creation of a variety of individualized programs. The lack of a common definition of under-represented groups, a
research framework or shared information made it difficult for any generalization of this information to occur. Because this College would have experienced the same difficulties with data collection as most others in the college system, the data collected here must be viewed within that context. A review of this College’s MYAA found strong indicators of commitment to access for the select target groups it was required to report on.

**Strategic Planning Documents.**

**Ten-year plan.** Launched in 2010, the ten-year strategy document set the course for the College in six strategic imperatives: 1) to prepare diverse learners for job success, 2) to enable the innovation economy, 3) to leverage technology, 4) to create a high performing organization, 5) to develop ‘high-value’ partnerships, 6) to build a sustainable financial model.

The strategic imperative most aligned with access was number one, to prepare diverse learners for job success. Although there was mention of the diversity of the learner within this strategic imperative, which could be associated with access, my examination of this document revealed a departure from previous documents produced by this College in which access was specifically referenced. The language depicted a shift in thinking from access to skill development for all learners, who by their nature were diverse. The focus of this core driver became the expansion of field education, innovation in academic delivery and the development of skills that employers were seeking. There was one reference to enabling pathways both into the college, and upon leaving, for students with diverse backgrounds, which could have aligned with the “connecting” category in the Beatty-Guenter model. The statement was not elaborated on, however, so it was unclear what it was intended to convey.
There were no other references made to an access mandate or to any of the categories described within the Beatty-Guenter model within this document. The largely external focus of this document was a significant departure from previous documents, in which there had been identification of an access mandate for this College.

**Strategic Mandate Agreement.** The Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) initiative was launched in 2012 by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to strengthen Ontario’s public postsecondary sector, and with the hope of ensuring improvements in productivity, quality and affordability. The Strategic Mandate Agreement's stated outcomes were to meet the goal of a more differentiated system in postsecondary education, to see a reduction in program duplication between institutions and to advance the creation of program specialization within each institution. This differentiation would be accomplished by creating institutional mandates, citing distinct program strengths or aspirations and key objectives aligned with that mandate. Within this College's SMA there is a specific focus on preparing diverse learners for job success. There was, however, little focus on this area as core to the mandate of this College. Again the phrase “preparing diverse learners” is used with reference to increasing employability skills. There is no emphasis on access as a primary driver, or as central to the work of the College. Instead, the references about access are as part of the mandate of the College, and in response to Ontario's goal of 70% participation rate in postsecondary education. This document again referenced this college as a “comprehensive college” offering “pathways from upgrading to degree” (p.3).

In their response to the College on the strategic mandate, the Ministry identified that this College had a “unique institutional mission to improve access and retention for under-represented groups” (p.7). That seemed to be based on the identification of several
populations currently served by the institution. The list included Aboriginal students, First Generation, students with disabilities, international and mature students, as well as indirect entrants and academically underprepared students. It was also noted that this College had strength in the education of a number of underserved populations, including Deaf students and people with mental illness and/or addictions. Although there was an identification of several populations of non-traditional learners, there was no mention of a systematic approach to the education of these learners, and also no information that aligned with the categories within the Beatty-Guenter model.

**Academic Strategy.** A college-wide academic strategy was launched in 2005 and implemented in two phases between 2005-2011 with the purpose of engaging the community in a dialogue on academic quality and learning. That strategy had four pillars: “student learning first”, “learning community”, “diversity and internationalization”, and “innovation and scholarship”, with the overarching priority to make excellence in teaching and learning the College’s hallmark (p.1). Although this strategy did not call for a focus on the access agenda, it did reference preparing diverse learners once again. The strategy identified the challenges of educating the underprepared learner, coupled with the stated desire to have more concentrated resources in the foundational English and Math programs. The goals of this strategy were far-reaching, focusing on the academic content as well as the quality assurance process of the programs being delivered. There was also a focus on creating a learning community within the organization that could support both the faculty and the students in the learning process. The changes identified were comprehensive and varied, and the outcomes would impact all learners. The alignment with the Beatty-Guenter model could be found in the increased focus on assessment, and the provision of remedial support, which line up with the “sorting” and
“supporting” categories of the Beatty-Guenter model. This strategy also introduced student success programs within the divisions, with a specific focus on the need to identify at-risk students early in their semester and provide the academic or personal support and connections to ensure stronger integration of students within the programs. This is very closely aligned with the “supporting” and “connecting” categories in the Beatty-Guenter model.

**Academic Plan.** The 2012-2013 Academic Plan is a significant college policy document that set out a model to achieve and sustain the path for excellence in teaching and learning articulated in the Academic Strategy. This plan asserts a clear academic vision that makes student learning the first priority. The goal was to be reached by creating programs and experiences that lead to ongoing student success in the classroom and in the workplace. The plan further states that the College expects to produce improvements in academic effectiveness, employment rates and preparedness for employment, as well as in program completion rates and students’ satisfaction with their academic experience. There was no specific mention of access or any reference to the characteristics of non-traditional students. Three key priority areas identified are: the curriculum, the learning experience and the institutional culture. Within the curriculum pillar, there are two identified priorities that could be linked to the Beatty-Guenter model:

1. Expand pathways to further education, including degree completion, within and beyond the college
2. Increase effective and efficient academic supports for students to increase retention and program completion. (p.1)

The Academic Plan identified the goal of expanded pathways only as they relate to programs that occur post-college. This document does not suggest there would be a
focus on pathways into this College, which would align more closely with the need for “outreach and transitions” in the expanded Beatty-Guenter model. The increased focus on academic supports clearly aligns with the Beatty-Guenter model in the “connecting” category, as academic supports are often necessary for many non-traditional students who come under prepared for the rigors of academic learning.

**Divisional Level Documents Analysed**

Most of the material I collected from the division did not coincide with the six-year time span of this analysis. The materials available for review were produced between the years 2009-2013, with the vast majority of the documents being in the 2010-2012 time period. The archival material for the division was sparse, incomplete or lacked any depth of information and, therefore, little history was available to draw on at the divisional and operational levels. The archivist suggested that the documents I sought would be in the program areas, but they were not available for review.

My review of marketing material included hard copy pamphlets and brochures, as well as an analysis of the College’s website content. Here again, I reviewed the material with a focus on gaining further insight into the division’s structure, philosophy and how the work was being presented to members of the public who the College was trying to inform and potentially recruit. Themes within the marketing material that reflected the Beatty-Guenter typology were very limited but the ones present seemed to relate most closely to the “supporting”, “connecting” and “student transformation” categories with a particular focus on the opportunities being offered to the individual.

**Business Plans.** I reviewed the available business plans from 2007-2012 to look for themes and any material that articulated work to be developed, and for either integrated or strategic approaches that could align with the themes in the model being
explored. The business plans were tactical in nature and required reporting on goals identified the previous year. Although there were some small examples of programs that could be classified in either the “outreach or supporting” categories of the Beatty-Guenter model, there was not enough information included to correctly classify them in either category. For the most part, the business plans were rich with operational data and the initiatives aligned with College's priorities and objectives, but could not be classified as strategy documents. Consequently, I gleaned little from these sources on the issues under review.

**Divisional Mission Statement.** The Dean of this area shared the divisional mission statement with the research assistant during the interview. It is not a public document but captures the mandate and mission of this area as follows: “We provide support education and training for traditional and under-represented or underprepared students. We believe that through education people can experience success, gain access to other educational programs, find meaningful work and live more enriched lives” (p.1). This mission statement encompasses several categories within the Beatty-Guenter model including “supporting” students, “connecting” them to other programs within the College and “transforming” individuals who experience this educational offering.

**Divisional Linkage Maps.** The request for divisional documents resulted in two “maps” being shared about the programs’ linkages (Appendix G & H). One map illustrated the links between the program areas within this division, and the other indicated the linkages with the rest of the College’s divisions and programs. What the maps demonstrated quite clearly was there were numerous linkages between programs in the Access Division and also with other divisions and other programs. There was also
some detailed identification of the work and/or training that was being delivered or shared between programs. What was not clear in these maps was the scope of this work, the participants involved, the purpose of the connection, the objective of the relationship, or the impact, if any, of these connections. As snapshots, they provided a picture of the way the division is connected to others within the College and, potentially, where these connections could be strengthened or developed to serve students who need the connection to the pathways to further their connections to the institution.

The maps are potentially more useful for the people within the division who know the detail of the connections, as they were engaged in the work, and less useful to the outside observer who did not have the internal knowledge to interpret them.

**Program Reviews.** I examined the content of four internal “Program Review” reports from 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012 to identify whether the documentation reflected the model under consideration. I summarized three pre-program reviews as a unit, but gave the Upgrading program review more scrutiny since upgrading programs are the beginning of the “access funnel”, and most students entering the access area utilize this program. This program is the largest of the programs in the Access Division and accounts for the largest group of the total number of students seen in that area. Individuals in the pre-programs share a similar profile and must have completed grade 12 English to be eligible to apply for these postsecondary offerings. The programs were reviewed in detail from the perspectives of student populations, curriculum provided, available resources, retention rates and key performance indicators, as well as the recommendations provided by the reviewer.

I found there were many examples that align with the Beatty-Guenter model categories within the program review documentation. I often found the “outreach”
component in the web and print marketing materials that describe the programs. These materials are collected as part of the program review. There was, however, no description of how the outreach was conducted but rather recognition that the programs had robust partnerships with external agencies that supported the transitions of students into the programs. There was little, or no, information related to the well-developed networks that exist and are established through either the community-based or internal upgrading programs at the College. There were, however, many comments about the need to establish these networks and have many more opportunities for marketing the access programs to both the community networks that many students come from which would support the “outreach” category in the Beatty-Guenter model. “There should be successful and consistent marketing of academic upgrading programs….as students primarily hear about the program through word of mouth and identify Academic Upgrading as the best kept secret” (Program Review, 2008, p.7).

The pre-program reviews identified difficulties regarding how the programs were being marketed, especially in relation to the program delivery model and the pathways available after these programs. I saw the “sorting” of students, the second category in the model, in the screening processes outlined in the reviews and also in the data that were collected to help identify students’ needs and provide them with the appropriate programs. Identifying data on all student populations was collected for all program reviews, but was best represented in the information collected from the surveys administered for the 2008-2009 reviews.

In those surveys, the following data, collected at that time, showed that the majority of students at Central College –70% – were in the 25-44 year age range and 65% of access program students were female. Thirty-seven percent noted that their
primary language was not English. There have been some variations in the student population in the last four years, mostly reflected in the gender and age of the students.

A student survey conducted in 2012-2013 provided the following data about the new incoming students to the Access Division. Survey results indicated that 73% of the first year students were female, and 26% were male. Fifty-seven percent were less than 21 years of age and 61% were born in Canada. Thirty percent of the Canadian born students had both parents born outside Canada, 20% identified as First Generation, 12% identified as Aboriginal, 14% identified as having a disability, and 3% were international students. Twenty-nine percent of survey respondents identified as a member of a visible minority. Of students who identified as a visible minority, the most common minority group identities cited were: Black (34%), South Asian and Filipino (17% each). Survey data also revealed that 35% of respondents had prior PSE experience; 61% had high school diplomas and 2% had less than high school. Ten percent would rather be working full-time than studying at the time the survey was administered. At least 40% of the students said they would benefit from strengthening the following skills: expressing ideas in writing, improving their writing, math and reading skills, and developing better study skills. They also suggested that learning how to manage their time, take notes and select an appropriate career were of high interest to them. These items are also clearly identified in the “sorting” and “connecting” categories within the Beatty-Guenter model.

Surveys of students in the Upgrading program indicated that 80% decided to enrol in an academic upgrading program because they realized that they needed to upgrade their skills to get into their preferred programs. This is particularly useful information as it aligns with the category within the model of “connecting” students to other opportunities within the College. Seventy-two percent attended this particular
program based on college reputation or referral from friends and the convenience of the location, while 44% of students specified that they heard that the program was good and felt that the location of the College was convenient. The model’s “supporting” category could be seen in the section on student needs, in which work-life balance was identified as an issue for these students.

Work-life balance was identified as an issue in the Upgrading program review, with 37% of students reporting that they worked in addition to attending school (48% of those students worked 11-20 hours per week and 26% worked over 21 hours per week). In addition to self and family support, 50% of students gained financial support for their academic upgrading schooling via external funding sources using Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) or Employment Insurance (EI).

The need to balance work, family and school was documented within each of the reviews. Family responsibilities were a factor in the lives of these students with 38% responsible for child care or elder care in addition to attending classes. This factor has strong alignment to two of the Beatty-Guenter categories: “connecting” and “transforming”. In each of these categories, there is a recognition of the impact that the external environment has on an individual student’s ability to balance the demands of an academic program with the demands of both personal and family responsibilities. The Beatty-Guenter model suggests that without the recognition of these issues, and specific and timely supports offered, students are often unable to maintain the balance necessary to be successfully retained. There were no examples given within any of the program reviews about how programs were addressing these issues other than identifying them as challenges at the time of the review. There were, however, general references that could be tied to the “supporting” categories, for example, “The distinct advantage of programs
positioned within a Centre whose mandate is access is having faculty who are committed to the concepts of preparatory studies and the diversity of learning needs that this type of program presents. Student feedback about faculty has been enthusiastic” (Program review, 2009, p.2).

The third category of the model – “connecting” – is seen in the many student comments referencing the faculty’s help in connecting them to resources, even though this was not a theme that was constant throughout the documents I reviewed. “Faculty commitment to the mandate of the program and the role it serves in successfully bridging students to a diploma program of choice was clearly evident” (Program review, 2008, p.2). “Transforming students”, another category of the model, was evident in these reports in the descriptions of graduates. Ninety-one percent of the graduates suggested that they would recommend this program (Program review, 2008, p.40). The work of this area was described as transformational for those who were successful, but the reviews also stated that the communication of the work needed more profile to ensure that others in the College recognized and supported the work of this area.

The greatest connections to the Beatty-Guenter model were often found in the challenges reported. There were consistent reports of systemic concerns in each of the program reviews related to the pathways out of these programs, and the connections to the other programs within the College. Staff members felt confident that they were doing excellent and high quality work, but they needed to convince others in the College of that achievement.

Professors from both the Upgrading and pre-programs identified that they felt there was a bias against their students on the part of the rest of the College staff and
faculty, which they perceived as unfair. There was a clear sense that more needed to be done to reach out to the rest of the College and create stronger linkages to reduce stigma.

All reviews identified that the programs report creating pathways into the College, but that observation was not necessarily borne out in all cases. Some programs did not have articulated pathways into the postsecondary programs, and even those that did had conditions attached to accessing them. Program review documentation stated that successful completion of a program would not automatically ensure acceptance into programs at the College, and a 3.0 GPA was needed to articulate successfully from the pre-programs.

**Interview Transcripts Analysed**

The objective of the interview transcripts analysis was to study the participants’ thoughts and perspectives about their current access programming, and the usefulness and applicability of the Beatty-Guenter model for the delivery of access programming in general.

Each of the questions and follow-up questions outlined in Appendix D were asked in order and the data collected were aligned to one or more of the seven specific sub-questions as outlined in Table 2. The results of the interview questions asked are documented below by sub-question with the most meaningful data presented.

Sub-question one asked participants to examine how their postsecondary institution structured the access programs within the College and whether there was currently a mission, model, mandate or framework that governed their work.

**Model, Mandate and Mission**

During the interview, participants were asked to identify if there was a model used in the Access Centre to develop and implement programs and support services, and
to describe the Centre’s current mandate and mission. They were also asked if the Centre used a particular framework or theoretical model to guide its work. This particular question was designed to answer the first sub-question: “How does the postsecondary educational institution currently structure the access programs?” and “Is there a particular framework employed, or theoretical model underpinning, the delivery of access programming?”. When asked about a mandate or mission for the Centre, administrators and faculty answered the question in similar ways. Both groups felt that their mandate and mission were aligned with the principles of access by offering educational opportunities for the under-represented population of students. I identified a consistent theme of providing programs and services for current and prospective students with barriers to employment or academic achievement.

Four faculty and four administrators interviewed indicated specific student populations: students with mental health or addiction issues, barriers to employment or academic success, those who did not complete high school, those upgrading current skills, and non-traditional learners.

In response to the query about a specific model or framework used to deliver the Centre’s programs, all of the administrators and faculty agreed that no overarching framework existed. Although each person identified a philosophy that guided the work in which they were engaged, there was little consensus among participants. One administrator described it this way:

It wasn't like there was one mandate or one mission, or even one set of values. The school that I Chair and [the] other schools are kind of separate, so I can speak to the work and college preparation. There is actually a vision and mission for the
Centre. I can only speak informally about this as we do not share a common vision. (A56)

There was some acknowledgment by only two of the administrators that a divisional philosophy was evolving in the Centre, although it was not consistently shared by all programs.

There is philosophy evolving but I would say there is no framework. I think a framework might be helpful as long as we had good stakeholder buy-in. (A77)

Another administrator suggested that there was a growing focus on an access philosophy and related that to the expansion of the Centre when additional schools were added:

I would say particular philosophies are more growing from the ground up and maybe they've gotten to that point now because they've expanded the center and there are a few other schools, and it's more obvious that the focus is on access, so they may have come to that. (A56)

When asked for the framework or model employed for the delivery of their access programs, several answers were offered. In total there were eight different ideas reported by the faculty and administrator groups that had little consistency between them. Many suggested more than one approach that they used when working with students. The approaches mentioned were not really frameworks or models but rather approaches to the delivery of programming and answers given varied significantly. Some participants mentioned more than one variable or approach that they felt guided the work. All identified approaches had some common elements, which included student-focused learning, recognition of the complexity of the learners in the learning process and a focus on maximizing student success.
Table 3 below depicts the significant differences and gaps in both definition and description of approaches provided in participants’ responses. There were multiple things identified that would not constitute a framework and no alignment in how the participants described the model they employed. When asked to elaborate on the division’s theory or framework for program delivery, interview subjects provided examples of the type of students or the program delivery.

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<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>access mandate</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>anti-oppressive framework</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>government funded model</td>
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<tr>
<td>community outreach and partnership</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>opportunity based approaches</td>
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<td>college mission and strategy</td>
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<td>government curriculum (e.g. OALCF)</td>
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<td>supported education model</td>
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There was a stated interest by two in the administrative group for a framework to be created to guide the work of the Centre. One administrator noted that a framework might be helpful:

If we had a consistent view I think a model would be helpful to present the commonalities of our programs even within our programs. Different programs might see themselves as having very specific and unique challenges or needs. They might not think that others would have those things but when you look very closely we are all doing very similar things. Their students (from each program) are not that different at all. (A77)
Influence of Government Policies

The next question sought to determine how the policies of current and previous governments have influenced how the Centre’s offerings were delivered over the six-year time period of this study. There was wholesale agreement in this area, in that all administrators and faculty interviewed stated that they felt that the policies of current and previous governments had a direct impact both on the original development of the Access Division within the College and, over the years, on shaping programming and operations within the Access Division. Funding for colleges has always influenced programming, as was stated in the Rae report (2004) where it was noted that the Ontario system was underfunded as compared to other provinces and international peers, and also that “the goal should not just focus on being first in spending…but on being first in quality” (p.93).

The impacts of funding were noted by both the faculty and administrators and was reflected as a concern by both groups:

Access funding is also problematic in that it is often based on specific funding from multiple pools – and often multiple ministries. The funding that access programs receive is different than many postsecondary programs in that they are not granted financial support based on a weighted funding unit formula. (A33)

One faculty member stated that the government funding changes created pressure for the programs to align with funding outcomes and the reduction in funding presented signification challenges financially:

With regard to Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, they have constantly imposed some pressure onto the program in terms of creating a program that actually aligns with the academic criteria of any program that they
would fund, but they also have provided a funding formula that is similar to tuition short funding model, which actually is not significantly sufficient to cover all the bases or to include some innovation within the program. So we barely, barely survive, based on this model at this time. (F71)

Another faculty member agreed that the lack of sustainable funding was making it difficult to achieve outcomes especially given the complexity of the students they were serving. One faculty respondent said, “We have greater demand to retain students with more complex needs with a very limited resources” (F5).

One administrator felt that the policies and funding issues had significant impact on the work of the division. The fluctuation of funding was noted as a challenge to the sustainability of programs.

The government's policies and the funding we receive influence the entire division quite dramatically because so many of our programs are focused on working with people with barriers. Funding for these populations fluctuates greatly depending on the commitment from a given government – it can be very ideological. There’s a lot of fluctuation. Academic Upgrading has recently been at risk due to the politics around the Canada Jobs Grant. For immigrant programming there is always fluctuation depending on the government in power. It’s not too bad at the moment – although it was better in the past and of course it’s easy to imagine it getting worse. (A40)

Participants expressed a keen understanding that the policies of the previous provincial government from 2003-2007 had been instrumental in shaping and increasing access programming within this College, as well as within the larger educational system. These policies had allowed this College to become a system leader in some specific areas
such as access programming for Deaf students because of the Centre’s ability to capitalize on government funding opportunities, such as the upgrading mandate that the College has adopted:

Okay, well certainly the policies of previous governments got us to where we either were or are. Which is why there’s funding for literacy and basic skills, it’s why there’s funding for the assignment of particular disability focuses to different colleges which meant that we have expertise in Deaf education that we wouldn’t have otherwise. We are, without doubt, the provincial leader in education for deaf students, particularly those who require upgrading. We have the provincial project; we have all kinds of things that we do because there was that initial opportunity. (A27)

This question also generated significant data and agreement between faculty and administrators in specific areas about the role that government policies had played in general and, as seen below, both positive and negative influences were attributed to the effect of government changes, especially in the area of funding.

Three faculty members and one administrator identified that there were many more administrative tasks required recently by the funders that often took away from the delivery of services. Four faculty and one administrator identified that the services had been reduced or restricted due to specific budget cuts or changes to the funding model. Four of the faculty and one administrator felt that the impact of policies had also reduced the flexibility in programs.

The challenges cited seemed to revolve around the constant funding issues such as an increased focus on selection criteria and targeted outcomes which were tied to
funding, impacted the program offerings and caused stress for staff members and students.

Table four below identifies the number of ways both faculty and staff felt that government policies or funding had a positive or negative impact on the delivery of services within their area. Both faculty and administrators felt that the lack of funding reduced their ability to provide more flexible programming geared to the needs of the students. It is notable that people identified both positive and negative impacts of the government policies and funding mechanisms that governed the delivery of the programs within this division.

Table 4. Impact of Government Policies on Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Description</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 reduced or lack of flexibility</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 additional administrative tasks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 service reduction due to budget cuts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 enabled new programs and partnerships</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 restricted services and strategic actions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 outcomes-based funding model resulted in increased/better services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 funding model increases focus on efficient transition of students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 collaboration led to better planning and responsiveness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 political agendas cause fluctuations in support for programs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: + sign indicates the faculty or administrator suggested a positive impact - sign indicates faculty or administrator suggested negative impact

There were also issues raised about a focus on retention and graduation rates within specific parameters, which caused changes in the students served and meant
having to provide program supports within financial constraints. One administrator stated:

> We have, in some of our areas, huge funding challenges. We have challenges with graduation rates. Many of the students who come through preparatory programs are students who have very complex lives, very challenging situations and often, they are not able to continue their studies, or they’re not successful and they drop away for one reason or another. (A27)

There were also areas of positive influence identified. Four of the administrators felt that the policies had enabled new programs and partnerships to be developed. Two faculty and two administrators identified that the outcome-based models had resulted in better services to the students, and an additional two administrators identified that they were able to put curriculum online because of the new directions. Overall, however, the impacts reported were substantially more negative than positive.

There were four faculty and one administrator who indicated that reduced, or lack of, flexibility in their program offerings had resulted from previous and current government policies. Out of these five participants, two also cited additional administrative tasks for faculty, two cited restricted services, and two cited reduced services due to budget cuts. Even with only five participants who cited reduced or lack of flexibility, the data suggest a clustering of the negative influences within that category. The funding issues seemed related to the increased administrative tasks, the reduced program flexibility and a reduction in services offered.

The impact of government funding policy on this division appeared throughout the interviews as a theme that dominated the conversation within this question as well as many other questions. The role that government played seems to have changed
substantially over the time period reviewed (2006-2012), especially in relation to the funding models that were put in place. As one administrator interviewed noted:

When I first got this portfolio, there was very much funding on a project-based ‘flavour of the month’ kind of funding: ‘Now we care about at-risk youth so, take whatever it is that you want to do and try to twist it into a project for at-risk youth. Now we care about impoverished women so can you please do something for them?’ (A27)

It was clear by what was said that with this type of funding, it was difficult to plan and engage community stakeholders. It seemed that the division had been successful, however, at influencing the senior leadership at the College and Ministry representatives to think about community engagement and longer-term outcomes:

You can’t plan and you could not really be in a responsive dialogue with the community... So that’s really moved much more to a different funding model.

We’re in collaboration with the Ministry. We were able to say, this is what we’re attempting to do over three years, here are our outcomes, here are the costs and this is the impact. (A33)

There was a feeling that the Ministry had tried to move more to outcome-based funding based on the work and influence of this Access Division. There was a collective sense, reported in every interview, that the government influenced the entire division quite dramatically because so many of the programs received all their operational money directly from government. All funded programs in the Access area educate non-traditional learners, and Ministry funding for these types of programs to serve these populations has fluctuated greatly over the years in review, depending on the access commitment of a given government.
Both faculty and administrators reported delivering multiple programs for numerous types of students who were entering the programs, attached to different funders, and trying to balance the learning needs of the students with the outcomes required from the funders. Each funder had different expectations of the outcomes, the pace, and what can or cannot be offered, based on the funding agreements. Flexibility also depended on the Ministry consultant associated with the file, who would either allow for creative decisions to be made that benefited student learning, or who kept things strictly monitored, expecting programs to be “delivered by the book”.

One faculty member suggested that the policies had substantially impacted the work that was done for students:

Let me talk about the current government at this point in time. I think very strongly that the policies are regressive, that is, it seems to be very much more an intrusive, patronizing, totally about pull yourself up by your own bootstrap type of policy, rather than a progressive policy that we see as enabling students who may be living with many barriers, because a large percentage of students at times have faced many challenging barriers in their lives. (F56)

All administrators and faculty identified that there had been a shift within the last few years from funding based on the number of students served to funding based on outcomes, quality assurance and client satisfaction. The funders had put in place a more rigorous accountability model with more outcomes and significantly more reporting and tracking of data. Students needed to meet criteria to enter the programs and the staff within the program we required to monitor progress and report more frequently on the milestones that the funder required. Although the reporting was seen as difficult, three administrators described how they found it to be useful:
It’s very difficult because the outcomes are, as you know, notoriously difficult to capture. There’s no reasonable sort of control group here. It winds up being a cross between activity reporting and outcome reporting because that’s really all you could say. But nevertheless, it’s been a real benefit. We have many times the funding that we used to have. Again, we’re in that responsive position with them where we are always interested in trying to do something that they want. (A27)

One administrator suggested that “even the reporting and the tracking, while it can be a bit tedious but we embrace it because we believe we're doing a good job and we'd like to be able to prove that with numbers” (A33). Some administrators seemed resigned to the fact that it was now a requirement, while others had embraced it and moved swiftly to implement the new model, seeing it as having forced programs to look at delivery differently and to be more creative:

We have embraced it almost just as it's another thing to do having had to focus on milestones and outcomes. It's been an extra piece of work and some faculty has somewhat resisted it. We've had to maybe re-evaluate and re-focus, but I don’t think it's hindered it at all. (A33)

For other administrators, the accountability model created a new way of evaluating the programs and new delivery models. For some programs, there were directives about how programs would develop and, in some cases, a requirement that they be delivered with new external partners chosen by the Ministry:

We were told that we had to partner with four different community groups, we had to run programs at these community centres and we had to create a partnership, and we had to make it work. That was really difficult too because we would not have picked those agencies to partner with, we would have picked a
different agency, but we didn't have a choice. I mean it worked out but it was very
directive. (A56)

Some administrators described the most recent move to shift some programs to
the postsecondary funding stream. This again was a decision driven by the Ministry to
align the programs in the Access area within the tuition framework for the province,
which had some benefits, but also some significant drawbacks. This change occurred
because the government decided to phase out a tuition framework and did so without
considering the implications for the programs affected by this move, which has been a
significant problem without an identified solution.

One administrator suggested that “somebody in the finance department didn’t
look clearly and see all of the things across the province that were being funded in this
way and made some kind of a streamlining decision that has been very problematic to
deal with” (A27). It was suggested that these decisions are often made without
consultation and have impacted the programs in substantial ways. The decisions also did
not recognize the complexity of the programs delivered and, therefore, the funding model
does not reflect the supports embedded in the programs:

We were finally successful in getting it set up as a postsecondary program to get
tuition, but still we don't get enough money to really run the program, so it created
financial problems. There was recognition from the Ministry that the program
should be recognized in the postsecondary stream, but a lack of recognition of the
program model being different from most postsecondary models, ‘Oh, yeah, this
is great program. The Ministry says I'm doing great work, but they are not willing
to invest in it'. (A56)
Some administrators felt that some programs did not fit neatly into any of the government’s funding models and, to maintain their integrity, they continued to run a deficit and remained underfunded. The difficulty of securing sustainable funding was noted to have constrained the design and development of new programs and the focus, therefore, had been on creatively refining and improving the programs that existed. There was a clear understanding that the political landscape could change, as could the funding for programs that were currently being offered. This uncertainty made administrative staff anxious about the future of some of the program offerings that might be impacted by a new political mandate.

Faculty responses to the same question elicited similar answers. The differences noted tended to be on the impact of funding decisions on the frontline programs and, in particular, the impact on the students they were teaching. One faculty commented, “This lack of funding over the years to cater to more students with complex needs has impacted on programming. We have greater demand to retain students with more complex needs with very limited resources” (F5).

With regard to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, three of the five faculty felt that there was some pressure to create programs that would align with criteria that the Ministry would fund. They felt the Ministry provided a funding formula that was not sufficient to cover all the bases or to include some innovation in the programs. One faculty member reported that the programs barely survive based on the new funding model and do not reflect the needs of the students they serve:

This is just a given thing in our program because the students have multiple challenges, multiple barriers, so they absolutely cannot take a full course load because they get extremely overwhelmed, anxious, they relapse. So, ability to
customize the program to accommodate student needs and to balance academic requirements and expectations and mental health is key to the success of a program like ours. (F5)

Faculty reported feeling like they needed to adjust the program to retain the students while tracking every milestone they met, which put them at odds with securing the funding they needed to deliver the services:

There is a milestone for everything and for everyone, it not only seems administratively very heavy, but it also becomes a policing, a gate-keeping mechanism, because it seems that if we give money to individuals who face barriers, including students who have not been successful in high school, we've got to make them more accountable for any sort of money than anybody else, because they may very well not be deserving of any funding we give to them. Let's make them jump through another 30 barriers before they can demonstrate success. (F26)

The second sub-question asked participants to explain how their Centre is integrated within the College as a whole, with details about the interface between the Centre and other departments, and between the Centre and the external environment. The interface between units within the Centre was also explored. This question was constructed to address the first secondary question within the research framework: “How does this Access Division currently organize program delivery and support services and integrate them within a system of institutional services?”.

Program Integration

When asked about the integration of programming that existed within the Access Division and between the division and the rest of the College, there seemed to be some
consistency in both the faculty and administrator responses. Both groups referenced the silos that they felt existed within the division itself but, to a greater extent, the impact of the silos that existed between this division and the rest of the College.

At the divisional level, there was agreement among all administrators that there was reasonably good integration at the management level. Most administrators reported working together on programs and often suggested new processes or programs to better support the students. There was a common sense of working for the greater good of the division and, when ideas surfaced, there seemed to be a willingness to support one another’s new plans.

At the faculty level, there seemed to be less understanding of the division as a whole. Several references were made about only being able to speak for the program they were in and not for any others, as they felt their knowledge was too limited. Only two of the faculty and one of the administrators identified a bridge that exists between Academic Upgrading and the other programs in this area. Two faculty and one administrator identified the divisional newsletter as providing a connection and two identified the Centre’s joint workshops. There did seem to be a pervasive understanding that all programs worked within the same division but had limited contact with one another. As one faculty member stated:

I think we come right back to the institutional silo, the setting up of departments and their programs. So you're all ‘over there’; you work on your own rather than in an integrated model, which may work very well, but again this may be institutional politics I'm getting involved in and it's not my domain. (F26)

Faculty also reported having limited contact with the other programs in the division. When contact occurred, it consisted of an annual meeting and professional
development sessions. Other than that, they felt somewhat isolated within their own programs. There was an attempt by two administrators to integrate their staff through cross-teaching events. One administrator felt that there had been a recent move to integrate more through cross-teaching appointments:

There has been a recent move to...integrate faculty a little bit more between the areas allowing them to teach in each other’s programs, so sometimes it would be good to experience some of the different needs of our students and be able to bring that back to our own program. (A33)

There also appeared to be a difference in the amount of integration between the entry level programs and those identified as postsecondary programs within the division. Administrators described some movement of students between programs, but that seemed to be on an individual level and not as part of an established pathway, or articulation, between the areas. Faculty cited strong relationships between programs, but there were no expectations of the students transferring among the programs. It was up to individual staff members to reach out to others and secure a “special arrangement” for students to move between programs, even if it would be of benefit to that individual student.

The entry-level programs often shared the same students and had teachers who had taught in several of the program areas. These programs seemed to have created an unwritten approach to the transfer of students between them for additional help and specific supports, and this method was seen as “working well for cross-referrals” (A77). Some of the other faculty, however, reported that “the units really sort of are still playing within their own school” (F49).

There were several comments about working in silos, with participants saying that they did not really understand the workings of other programs and therefore would find it
difficult to see how they could become more integrated with other programs within their own division. Faculty interviewed had a general sense of the types of students that others taught but not a good understanding of the programs within their own division. One faculty member described it this way:

I think for each of these questions I need to frame them by saying that I can only speak for my department [which] sometimes, I'm conscious, can be a silo unto its own, not in any negative sense at all, it's just structural within the system. I think the system, whether intentional or unintentional is set up much more [as] a silo so I can't speak for the center or the school, but for academic upgrading, I think it definitely provides, the model that we use that probably would be an outreach and a supporting model, but we also include aspects of all the other models. (F26)

Another faculty suggested they did not know enough about other programs as there was little interaction between the areas and, therefore, they could not speak about the division but only their own program:

Having read these questions prior to, I feel strongly that I can only speak for my department and not the center or the school. The mandate of my department, our program mandate is to provide access for students who, for a variety of reasons, might not have completed the high school requirements to enter college. Often those reasons are as varied and as complex [as] the students are... I am not sure if that is everyone's mandate. (F49)

There was a clear sense that the lack of time to connect and discuss planning as a division was missing in what the participants reported. An additional faculty member felt
there were few opportunities to connect and that the focus was on the work of their own programs:

The schools in the Center come together rarely, at divisional meetings only. We also publish the newsletter, so every once in a while you’re asked to contribute to the newsletter. We receive the newsletter. We’re informed of what our colleagues are doing but I tend to focus on the work of my group. (F5)

Only one administrator suggested that there may be silos within the division:

We don’t necessary have the ability to easily leapfrog between our programs and say another area within our division, there seems to be some silos that exist. There are referrals from ESL into Upgrading after an individual…finishes ESL. They want to come to Upgrading before going to another program we might refer our students to apply to General Arts and Sciences for instance after they finish here. We don’t have much cross over unfortunately…I think one of the main barriers is that there is a very clear philosophy difference between schools. (A77)

When asked about the integration between their area and the College, two of the faculty and all five of the administrative staff identified their connections were based on the collaboration between themselves and postsecondary programs outside of the division. One faculty member felt they had worked hard to ensure they created pathways and learning opportunities within the division for their students. This integration was very much directed by the faculty members and was seen as way of helping students to connect to the postsecondary programs while still in a supportive program environment, thereby easing the worries of transition to another setting:

To give you an example of how we are integrated, so in the third semester of our program, we allow students to take a general elective or we also allow students to
take a course in the pre-programs within our school (previously) but now is a new school within our division, a course free of charge to them. So we're trying to not keep them segregated but, as they're (students) becoming more ready, comfortable in the last semester, we're trying to bridge them to other programs so that they feel they are confident and have believe in their ability to be successful on their own without this constant support that is offered within our program. (F5)

Although they identified this collaboration as the vehicle for integration, they also expressed concerns throughout the interview about the need to establish stronger connections to integrate their work into the broader work of the College:

We built extraordinary relationships with admission and intake, but other than that, all the other schools and centres for whatever reasons, and I think we come right back to the institutional silo, the setting up of departments and their programs. (F26)

Table 5 below represents examples provided by faculty and administrators of divisional integration within the College. It was noted that these examples did not reflect integration within the division or with the areas of College but rather identified the vehicles for collaboration and sharing of experiences.

Table 5, *Divisional Integration within College*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Administrator</th>
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<td>bridging and collaboration between centre and college</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>college wide professional development</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>project with community partnership office</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>remedial classes delivered for other divisions</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>partnerships with registration and admissions</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>collaborations with academic management group</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The entry-level programs that are not postsecondary programs in the division identified that they did not have articulation agreements with any of the College’s postsecondary programs, including the ones housed within their own division. When students finished their upgrading, they applied, like any other student, through the external application services for a program within the College. This system includes applying for the pre-programs in the Access Division, which could be considered the next logical step in a student’s transition to postsecondary education. “We do not have any articulated agreements with any programs on academic upgrading. Other pre-programs do. Our students apply like any other student to any college, like any other external student when they apply to any college” (A26).

There was also a sentiment identified by faculty that they were considered “less than” other postsecondary programs within the division and the College as a whole. Some faculty reported feeling undervalued when it came to the way the students from the Upgrading programs were seen by the rest of the College. Faculty expressed there concern about their lack of visibility and how they felt undervalued within the institution:

We're so low on the totem pole, at least that's how it feels. We're so much under the radar that it seems that nobody knows us or knows what we're about or who we are or what we do or why we do what we do. (F49)

In the postsecondary programs housed within this area, administrators and faculty noted that several articulation agreements did exist between this area and the College. Some also described the success of students who made transitions into postsecondary programs throughout the College, as well as making transitions to other colleges. One faculty felt very positively about the student transitions and shared the following statement: “I feel we prepare our students to do well and many come back and share their
successes with us. They let us know that the foundation they received from our programs made the difference in their success” (F26).

There were, however, multiple reports by both the faculty and administrator interviewed of the negative stereotyping of the students who had taken this pathway into postsecondary from individuals outside the division. They reported having their students described by people in other divisions as being less academically prepared than students who “had not set foot into a college” prior to applying for programs. In many instances, a sense of bias was reported against numerous students who accessed upgrading as a route into postsecondary education:

Often what we experience, what our students experience, it is a belief set that students who come through an access program are not as good as the brand new high school graduate who comes in. Well, they came through an access program so surely this person we’ve never met before will be better. Even though a good many of our students get in and succeed, there’s an attitudinal issue from others against our students. (A27)

Although some of the articulation agreements within the postsecondary programs seemed to be working very well and were quite open to the students who made the transition, others seemed fraught with problems and had less successful outcomes for the students. There seemed to be a constant need to prove that these students were as capable as other students. Two faculty stated that the students should be given preferred admission status based on their demonstrated achievements, while two administrators felt they should be handled like regular admissions from outside the College.

Another aspect of integration was the acceptance of students who have not been admitted into the regular programs because they have not met the standards for
admission. These students were deflected into the Access Division’s pre-programs to help them improve their chances of entrance the following year. This practice was seen as a service to the College, and was well-received by admissions and registration as a potential pathway. There were problems, however, with how students may perceive this option, since not all students who successfully complete pre-programs are accepted directly into the regular postsecondary stream by other divisions:

I think it would be amazing if there were more connection points for students. I worked in a college in the States where there were articulations between developmental programs like Academic Upgrading and the postsecondary programs, that basically if you finish with them you are articulated into the postsecondary program. Not to mention after you finish your postsecondary program, you articulated into university if you wanted to. (F57)

According to one faculty participant, some areas are more integrated than others and this participant felt that some connections may not be made with other areas because of how their division is viewed:

I think that we probably have a reputation of being …probably the forgotten programs... I think what the truth is that when students come to our programs specifically for upgrading, they do better than the average student who comes, you know, off the street in whatever program they go into. (F26)

The faculty members seemed to feel that this bias was the reality they had to try to overcome for the sake of their students and their own reputations. They referred to having statistics to back up claims that their students were very successful when they transitioned to postsecondary programs but they felt these were largely ignored. Even given these statistical data, the administrators and faculty appeared frustrated by the lack
of support they received for the transition of their students into other programs across the College:

Yes, of course I see more need for better linkages......I think what we need are consistent allies across the College system to look at access and accessibility. When we talk about this as a College priority, putting student learning first, I think that people stop short of really understanding, digging deeper to see what that really means. If you really unpack that, to me, it really means...looking at what each student’s needs are. To me, it means unpacking my own biases, my own expertise…and really trying to understand how can I see this from another person’s perspective? How can I understand what is preventing this person from learning, without shaming them? (A77)

There was unanimous agreement in both groups that stronger linkages need to be established, and that transition planning was an area that needed to be explored more to increase the likelihood of the students moving on within the educational system. There remained, however, a sense that the College as a whole did not necessarily welcome the students in a way that could support successful transitions. There were ten separate references in the interviews to subtle and, at times, not so subtle discrimination against the non-traditional learners:

What’s missing is that connection to really understand learners, and it’s also an ‘us vs. them’ perspective… I think is very harmful because I don’t know how many pieces of research need to come through the college system that say that we are not getting traditional learners; there is no such a thing as traditional learners anymore. (A77)
When asked about the interface between this area and the external environment, both faculty and administrators identified strong connections between themselves and partner organizations that either provide referrals to the programs or act as a referral source for students who require specific supports:

We have engaged in other partnerships more informal in nature in supporting students. We do come across lots of students and no matter how much screening we do, who still have mental health symptoms in the course of the program, whether it's due to the school or whether it's their life outside. Not everyone has the privilege that they have their caretaker, a case manager, or a doctor or psychiatrist, so sometimes we need to rely on our informal partnerships outside. So, we need to rely on these relationships and informal partnerships to get support for our students. We also have an informal partnership if we need psychiatrists, we send [students] with information and they will see [them]..... or support the student on site. (F5)

They also identified strong partnerships with the institutions that acted as their advisors and research partners and that the research had informed better outcomes in their practice:

They have been research partnerships.....based on a bottom up approach. They are not guided by any top down agenda. Just to give you an example of our research partnership on cognitive remediation or enhancement for people with serious mental illness that has actually been applied to the program curriculum. It has resulted in the integration of the findings or evidence into our curriculum to increase greater outcomes not only for people with serious mental illness but with
anyone who experiences cognitive impairments as a result of mental health and/or substance use issues. (F5)

Four of the faculty and two administrators identified adult literacy programs as strong partners. An additional four participants identified service or institutional research partners and groups that they interfaced with and had strong historical partnerships with.

Table 6 on the following page represents the number of examples given by the participants of integration with external partners and organization. Interview participants were able to list a significant number of partnerships that were external to the college. The external connections identified were more numerous than the internal connections identified in Table 5, which focused on the connections and integration of this division within the larger college system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 partnership with adult literacy organizations</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 service and research partnerships with other organizations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 industry partnerships/student placements</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 partnership for collaborative initiatives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 articulations with other colleges and universities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 delivery of upgrading in external agencies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 interface with OCAS for student funding</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 presentation at partner organizations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 community of practice-shared data collection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In three, sub-question participants were asked to identify what they considered to be the major successes and serious challenges in delivering their services to achieve the division’s mandate. This question was constructed to address both what participants felt
they had most success with and some of the major challenges experienced by this access program. Their suggestions for improvements in service delivery were also sought.

Successes and Challenges

Table 7 below reflects the most common answers given when asked about major successes in delivering access services. What is clear is that supporting students and the successful transitions of students into postsecondary programs are seen as the two most significant areas of success by both faculty and administrators. Four of the faculty and three of the administrators identified supporting students. Three faculty indicated that the flexibility of the programs to meet student needs was how they had achieved their mandate. Additionally, six of the participants identified the successful transitions of their students as their success.

Table 7. Major Successes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 supporting students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 successful transitions to postsecondary programs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 strong relationships between internal and external partnerships</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 staff competence, commitment and passion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 transitional workshops</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 flexible programs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 student tracking system/program monitoring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Multiple responses from participants

Participants reported that substantive changes had been made to the retention rates in the last few years with many more students transitioning successfully into postsecondary programs:

I think with Upgrading what I noticed the first couple of years I was here, it was like an inverted triangle … no, actually, a regular triangle in terms of there being a huge group of students coming in constantly, really no measures around
retention, so we would fully lose them … I think at one point when we did a program review …. We did a lot of program reviews [found] 9% success at getting students to postsecondary, so it was terrible! Now things are very different. (A27)

Much of the positive change was attributed to a new leadership team that formed in 2008. Credit was given to the vision and leadership of the Dean and the Chair who brought a new sense of purpose and rigor to program delivery as well as a commitment to student learning in the development and delivery of the programs.

Academic Upgrading has grown under great leadership …their commitment to it, the way they've redeveloped their curriculum. As I walked in to this role and went to some of their program meetings, I'm hearing them calling this the year of the student. So it's like, Wow, beautiful. (A33)

The increase in profile and the growth in articulation agreements within the College, and with universities and colleges within the system, were seen as signs of leadership and success in creating pathways for students who had not had access to these institutions in the past:

Okay, at the Centre level I think there's been a lot of success at having a higher profile than in the past, before the Centre was created. About eight years ago, those programs were kind of dispersed everywhere, so I think in the last number of years, the Centre's really created a higher profile for these programs, and awareness that they're really important and that the students graduated from the programs are very well-prepared for success. (A40)

When asked where they felt there was room for improvement, the top three areas cited were: a need for better internal and college-wide integration, a need to reduce the
cultural bias and discrimination against their students, and the need to collect hard data to support the work they were doing.

Table 8 represents the most common answers related to challenges in the delivery of access programming. The three most significant challenges identified were: increasing integration, dealing with cultural bias and discrimination, and difficulty with collecting data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Challenges</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 increasing internal and external integration</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cultural bias and discrimination</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 data collection</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 balance between student support and program standards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 faculty inflexibility</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 flexibility in class schedules</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 challenges when student transitions to mainstream programs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 increasing graduation rates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All five of the faculty and one administrator identified that better internal and external integration would improve the services to students and help to raise the profile of the division. Four faculty and three administrators felt cultural bias and discrimination was a real issue that both the students and the faculty experienced in their programs. There were multiple examples of this challenge identified in response to this question on challenges and in response to other questions. The collection of data was identified by
four of the faculty and one administrator as something that needed to be improved in order to demonstrate impact and increase the profile of their work.

The answers to this question reinforce the themes of (1) a need for better internal and external integration; (2) decreasing cultural bias and discrimination; and (3) the need for hard data. Participants did express a desire for a more integrated approach between programs and within the College, which could support easier transitions for the students involved:

Well, like integration within the Centre and within the College. I mentioned that in the Centre, we have the divisional meetings and we have the newsletter, but I don't think we know each other very well. I don't know how institutions do that, but I just I feel like, for example, I don't really know much about the liberal studies side of our Centre at all. I should probably, right? I teach here. (F57)

The difficulty of providing service for students who may be perceived as not part of the College’s overall mandate was also a theme that emerged in both the administrator and faculty interviews. It seemed that a negative bias toward these programs and their students surfaced in many questions throughout the interviews:

I think challenges come in part precisely because we’re serving students with barriers and from marginalized communities. There will always be people who question whether that is what the College should be doing and whether these sorts of programs bring in enough revenue to hold our own. But it’s not really why you do these programs – you do them because they give the school a great reputation, because it’s the right thing to do for the school and for society. But some might question that. (A40)
Many of the challenges referenced a need for a culture shift within the College to reflect the kind of learners served by the division. Within this challenge, an opportunity was identified to help the College gain a greater understanding of how to successfully engage these learners. There was a clear understanding that there was expertise about non-traditional students within this area that could benefit the rest of the College. Participants expressed a real desire to help educate the whole College and to dispel the current myths and enable greater success for their students once they made the transition to regular programs within the College.

The lack of adequate data collection was also cited as a challenge for the programs, as both administrators and faculty felt the lack of data did not allow them to represent their work in the most powerful way and hindered their ability to track their successes and areas for improvement:

We could do a better job at tracking our numbers. We are actually about to make our feedback process more formal. Sometimes I think we make a lot of decisions based on just sort of a gut feeling from anecdotes and observation. We want to back that up with some more concrete evidence. (F49)

Another participant stated that a tracking system would be a very beneficial so that they could track their students while they were in the programs and once they had made the transition to postsecondary programs within the college:

I think what we would really like to see is a sort of tracking system for our students who go on to postsecondary, maybe both tracking and support or a referral system to the larger college. If we've got 50 students this year who have been accepted in postsecondary programs, we wish that there was a sort of referral system where we can say, listen these are students who came through our program
and these are the ones who face the most barriers and have had this amount of support. (F26)

Sub-question four asked participants to access the impact that the access programs were having on both the students and the College itself. They were also asked to discuss how they measured that impact and whether there were formal evaluations or data collected to support their assessments.

**Assessing Impact – on Students and the College**

The next question explored participants’ views about the division’s impact, both on students and on the College’s policies and practices, in a discussion that included their perspectives on evaluation processes and tools. This question was designed in part to answer research questions four: “What evidence is there to suggest that the access program has met the needs of non-traditional students? How is this evidence used to inform institutional change?”.  

When asked about the impact on students, six of the ten people interviewed identified that their impact was seen in the delivery of more prepared students for postsecondary programs. One administrator felt that there had been a number of students who had moved on to other programs within the College and saw the students’ successful transitions as an indication of the program’s achievements:

> I know that our numbers of students who have gone on to postsecondary have increased every year in the last seven years…and that is positive. I think that means we’re preparing students for entrance; but also the number of students that came into our program and went into postsecondary after semester three are still doing well. (A40)
Both faculty and administrators struggled to define the impact of the Access Division on the rest of the College and to give examples of that impact in a tangible way. They felt that this area had played a role in helping the College to achieve its stated commitment to access as an attribute of leadership. In that vein, participants felt that the College could claim it was fulfilling that part of its mandate, which also attracts funding and raises its profile.

There was agreement among both administrators and faculty that there were no standardized evaluations used among the access programs. They also noted that the evaluation tools were the same ones used by the rest of the College. These evaluation tools were: Key Performance Indicators, the Student Feedback questionnaire and looking at students’ progress from one semester to another. In addition, participants mentioned that there was a set of data tracking and evaluation tools supplied by the Ministry that they were required to use as part of receiving funding for the programs:

In terms of assessing the impact, that’s a harder question because the evaluations that we use are the evaluations that everybody uses. We use the KPIs, we use the ESFQs, and we look at students progressing from one semester to another in the Academic Upgrading area. There is a whole set of tools that we have from the Ministry that we use. They’re not standard to the College, but they are standard to all access programs in the province. Then for other things like our Aboriginal services, we match against the outcomes that we’ve set. (A 27)

Table 9 below outlines the tools used by all administrators to determine impact were the evaluation tools mentioned above, whereas all the faculty interviewed and one administrator also reported they relied on anecdotal and informal different methods this division used to assess the impact of their services. Metrics were used variably by
program areas, since an equal number of respondents used anecdotal and informal feedback due to insufficient data collection. There is also a distinction between the sources of information used by both groups with the administrator group using more sources of information. Current outcome data as well as anecdotal data were identified as the means by which they measured the impact of service.

Table 9. Information Used to Assess Impact of Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Outcome data and metrics (attendance, grades, completion and transitions, KPI, SFQ, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Anecdotal and informal feedback</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Pre and post program student tracking (goals, income source, employment)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most participants agreed that evaluation was an area that needed increased focus, with an emphasis on using the data to increase the profile of the work of the division and the success of their students. It also could be used to support the case for continuing the program, especially if the program was not generating enough revenue to sustain itself.

One administrator voiced a strong opinion about the need to provide a more robust tracking system for their students and to start gathering outcome-based evidence to support and validate the work they were doing, especially given that their area was not revenue generating:

Some programs have assessments in place. I feel very strongly that gathering outcome evidence is critical. Particularly if you’re working in an area that’s not a huge revenue maker, you need to be sure that you’re improving the efficacy and the benefits of your programs to ensure their viability. (A40)
When asked how this department informs institutional policy or change, there were a wide variety of answers. It was felt that the current tools employed did give some useful data, however, creating evaluation tools that could reflect these programs would be of great benefit, would demonstrate the impact that this area was having on the rest of the College, and could be used to inform institutional change. This question received the fewest consistent responses, with most of the answers focused at the student or program levels. There were no references to specific policies that had changed or had been influenced, and comments focused on the influence the approach of this area had on others within the College.

Table 10 reflects participants’ responses related to the impact on institutional policies or changes to programming at an institutional level. The variety of answers and the limited number of consistent answers is presented below. There were no real examples of transformation provided by either the faculty or administrators in this study. This question received limited responses from both faculty and administrators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Informs Institutional Policy or Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 college wide acknowledgement of service provided and special needs issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 influence student population through successful transition to post-secondary programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 proximity of support resources for other areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 education others on mental health issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 cross pollination between upgrading and pre programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 changing the way subjects are taught at postsecondary level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 information sharing with other divisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 encouraging focus on student success and retention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some administrators felt that they had a responsibility to inform the College of the work of this area and did so in every venue possible. They felt a responsibility to continue to provide information about their students to ensure those students had visibility within the larger postsecondary population:

I think another way in which we’ve influenced is to keep reminding people, and I certainly see it as part of my mission to keep reminding people, that not all students at this College are postsecondary students...there are hundreds of Aboriginal students in every area of the College. It’s that awareness that is necessary as we create policy, to always ask the question, how does that affect particularly the non-postsecondary students? (A 40)

Others had a sense that their role as educators on issues that impact students, like poverty and mental health, was a way of influencing the general College's attitude toward non-traditional learners as they provided workshops, in-service training, and ran an annual conference on mental health. This approach was seen as having an impact on awareness within the College and resulted in a better understanding of people with unique backgrounds and pathways in postsecondary:

Has it had any deep policy change? Not sure. We've had a couple of our students that have had great successes. Did it affect any policy or anything like that? I'm not sure. Did it affect some awareness around the college, around our folks? We've come a long way. Have we changed policy? I don't know. Have we changed the few minds and hearts around at least that population of students we serve? I think we have. (A 33)
Other administrators felt that through the infusion of other cultural approaches, the College was adapting and attitudes could be changed. It was perceived to be a matter of continual focus and moving the agenda forward slowly:

I don’t think its policy per se. I think we do things that inform institutional awareness... I would say for four or five years now, we’ve had a Territorial acknowledgement at convocation. We never, in over 40 years of history at this College, had a Territorial acknowledgement. Now, we have it, standard at all convocations. It’s a way in which we’ve influenced what happens across the College. (A27)

Sub-questions five, six and seven outlined in the section that follows guided the exploration of the Beatty-Guenter model. The data collected from these questions was analyzed first for the identification of the Beatty-Guenter model and alignment with the divisional programming. It was also noted where the alignment to the model was limited or gaps in the programming were identified. The interviews were also reviewed for emergent themes that were not part of the Beatty-Guenter model but were clearly identified by participants in the study.

- What model is used in the access programs to organize and provide outreach, connection, support, and transformation?
- What are some implications for the implementation of this or an expanded version of this model?
- Are there changes that would improve it for the sake of evaluating and establishing access programs when applied to the current model and approach delivered within this Access Division?
Interview Findings re: Beatty-Guenter Model

I examined the interviews of both administrators and faculty to assess where alignment with the six categories of the Beatty-Guenter model was identified. Sub-question five was used to explore the model used in the access programs to organize and provide “outreach, sorting, supporting, connecting, and transformation of students and institutions” for both the students and the institution. The Beatty-Guenter model was used as the framework to review the participants’ interviews and ascertain the level of alignment with each category. The interview data are presented in separate groups beginning with the administrators’ responses to the questions followed by the faculty responses.

Administrator Interviews

Outreach Strategies. The “outreach” category, which was added to the Beatty-Guenter model, refers to the strategies which are critical to the promotion of accessibility to non-traditional students. These approaches encourage positive attitudes towards postsecondary education and awareness prior to students attending the College. All administrators mentioned some form of outreach in their interviews. Four of the five administrators noted several outreach initiatives and one administrator suggested they were just beginning to add this component to their programs.

Many programs seemed to provide a lot of outreach to students prior to their arrival in the programs as a natural part of bridging a student's experience from the community to the College. One area seemed to be just beginning to offer these opportunities to students prior to application:

We do a lot of bridging, so for all those programs that are in the community, we worked closely with the staff of those programs; we provided professional
development for them and included them in PD activities we had on campus. Then we brought those students regularly to the College, we did tours, we gave them student cards, we brought them paraphernalia from the bookstore, all kinds of stuff, and they felt right at home. (A77)

There seemed, in some cases, to be specific outreach based on the student population that the program was interested in engaging, and there was recognition of these in documented partnerships. According to one administrator, “In terms of outreach, I would say we actually have quite a significant amount of outreach. We actually have a formal partnership with the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, for example, as well as other agencies” (A27).

One administrator seemed to be introducing outreach components but these were in the beginning stages and noted, “We're going towards that a little bit more. We've actually got one planned for the 24th of April, we're reaching out to guidance counsellors……we're trying to maybe cast that net, a little bit more broadly” (A33).

**Sorting Strategies.** “Sorting” strategies in the Beatty-Guenter model attempt to group students into appropriate subsets, with emphasis on the importance of matching students to appropriate retention techniques based on their characteristics. These strategies include: pre-entry and threshold strategies, the admissions process, assessment on entry, mechanisms to monitor student attendance and progress, and profiling “at risk” students. Three of the five administrators gave multiple examples of sorting students into specific programs identified mainly by their academic placement scores.

In this section, there were several activities described as sorting, from information sessions to working with the Registrar in a more formal, institutional approach. “I think on one level, we do this very well, sort of assessing the students… We have our intake and
our screening for specific programs. I would say we do that at the cohesive level” (A33).

One of the administrators saw that the sorting occurred at the program level and not at the College level and stated, “Well, the College doesn’t really sort students. We do … If a student comes to us, we identify where that student fits. At a College level, when a student is declined for academic reasons, upgrading is suggested” (A56).

There were examples given of collaboration between areas to sort students by offering alternative, and possibly more appropriate, programs based on their incoming grades:

We’re experimenting with the Registrar’s Office now that when a student is declined from an area where we have a pre-program and there’s a differential between the program’s cutoff and our cutoff in terms of grades, that what we’ll do instead of just saying you are not accepted to the College the student is referred to one of the pre-programs. (A27)

This approach was seen as more supportive to students, because instead of declining the student outright, it allows entry into a program that may be better suited to that individual and creates a pathway into the College. According to one respondent, “…..it softens the blow and we hope … we’ll help the student if they come and, indeed, a good many of our pre-program students do go on into various community services programs and are quite successful” (A40).

Supporting Strategies. “Supporting” strategies, the third category in the Beatty-Guenter model, endeavours to support students in their lives outside the College so that they find it easier to continue as students. Every administrator mentioned several examples of how this was carried out within the programs. This category elicited the most examples, which ranged from specific offerings of financial support through
bursaries, transportation, and food vouchers to more academic and emotional supports including supportive curriculum, the availability of student success programs and the Counselling staff within the Centre:

Our faculty team has looked at how they can embed supportive principles into the fabric of our classroom delivery.... Activities and supportive discussions and discourse in class help the class and teacher explore these and other realities of the student’s life and help to frame a new narrative for them as they move towards their new life journey. (A77)

There was recognition of the barriers that their students faced and how that impacted their learning. There was also general understanding of the supports required for these individuals to be successful:

The more barriers that an individual might have impacts what they need to be successful. They may be Crown Wards, they may have disclosed that they have a mental health issue or they have disabilities, or they might be laid off for more than six years. So as a program, we’ve been trying to bring onboard within our programs different ways to be able to support those individuals. We boosted our in-program counsellors, and we really explored how to support who we consider exceptional learners. (A77)

Another area where these supportive approaches were noted was in the attention given to financial supports for individual participants. One administrator suggested that financial support was an area that impacted a student’s success and noted that the programs took on the responsibility of distributing funds to support students in need:

In Upgrading we give the students tokens. We got lots of money to just give for transportation. We could have used it for childcare support, but we could never
seem to figure out how to distribute it equitably, so we didn't get that far … but we definitely attempted to do that through the use of financial aid bursaries. We were constantly trying to create more and more bursaries for students. (A56)

This supportive philosophy was also evident in the personal values of some of the individual administrators interviewed:

I am very much in line with the philosophy that everyone at some point in their life will have some sort of disability and it’s up to everyone to be able to understand how to be able to relate with everyone else…how do I not jump to conclusions and project my values on this person; how do I break it down to understand where this person is coming from. (A40)

In addition to the support faculty provided in the classroom, administrators also suggested that the support role extended beyond the College and included providing referrals to resources outside the College:

We don’t have on campus childcare. We do offer some financial aid in transportation… but we have a resource for all our staff to use that has about 300 agencies across Toronto to make referrals to, and that could be things like shelter, it could be women’s health, there could be friendship centres. Those are the things we know might come up with a student when a teacher might have a conversation with a student who says ‘I haven’t been able to make it here because I have no place to stay’. We have in this neighborhood alone four or five temporary and permanent housing solutions so that they can say ‘We can make you a referral’. (A77)
One administrator outlined the several support roles that existed within the division to support students and help them to connect both to the College and to the other services they could access:

We have hired a Student Success specialist. She does a lot of initiatives around student support. We also have a Pathway Specialist that tries to provide pathway support to students if they need or want to change programs, investigate options. We're heavily committed to that too, and we're continuing to explore ways to do that. (A33)

One administrator identified the use of Student Success specialists who provided “early alerts” to catch students when they began to struggle academically, but there was not a sense that this resource was available to all students. “We tend to target the more academically challenging courses for Student Success because they're struggling there. If we could help them there, obviously, that will take care of a lot of other stuff”, commented A33.

Another administrator identified the importance of having counsellors as support to the students, given the nature of the problems students experienced: “A lot of the upgrading programs across the province don't have counsellors. We have two counsellors in the program and their job is to do personal, career and academic counselling and students can see them at any time” (A56).

**Connecting Strategies.** “Connecting” strategies in the Beatty-Guenter model are aimed at the development and fostering of relationships between students and the institution. They promote the integration of the student into College life by creating opportunities to become a member of a community. These approaches increase the sense of attachment that students have to the institution and to their peers. There was a sense
that the programs provided connections to extracurricular activities, but these connections were described differently in each program. There were connecting activities mentioned by four of the administrators but they often related to academic skill enhancement rather than community building. As one administrator clarified, “Again, there’s variety of activities across the Centre, but I would say they are probably in each of the schools and academically focused again, because of the nature of supportive education” (A40).

There seemed to be an understanding in some programs that they lacked structured opportunities to build connections to the larger institution and for students to develop richer relationships with their peer group:

I think there is an opportunity to increase peer interactions. Extracurricular activities, we can definitely increase that. But we do have peer mentoring classes for math and for communication. (A77)

In two programs, the administrators described a specific focus on developing group activities that support the learner within the larger College setting. These were often described as “building networks” or in some cases, building a “connection”:

We instituted things like lounge nights and groups of classes going to see movies together related to the topics and the program…One of the assignments they had was to visit a class in postsecondary program to make the connection. Yeah, there are lots and lots of activities focused on connection. (A56)

**Transforming Students.** The fifth category attempts to transform students from passive learners to active learners, from possessing poor skills to developing improved skills, from expecting failure to expecting success and from being unmotivated to being goal-orientated.
There was consistency in the responses from the administrative group throughout the interviews and they showed both an interest in this category and reported capacity in delivering results in this area. The two items in the “transforming students” category most often reported were the use of embedded counsellors and learning coaches. The participants offered several examples in their description of the work they did and also discussed the outcomes of students within these programs:

Well, I think we do really well on this one, and certainly in particular areas. I think about the testimonials that students do and talk about how much they’ve changed in the time they’ve been here and how critical the supports they’ve had have been to them. (A27)

Administrators talked about both the academic achievements of the students and also about the powerful impact of helping them set a new course for their life. Many described this as a passion in their lives and what makes the work significant to them:

They are often really successful from the standpoint of somebody who hasn’t worked for 10 to 12 years; thought they’d never work again and then is out there in the community, holding down a job, doing well, back in touch with the family they’ve been estranged from. You see those powerful things as well. (A33)

One administrator cited the role of the counsellors and learning coaches as well as other staff as critical in this transformation process for students. They reported that, “We have embedded counsellors and then in pre-programs, we have learning coaches as well as coordinators, who really did a lot of advising, plus we created a new position just for advising students called the Pathways Specialist position” (A56).

There was a sense in four of the five administrative interviews that the work that was occurring had a transformative effect on both the staff and the students involved, and
that the outcomes of success had an impact on their lives beyond educational and employment benefits:

We tend to look at the jobs and finishing the program but then when I go to the graduations and I talk to the families, the other thing they say is, ‘Well, we’ve been out of touch for two or three years because we just couldn’t deal with the drugs anymore.’ Or ‘We just couldn’t deal with the repeated hospitalizations anymore.’ Then this person really came back and we connected, which in the scheme of things is probably more important than having that job. (A27)

**Transforming the Institution.** The fifth category aims to improve all aspects of teaching and learning and the working environment. First and foremost, these strategies focus on changing the commitment and priority given to retention by the institution. Typical strategies include structural changes, policy changes, action research, curriculum redesign, staff development programs, and teaching and learning innovations. Transforming strategies are the only ones in which the individual student is not the only object of the intervention.

Two administrators felt that there were difficulties with the transformational aspect at the College level as their programs did not always align in terms of College schedules. It appeared that policies, start times and schedules often created barriers for the students who were attending:

We have students who can only start in October because they only got laid off in September and they want to start programs in May but they needed to have their original marks in by January and that basically will give them two months to get themselves ready to go ...they end up missing the deadline to start in September and losing the spot and their funding, so they get kicked out of the program. (A77)
One administrator, reflecting on establishing richer connections with the rest of the College, suggested that there was a lot to do and that not much had been done in this area. There was a desire to create richer relationships with programs and individuals across the college:

I think what we need are consistent allies across the College system to look at access and accessibility. When we talk about as a College priority putting student learning first, I think that people stop short of really understanding, digging deeper to see what that really means and I think that it’s something everyone wants to say; if the college wants to truly be the steward of this diverse city, we need to make sure that we understand how to really elevate the stature of diverse groups of people. (A77)

There was a sense that lots of work had been done in this area through connections with other departments. Extending resources to others was a way of raising the profile of the area:

We reached out to diploma programs across the College and we provided extra classes for students in nursing, business, technology, apprenticeship and dental assisting. So through that we were supporting the students, but also were raising the profile of the access department and what the access department could do in collaboration with other departments. (A56)

Transformation at an institutional level was interpreted differently by different administrators; two administrators reported that great headway had been made because of the work on individual accommodations for individual processes, and two others reported feeling that there had not been substantial progress:
For us, it was not so much changing the institution’s policies, but working with the policies and finding a work around for our students and accommodating their needs. Our goal is not so much to change the policies, but, for these guys and this little program, can we find some work around. (A33)

One administrator felt the area had very little impact on the institutional culture and processes and stated that, “In our hearts we would love to be able to say we were transforming the institution, if you interview me again in three years, maybe we will have made some impact” (A56).

Faculty Interviews re: Beatty-Guenter Model

The Beatty-Guenter model was used as the framework to review both the administrator and faculty interviews and ascertain the level of alignment they saw between their work and each category. The interview data from administrators were covered in the previous section and the faculty data are shared below.

Faculty were asked to reflect on the programming delivered within their division and use the categories within the Beatty-Guenter model as a guide to identify examples of alignment in their work with each of the categories.

**Outreach Strategies.** When applying the Beatty-Guenter model to the faculty interviews, it appeared that there were some faculty who felt they provided a great deal of outreach to their students, with four of the five faculty suggesting that outreach was something that the programs did well:

I think we do outreach well; we do excellent referrals. We have got Aboriginal and new immigrant group sites, we have done a presentation just this week about pathways into College and these were all individuals who come from other countries We do a good job there. (F26)
One faculty described a process of formal agreements being signed to work with students who had multi-barriers within their own communities prior to them coming to the College. The faculty described that, “We do work with community partners as well, so we have five agencies in the community which can we work with. They run upgrading programs at their Centres” (F49).

One faculty felt that their program excelled in this area as they focused on populations that were hard to serve, commenting that, “I'd say we're up near the top. I mean that's where the majority of our students come from is through outreach … if we're going to market our program, that's exactly where it's going, to under-represented communities” (F71).

One faculty member saw no indication of an outreach approach within the programs they were teaching in, stating that, “I have not seen any evidence that that outreach happens, because I think the only outreach happens through an information fair within the community …It’s not very active and process-oriented. It's an event-based kind of an outreach” (F5).

Sorting Strategies. All faculty interviewed reported that they did conduct some sorting activities in the delivery of their programs, whether that was before arrival through the marketing materials, at intake with the incoming assessment, or with early warning systems that identify students at risk of academic failure. One faculty referred to early assessment, stating that, “I think across the whole Centre that that's happening. Early assessments are used in order to flag students who need more support and although it's not perfect, but it is there” (F71).

There was identification of the importance of sorting by all faculty, but some identified the burden that it placed on the system when students were trying to enter the
programs. That being stated, it was described as necessary to the delivery of the program: “Our department does sort students at intake, it's cumbersome so that's one of the downsides, but it means that we do sorting fairly early. Our marketing material does sort as well, as does the student and admission assessment process” (F26).

One faculty felt strongly that they were constantly engaged in sorting their students through intake and during programs but that the implementation of this sorting was impacted by the types of students and that “We focus on sorting, but our ability to implement some of these things may be less due to the population we work with, the transient nature of students” (F71).

Early warning systems were seen as another sorting technique, employed to ensure that students in need of help could be identified early and given the supports they required:

> We do have early warning systems, the teachers are excellent, sending emails to say, well, I've not seen Nancy for some time and Nancy shows up on a regular basis and I haven't see her for three weeks. We've got good warnings systems. The teachers are really frontline active and the teachers know the students. (F26)

**Supporting Strategies.** In the “supporting” category there were numerous examples of this activity. There was unanimous agreement by all faculty that this category was central to the work of this division and something that faculty took great pride in:

> I think faculty, teachers, they all are supportive to students, in terms of flexibility and allowances they make to accommodate the challenges students may be experiencing. But sometimes they can only talk and not do anything to change the circumstances for them because of the lack of logistic support. (F5)
Two faculty members identified support as the most critical factor in the success and retention of students and assumed that all faculty would recognize this, but there was a gap between intent and action since there were no mechanisms at the front line for faculty to engage in developing networks to support the students:

I think one of the biggest factors that I can think of is this kind of support, whether it's financial, to use an example, which requires some absolute initiatives that you need to take, like reaching out to be able to get money from people so that you can support students financially. So I think the intent is there, but I think the action, there's a gap. There's a huge gap in action. (F26)

Two faculty members provided a list of examples of supporting students, from transitions workshops to the use of counselling and student success specialists embedded into the programs. They also described helping to provide transportation support for students with tokens or metro passes as well as food and cash cards for students who are struggling with food security:

Things like on-campus child care and stuff like that, the transportation assistance, we have specific funding for that. We have funding to support people for childcare. It's not on campus but they can get funding and some help with childcare. We have TTC assistance. We have gift cards for grocery stores, for food security. The financial aid and bursaries, those are more at the Centre level. (F71)

One faculty member identified cuts in funding as having an impact on the program’s ability to provide these resources to support the students:

We used to do a better job. We have funding. We used to have more funding for transportation tokens. For food cards, we don’t have that anymore. Austerity
measures are hitting the provincial government. I think we need to do a better job.

On-campus child care is a massive, massive need, know that that’s a huge reason why they miss school or why they’re late for school. (F49)

**Connecting Strategies.** Connecting students to the larger College community was seen as something the faculty did with their students in an ongoing way within the program areas, with some programs doing this in a more active way than others. All five faculty gave examples of connecting student to the programs, to support within the college and to activities that would broaden their horizons.

There were a wide variety of items identified as vehicles for connection, from social activities to more structured events like orientation. According to one faculty, “They focused on creating programs that have more peer interactions and where we’re creating a culture of mentorship and we encourage the stronger students to come and support other students … in extracurricular events, we just had a big pre-program social” (F49).

One faculty identified that the orientation program was a good vehicle for connecting the students to the faculty, noting that, “We connect through orientation to the program really well through our three-week orientation, which is probably one of the most detailed orientations” (F26).

There was also some reference made to the programs having parties and socials to connect the students throughout the year. One faculty stated that, “We also do within our area a couple of times a year, a party or a potluck or barbecues and we have the market which is a really big example of connecting” (F57).

One faculty member identified that connecting occurred through activities the academic programs delivered like tutoring and mentoring:
Increasing student faculty interaction, that's happening within the program, increasing student peer interactions, yeah, we have tutoring set up that works for multiple departments within the school, right? It's a support that connects students from other programs and we don't let the school lines get in the way of connecting our students to resources. (F71)

**Transforming students.** When asked about transformation, all five of the faculty felt that they were able to see the students transform throughout their program and took pride in the role they had in this transformation. Faculty mentioned that the success of the students they served was an indication of the transformation of these individuals. All faculty identified examples of this transformation process. This category yielded many examples of how faculty felt students were transformed through the education they received:

I think we are successfully preparing students to become more confident in their ability to take rigorous educational endeavours for themselves and choose careers that actually would create meaning and hope for them and some financial stability as well. So I think this is success, for our students and for us as well. For our students to be able to feel success, feel confident, and move forward is a really proud moment for all of us working in the program. I think that's the biggest success. (F5)

One faculty member felt that it was through offering services and supports that meet the students’ needs and engage the students in the process that transformation happened:

We do well with instead of transforming, letting life transform students. Students develop study skills, because we've got smaller classes. We've provide transition
supports and workshops. We've got our one-on-one accommodation. We've got the counsellors embedded. We've got a lot of good stuff to support the students’ in their transformation. (F26)

The faculty saw the powerful role they played in the lives of their students and expressed this sentiment throughout the interviews:

We all have a passion. It's not just work for us. We absolutely have a very, very deep passion and belief in the work we do. I think this fuels us and energizes us here because people come and share their lives with us and they talk about their adversities and triumphs. They talk about the challenges and how they've been able to overcome. It really kind of inspires us in some way. It kind of provides this intrinsic motivation that tends to make us feel, ‘This is demanding work but it is also such a privilege to be a part of people’s journey’. (F5)

One faculty suggested that students’ experience of succeeding in a course that they had previously found difficult impacts the way they feel about themselves and their ability to learn:

I've heard from some students, when they take courses ... let's say take math courses, that they were never good at and they absolutely have great experiences, and do well and it changed the way they feel about themselves and learning. They find teachers helpful and using some cool strategies to motivate student learning. (F71)

Faculty describe the transformation as students learn new technical and soft skills as part of their jobs and one way in which they see the students making changes in their lives. One faculty added that, “I mean obviously our focus is on developing skills and we
think a lot about essential skills...The hard skills and the soft skills that help people change and they need for employability” (F57).

**Transforming the institution.** When asked about the impacts that the programs had on the institution, many faculty could identify impacts within the programs, but did not speak to the larger institutional impacts. Two faculty identified examples of the work within the programs and teaching approaches for this category:

I would say that we are doing some amazing interventions, improvising curriculum, including evidence-based approaches, teaching innovative courses that have added a new dimension and a new depth to student experience, developing teaching methods that are universally designed or based. These don’t have to be limited to students with mental health issues...anyone could benefit from these. (F5)

Three other faculty identified a lack of change at the institutional level despite strong relationships being developed with individuals, with the system, and even with other areas within the college:

We have built over the years, extraordinary relationships with admission and intake, but other than that, with all the other schools and Centers for whatever reasons, I think we come right back to the institutional silos, the setting up of departments and their programs. So you're all ‘over there’; you work on your own rather than an integrated model, which may work very well. (F26)

There was a sense that the ability of this area to make institutional changes that transform the system was hampered by the silos that exist within the institution itself. One faculty described the challenge of silos, stating, “Silos, yes, we've got them, we are
exploring alternate teaching approaches and institutional withdrawal policies, flexible scheduling can serve to hinder more transformational change” (F71).

Faculty described presenting at internal conferences and conducting applied research as ways to inform institutional transformation, but did not cite any examples of how that information was then used to change policy or practice within the larger institution. One faculty member stated that, “We do a lot of professional development….. Conduct applied research and publish it and deliver our own conference…. I don't know if that applies…if anyone looks we would have a lot to say about the institution, but not sure that changes things” (F57).

**Beatty-Guenter Model Components**

Participants were asked to discuss which components of the Beatty-Guenter model existed in their setting, based on their review of the relevant definitions, including the elements of outreach and awareness. This question was designed to answer RQ #2: To what extent can the Beatty-Guenter model be used to explain gaps in access programming for under-represented students and inform institutional transformation in the Ontario college that is the focus of this study?

As part of the interview, participants were asked to elaborate on why the model’s components were – or were not – included. In addition, they were asked to provide an assessment of each category of the model and rate their own area on a scale of one to ten, identifying where elements of the model might already be in use within their division. All scores were recorded, but I included only scores of six or higher for analysis, as that number indicated an assessment of that category as more significantly present in the program area. Negative examples, such as “lack of support”, were recorded and assigned
a specific designation but were omitted from the analysis, since the question focused on how this model did align with the area.

There were significant discrepancies related to how participants chose to place their examples, with the same example often appearing in multiple categories. It appeared that individuals chose to place the example where they felt they fit best even though they were given a written description to guide their assessment of what type of examples would fit in each of the categories. I then categorized the information by section and analysed the top two or three examples against the Beatty-Guenter model to see if the examples offered were also identified in the model.

In the “outreach” category, there were twelve individual responses given for examples of outreach activities and the top two examples chosen as forms of outreach were working with community partners and the referral process. All ten participants identified the same top two responses, which may indicate that these are well-established vehicles for meeting the objective of outreach in this division, and these were also referenced in the Beatty-Guenter model.

In the “sorting” category, fifteen examples were given and the top two examples were comprehensive sorting / admission assessment system. Three others suggested that an ability to sort early / early assessments / early warning systems were the way students were sorted, and an additional three suggested that marketing plays a role in the sorting process. These three examples were given by nine of the ten people interviewed and are also listed in the Beatty-Guenter model as examples of the “sorting” category.

The “supporting” category Beatty-Guenter (1994) suggests is to “strive to ease students’ problems with the aspects of everyday life, making it more likely that they will be able to maintain their status as students” (p.117). There were sixteen answers offered
by the participants to this category, and the top two responses were transportation assistance, suggested by five participants, and financial support / free tuition / food cards, identified by four others. Both of these items are also listed in the Beatty-Guenter model.

In the “connecting” category, there were thirteen individual responses with the top two being peer tutoring (e.g., encouraging mentorship by students in a remedial math program) suggested by four of the participants and extracurricular events offered by three others. Both are consistent with the Beatty-Guenter interventions to develop academic skills and improve connection and motivation.

The “transforming students” category had twelve different examples. The top two most cited responses, selected by four of the participants, were embedded counsellors / learning coaches / learning success specialists. Again, there was consistency of responses of the most frequently mentioned activities in this area and the ones in the Beatty-Guenter model (1994), which as she describes it, changes the student “from un-committed to committed, from uninvolved to involved .... or from failure threatened to achievement motivated” (p. 121).

In the category “transforming the institution”, only six individual examples were identified. The examples chosen did not really address the issues of institutional change, but rather focused on teaching and the development of teaching communities, which are listed in this category of the model but are not central to the theme of institutional transformation.

What was clear when the model was applied as a filter to the work of this particular area, was that there was an ability to identify examples of the model within the work of the division. The most frequently cited examples were also identified in the work described in the Beatty-Guenter model. There was also a clear indication from the
number of responses given that the categories where most of the work of this division occurred was in the areas of “supporting”, “connecting”, and “transforming students” and the area with the fewest identified activities was “transforming the institution”. This was consistent with the descriptions the participants gave of their work within the division. Given that the definition of each category was quite broad, and the specific initiatives were only named and not described by the participants in detail, it is hard to know whether their examples could be considered as consistent with the model presented.

**Beatty-Guenter Model as Service Delivery Guide**

Building on the previous question, participants were asked to comment on sub-question six and to explore and identify implications for the implementation of this model or an expanded version of this model. They were also asked to identify whether the Beatty-Guenter model would be a useful guide to the delivery of their access programs. Details were sought about whether any elements were not applicable to the participants’ setting, and whether there were additional elements that would make this model more relevant.

When asked about the Beatty-Guenter model, all the faculty and four of the five administrators interviewed found the model very helpful. In addition, eight participants stated the specific ways in which it was useful. Eight of the ten participants interviewed agreed that this model would be easy to apply and would have positive implications for program development.

Administrators found that the model could be most useful to them as it would be easily applied and measurable. Faculty identified that they liked the holistic, well-rounded approach of the model and that it could be used as visual guide to their
programming. Ninety percent of both faculty and administrators felt it provided a useful guide to programming.

Three administrators felt it was both clear and easy to adapt to their setting. There was consensus that the use of a common model could draw together the common threads among the access programs and help to drive a shared language and approach within very different programs. One administrator shared that, “..., it’s actually interesting. If a model is one that’s helpful, it should be clear and obvious to me. This is clear and obvious. I look through it and it is precisely what we either do or know we should be doing” (A40). This individual felt the model would work for them and the program that they were managing. Another participant mentioned that it was clear and made sense to them and that they had actually never thought about their work in this way before using this model and stated that, “I never thought about it this way before, but definitely those categories were all the important things” (A33). One faculty felt that the model was useful as it provided a guideline within which the information could be evaluated. The faculty noted, "I think it's an easy way of looking at a model with measurable parameters as guidelines and a way to evaluate its efficacy... rather than using a very theoretical, dense model, this allows for similar kinds of benefits” (F5).

They saw how they could do active outreach and sort their students as well as refer students to other resources based on the best fit or customization. They shared that they liked the fact that the model seemed to address all student needs, and didn’t just focus on their education. They felt this would help in building a learning community “rather than just deliver empty vessel teaching, where the focus is to shove knowledge into them and then you can get out of the class. This model suggests constant interaction
where learning extends beyond a classroom environment” (F5). Another faculty felt the model could be used as a vehicle to influence change:

I would use this model to influence changes in the programs and the rest of the school. Yeah, I think that …the use of this model could influence those programs a great deal when you start to look at your program from a perspective of access and support; it forces changes in the structure of the program, right? If we're going to commit to this model... it would force policy changes within the rest of the Centre. (F71)

One administrator felt the model was interesting to document the work they were already engaged in, and could be used to accurately capture the current work, but that implementing the model might not lead them to do things differently. The administrator noted that, “I think it’s an interesting model for thinking about what we do, as all models are, to capture what we do.....I don’t know that it would lead to us doing anything differently if we were doing it with this model in mind (A27).

One faculty felt the model could be used as a “visual guide” and to become more intentional about their approaches, which could transform their work and lead to a potential transformation within the institution:

I think the model allows you to visually capture that which you want to do and it is simple and clear... I look at it as a very visual guide. You're able to list very, very clearly what is that you want to accomplish under this model… I think it's exceptionally applicable, because when you begin to implement even portions of this model in intentional ways, I think institutions then themselves become transformed. I think the entire model is very applicable but I'm attracted to this model because of its simplicity and bureaucracy does not like simplicity. (F26)
Nine out ten of the interview participants liked the Beatty-Guenter model and felt it was a comprehensive and holistic approach to serving their student population. It was seen as not being limited to in-class learning, but rather as focused on shifting attitudes, transforming students’ lives and transforming the institution, which many of the participants identified as an issue they would like to have more influence on.

When asked to reflect on what might be missing, there were only three people who provided input, with the other seven stating they would not add anything else. The additions that were suggested included: 1) a need to focus this model on the opportunities present for any institution in the access area, 2) to take into account the current impact of constraints and potential risks within that institution and, 3) to identify the level of influence the program has within the larger institution. These additions to the model could act as a filter that would allow the area to gauge how quickly the model could be implemented, based on how much influence the area has on the senior leadership and the policy levers within the institution. One administrator expressed that having ideas and passion alone was not enough to influence the culture within postsecondary environments. They suggested that the model would benefit from a category that could help to identify the level of influence the program had within the larger college milieu:

Identifying one’s own level of influence as a program within a bigger system is not included. We might have all the ideas and all the passion, but if no one is listening on the other end because of who is presenting the information, I think that this is always the challenge. (A77)

**Implementation Implications**

The final interview question focused on the implications of implementing the Beatty-Guenter model, or an expanded version of it, in the Access Division. The question
posed was: “Are there elements that you feel are not applicable to your setting?”. Six of the participants indicated that all elements in the model were applicable to their setting. Two participants indicated they would make some minor alterations to both the language and description of the processes, and two did not respond to this question. Two participants indicated that the language used in the model reflected a postsecondary population and that it was not easily applied to their setting in upgrading programs. Some of their programs were continuous intake so the language of late registration was not applicable to their setting. They recommended that the language used in the model reflect the programs implementing the model.

Participants were then asked about the implications for implementation of this model within a college setting.

Table 11 below presents participants’ views on the implications of implementing the Beatty-Guenter model. Although there were a limited number of responses for this question, there was a degree of consistency. Three of the faculty believed that the model could allow for proactive monitoring of a student’s progress, and five suggested that the implementation of this model would cause institutional transformation to occur. There seemed to be a sense that the implementation of this systematic model would mean subsequent changes in the institution and would require a shift in the other programs within the institution.

Three administrators and three faculty suggested that if this model were implemented, it would have implications that could require other programs within the institution to be transformed. One faculty felt it would be the first time they would have a standardized way of looking at support for their students, which would increase the chances of student success:
The implications would be felt in the messaging to the divisions, the faculty and staff that the institution needs to be more integrated within itself. More opportunities to build, to share our strengths with one another and to create more opportunities for students to be engaged with one another. It would be a more complete service to students, a service that actually looks beyond just the ‘hard scales’ in the classroom, and looks at the whole life of the student and understands what they need to be successful. (A40)

One administrator felt that the change needed to begin at the top and be consistently delivered at all levels throughout the College. This participant believed that without this systematic approach, the model would not have the desired impact with the students.

Table 11. *Implications for Implementation of this Model*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>proactive monitoring of students for entire learning journey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>institutional transformation of other programs would be required</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>an examination of college mission statement would be required</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>more opportunities to build student engagement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>provide a roadmap if implemented totally</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>need for structured communication strategy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>culture shift would be required</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>financial implications</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One faculty participant felt that the approach could not be just from the bottom up, but also needed to come as a strong message from the senior leadership team to make it happen:
If all the Deans were speaking this language and then all the chairs and it trickles down and if there are workshops in staff development on this kind of learning environment, it will necessarily inform what happens in the classroom. That’s where it has to happen. The tutoring learning centre and the counselling and disability centres, those are important, but unless it is happening by in large in the classroom, we’re not going to be hitting all the students. (F49)

Four of the participants believed that this change would have to come with a significant culture shift if this model were to be sustainable. They felt it would require all areas to buy into a new way of examining what was being delivered to the students – the supports as well as the academic programs that students need in order to be successful:

I think any kind of culture shift is tough. It's a very long time-consuming process and journey. I think it's going to be very hard. Culture shift is the most difficult one; it's a very slow and gradual process but I think, once it's done, it can flow right from there. (F5)

Although culture change was identified as something difficult to achieve, this individual did not believe it was impossible. It would take time, but shifting people's attitudes was possible. The participant did, however, acknowledge that creating “Attitudinal changes, was important to do since they're quite embedded, they take much longer to occur” (F5).

Participants also noted that the funding implications of implementing this type of model would be substantial due to the level of support required to successfully deliver programs within the model as outlined:

I don't quite know any sort of financial implications, but I am sure there are many. I think if a model like this was to be implemented, even over a long period of
time, it would be costly. You would, however, see students being better supported.

With the students being better supported, you would see students, hopefully
having improved results in school, but even before they’re better supported, you
would see students being able to access programs in greater numbers. (F26)

All the participants interviewed felt that implementation would mean a large-scale
change for the College as a whole, with implications at all levels. They recognized that it
would take time and money to make policy changes. Two participants also identified that
it would require agreement across multiple Centres. Funding was mentioned again as a
consideration before they would be able to change their delivery to something resembling
this model.

Even given the challenges this change would present, there was a sense of
receptivity and excitement from some participants about the impact that the potential
changes would make on the lives of the students they educated.

Outline of remaining chapters

Chapter four has presented the findings based on the document analysis of
college-wide and divisional specific documents, as well as the interviews of both the
faculty and administrator participants within the study. Chapter five will examine the
analysis of findings, including an examination of the original questions. Chapter six
includes a brief summary of the research and provides recommendations on policy,
practice and further research.
Chapter Five: Analysis of Findings

The findings from the document and interview data were presented in Chapter four and both the current model of access programming at Central College and the extent to which it aligned with one access model, developed by Beatty-Guenter (1994), were examined. Chapter five will focus on the analysis of all findings, and on observations and conclusions that can be drawn from data presented.

The study applied the Beatty-Guenter model as a filter to the current access model employed at this Ontario college to ascertain the value of the Beatty-Guenter model as a model for service delivery. This research employed a case study method as a vehicle for the investigation as it allowed for information to be gathered from multiple points and to more accurately capture the experiences of the faculty and administrators interviewed in this study and their evaluations of the Beatty-Guenter model.

This case study relied on two sources of data collection: (1) document analysis, and (2) semi-structured interviews of two key informant groups central to this study: faculty and administrators. Each stakeholder group (faculty and administrators) appeared to present a slightly different perspective which could be based on the role they held within the organization, but the delivery of quality academic programs that support student success was referenced and described by everyone interviewed as a core component their work. This model, if adopted, may provide a collective framework to explain the work and a shared language around which to discuss common purpose.

The positive initial response to this model indicates that a framework may help to illuminate some of the connections between programs in the Access Division and allow others to be developed. This research was informed by the notion that the Beatty-Guenter model could be used by stakeholders to understand the complexity in their work, to
identify individual stages in the delivery model they are engaged in and to inform the design, development and evaluation of their programs.

Stake suggests that “issues are not simple and clean, but intricately wired to political, social, historical, and especially personal contexts…..all these meanings are important in studying cases” (p. 17). I found Stake to be accurate in his assessment of the complexity involved in case studies. All the questions that I analyzed uncovered many avenues to explore, and that multiplicity directly influenced the questions under consideration. The issues were often rooted in history, and indeed are “wired” to the cultural, political and personal contexts of this Access Division. For example, the identification of discrimination that was reported by both the faculty and administrative groups may be particular to this organization and the development or delivery of the access programs. It may also come from the structural organization of this College as these programs often are identified as “different” because they are externally funded, and in many cases, are not part of the College’s postsecondary funded offerings. The history and experience of the Access Division at this College shapes the impression that is held both within and outside the division.

The data I reviewed were seen not only through the lens of the model, but also through historical and cultural lenses. I came to understand both the history and cultural contexts of this particular division through the interview data presented and to appreciate the perspectives and beliefs of the practitioners within this division.

The data collected were organized according to the two main research questions and the seven sub-questions (Appendix D). The two main research questions are answered below followed by the findings from the seven sub-questions.
1. What can be learned about the efficacy of an expanded Beatty-Guenter model by applying it as a framework to examine one Ontario college’s access programs?

2. To what extent can the Beatty-Guenter model be used to explain gaps in access programming for non-traditional students and inform institutional transformation in the Ontario College that is the focus of this study?

In regard to question one (about the efficacy of the Beatty-Guenter model), it is important to begin with some of the limitations of these data. This singular case study was inherently small with only ten participant interviews and one interview informant and, as such, the information about the efficacy of this framework must be seen in those terms. Given that the participants work in the field and are experts on their own experiences, their responses can be given some measure of credibility as they apply to their own work within the Access Division setting.

**Efficacy of the Beatty-Guenter Model**

Notwithstanding these limitations, and based on the data gathered, it could be suggested that the Beatty-Guenter model has some potential usefulness to the participants within this study. The purpose of this study was to examine the usefulness of one approach to the delivery of access programming at a particular college.

A review of the current literature revealed limited information on any models employed in the college system to deliver access programming or documentation on the effectiveness of program models to achieve specific outcomes. The utilization of a systematic, coordinated access strategy that spans the course of a student’s postsecondary experience was also an area where information appeared to be scarce. Information was available, however, on the access of non-traditional students to postsecondary education. This information generally focused on individual barriers to
achieving access to postsecondary education, with little information on institutional barriers presented in the literature. I found negligible information on the analysis of frameworks for the structured delivery of access programming, particularly as it related to Ontario colleges. Additionally, the research on the systemic issues that prevent a more comprehensive and holistic approach to this work at the institutional level was essentially absent. The absence of this information in the literature suggests that contributions like mine would add to the knowledge available to practitioners in this area of study.

Within the document analysis there were examples of each of the categories described in the Beatty-Guenter model. Fewer examples of alignment to the model were noted in the documents analyzed as these documents tended to focus on information external to the program area and referenced work that was happening college-wide. Overall, within the college-level documentation, there were few references made to access and only tangential references to the categories described within the Beatty-Guenter model. The largely external focus within the documents produced in the years 2010-2012 was a significant departure from earlier documents, in which there had been identification of access as part of the mandate for this College.

Regarding the program documentation, a shift of focus was noted during the time period 2006-2012. The documents and marketing materials moved from identification of support for unique or individual students and their success in 2008 to the 2010 document where outcomes, skill development and employment of graduates were referenced.

While there was a high level of congruence in the answers given by faculty and administrators, there were notable differences that could be attributed to the role the individual held within the organization. The faculty often referenced the impact on the student in their discussion of each category. They shared examples of student stories,
identified with the particular program they currently taught in and the “way things are
done in my program” versus the division as a whole. The administrative staff seemed to
have a greater sense of what was happening at the divisional level and within the College.
They had fewer examples of particular students and more examples that described the
work of the division, the impact on the programs and the interface with the College as a
whole.

To understand the findings within this study, a further detailed analysis of the data
by categories within the expanded Beatty-Guenter model is delineated below, and
includes the identification of each category within the literature review, the
documentation findings and the interviews of both the administrators and the faculty with
special emphasis placed on sub-question five.

The expanded Beatty-Guenter model begins with the “outreach” category which
serves to connect students early in their postsecondary exploration to the institution as a
way of reducing barriers and increasing information and comfort with the new
environment (Engle, et al., 2007). The literature review clearly identified that early
engagement of potential students within their own communities can reduce anxiety and
create a greater level of comfort before students make the transition to the postsecondary
environment (Perna and Swail, 2001). Outreach was also identified as an important
feature of the programs at Central College by eight of the ten faculty and administrators,
who recognized partnerships within the community as vehicles to support their program
recruitment and help students during the transition to college. Twelve separate examples
of outreach were identified by the participants within the programs by both faculty and
administrators. The focus of these examples seemed to be on the strong partnership that
existed rather than the actual mechanisms for outreach. Although there were a number of
items identified, they did not qualify as outreach for the purpose of recruitment and transition of students. The role of partner agencies in the overall success of the outreach endeavours was mentioned as key to the success of the outreach efforts. There was, however, limited information on the detail of these outreach activities in any of the program or divisional documents reviewed. There was no collective approach acknowledged, or plan identified, in any of the examples that the interviewees shared. It appeared that the outreach work was executed separately by each program, and could be quite different within each program, as it was not driven by a collective or divisional strategy. Although the network of partnerships was described as strong, and was one of the top two vehicles identified for outreach, the documentation on the existence of these partnerships was limited. There was a reference in the program review material about the need to increase the information on program offerings available to potential students, as it was suggested that most students found out about the programs through word of mouth.

The second category in the model is “sorting”, which is employed to more accurately and appropriately match students to programs and resources that could increase their success.

There was information in the literature that supported sorting students into categories by skill and personal support needs as a viable approach that increases a student's ability to persist and succeed. Choy (2001) suggested that the capacity of institutions to help students persist and to remain enrolled was best met by focusing on the needs of the individual students and providing appropriate programs to meet those needs.

In the interviews with both the administrators and faculty, there was general agreement that the programs did sort students into specific categories, identified specific
needs a student might have and then worked to ensure that student received individualized support targeted at his or her particular needs.

Although this agreement was obvious, there was a difference in how faculty and administrators answered this question with all faculty identifying that the sorting of students occurred in multiple ways prior to them arriving in the programs. This included the selection of program at preadmission through information sessions, at intake with the incoming assessment, or with early warning systems that identify students at risk of academic failure. Three administrators gave more general examples of sorting students and these pertained to academic assessments that occurred at the divisional level prior to the student entering the programs. This disparity could be related to the more individualized focus that faculty had and their familiarity with the program details.

Three of the five administrators and all five faculty gave a total of fifteen examples of sorting students into specific programs or sections by their academic placement scores or personal needs. The faculty examples were more specific and more detailed. Decisions to tailor their teaching approach were also identified as being driven by students’ needs. Faculty shared examples of how they had created specific levels within their own classes and approached each group with flexibility, allowing the students to work within their own comfort zones, and, in some cases, work ahead based on successful outcomes. There was a general consensus in all of the data reviewed that having students’ academic and personal needs identified and addressed through a sorting mechanism was an important factor in students’ persistence and success. The findings in the interview data suggest that there was alignment of the work being done within these programs and the features within the “sorting” category of the Beatty-Guenter model.
“Supporting” is the next category, and the provision of support to students in their postsecondary programs as a factor in the students’ success was well-documented in the literature review. Additionally, the divisional and program materials and the interviews of both the administrators and the faculty identified numerous examples of the value placed on this category within this divisional area.

In the literature review, Stallard (2015) suggested that the universal need for support can be met through supportive personal connections at college, and when that support is present, students do better both academically and socially. Students who do not connect with the academic and/or social communities are less likely to persist (Conston, 2015). Through personal connection, students are more able to manage the outside pressures they encounter in their lives outside the institution (Beatty-Guenter, 1994).

Numerous accounts of support were referenced within this category and supportive faculty and programming were noted as areas of strength in all the program reviews. Student evaluations also provided multiple examples of the extensive support students received during the course of their programs, and the impact that had on their personal growth and academic success. Sixteen separate examples of supporting were identified in this category, and every interviewee cited more than one example of the support offered to their students. All faculty and administrators (100%) identified this category as an area of program strength. Therefore, there is evidence of strong alignment within the support category of the Beatty-Guenter model.

“Connecting” is the third category in the Beatty-Guenter model and is represented by the active engagement of students in the college experience, both academically and personally. The literature review identified this category as a key component in student retention. Tinto (1993) described connecting as academic and social
integration or “fit,” and also suggested that achieving that connection can increase the chances of persistence and success.

There were some examples of connecting in the documentation reviewed, specifically in the Academic Strategy and Academic Plan, the Divisional mission statement and the program reviews, which all mentioned one or two examples of connecting activities. There was also identification of the need for connection in the student entry survey, where the need to balance work, family and school demands was an issue. The impact of the demands of personal and family responsibilities while going to school was highlighted in this information. This aligns with the Beatty-Gunter model, which suggests that recognition of these issues, and specific and timely supports, are key to maintaining the balance necessary to be successfully retained.

All five faculty and four administrators identified thirteen examples within the “connecting” category throughout the interviews. Administrators’ responses were more focused on academic skill enhancement, whereas faculty tended to focus on the connections which improved motivation, personal growth and connection with peers. The examples cited were often in connection to the resources within the department and fewer examples had to do with the integration of the student within the College itself.

Here again, there was a notable alignment with the “connecting” examples presented by the faculty and administrators and the Beatty-Gunter model.

“Transforming students”, the fifth category in the Beatty-Gunter model, was reflected in the literature review as the ability to increase a student’s self-concept, motivation and academic skills. Achieving academic and social success helps students create a new academic persona, a new image and confidence in their abilities as learners. This transformation is particularly important for many non-traditional learners who have
not had previous academic success. There were no references in the academic documents related to transformation of students through participation in the programs. Within the marketing materials and the annual reviews, however, there were profiles of students who detailed the transformation of their life circumstances and the personal and academic growth they experienced as a direct result of participation in the programs. The program reviews also identified that students felt their work with caring faculty had an impact on their confidence levels and directly affected their positive academic outcomes. There was consistency in the examples identified by faculty and administrators, and the ones chosen were also identified within the Beatty-Guenter model.

All five faculty and four of five administrators identified twelve separate examples of the activities and supports put in place to help in the transformation of the students within their programs. This category clearly has alignment with the Beatty-Guenter model.

“Transforming” the institution, the final category in the model, was present in the literature review and was seen as an important component to deliver comprehensive and student-focused programs. The literature review identified the need for systemic action at the institutional level to eliminate the institutional barriers to student success. Tinto (2012) suggests that effective institutions are systemic in their delivery of service. He argues that, “Their actions are not piecemeal but encompass the full range of actions that support students in pursuit of a college degree or certificate” (p. 104). He recommends aligning all programs, services and actions within an approach or framework and delivering these offerings in a collaborative and collective manner, thereby maximizing the impact for students. He suggests that “effective institutions are intentional, structured, and proactive .... they collect and utilize their data...develop plans; actively pursue their
goals” (p.82).

In both the document review and the interview analysis, there was little evidence that this category was present in this division. Although there were notations in the institutional documents about this division, and the work was clearly present in calendars and program offerings, there were no documents that identified how this area had led institutional change or of any structural changes that resulted from the division’s work. This finding was also consistent in the interviews. Only six individual examples were presented, and the focus of these examples was on the teaching approaches taken and the development of new processes within the division itself. There was no evidence identified that the institution actually utilized or valued the teaching approaches identified by the interviewees. None of the examples presented could be considered transformative at the institutional level. Three administrators and two faculty reported that some headway had been made in transforming the institution. These participants referenced work on individual teaching approaches, processes and accommodation, which do not reflect a larger institutional transformation. Two administrators and three faculty reported feeling that no substantial progress had been made in this area. There was little documented evidence that the transformation of this institution was occurring in the divisional work and, therefore, this category was not aligned to the Beatty-Guenter model.

Nine of the ten participants agreed that they perceived this model as useful, and confirmed some distinctly positive attributes that could be constructive for this division. The division currently lacks an organizing framework, and participants identified the inherent value in this model and the potential within it to help create a common language and approach to their current offerings. They saw that many of the components already
existed within their setting and that this concept could be applied to deliver customized resources based on the categories provided. They suggested that the categories could provide a framework to develop more measurable parameters to evaluate their programs, which could address their need for a more robust data collection system.

Nine out of ten participants felt the model was clear, transparent, easy to use, and would offer much alignment within the programs and across the division. If this model was applied, participants felt it would allow for a common language to share across programs and to describe their work.

Individuals felt that it would be important to achieve buy-in and culture change if this framework were to be employed, but agreed that using a common framework could be a good place to begin the discussion of larger issues.

Research question two asked about the use of the Beatty-Guenter model to explain gaps in access programming for under-represented students, and to inform institutional transformation.

The model did identify gaps when it was applied as a filter to the existing programming offered in this division through a process of identifying activities that fit within each of the model’s categories. The categories where this division seemed to have very strong alignment with the Beatty-Guenter model were with the four categories of “sorting”, “supporting”, “connecting” and “transforming students”. The category of “outreach” yielded a number of responses but the answers seemed to focus on the identification of strong partnership ties rather than the mechanism of student engagement or transition. Little alignment was apparent within the “institutional transformation” category where there were few activities cited and limited reference to the Beatty-Guenter model.
Given these results, I suggest that the model might be used in its present form as an initial filter to identify gaps in programming, as it did in this case. It became clear through the research that there were some areas where the program exceeded the model’s definitions.

For example, in the following four categories there were multiple rich and detailed examples given with a total of fifty-six presented for “sorting” (15), “supporting” (16), “connecting” (13), and “transforming students” (12).

Many of the comments revealed both the passion the participants felt for the work they were engaged in, and the difference they felt it made in the lives of their students. One faculty was adamant about the program’s dedication to student support and their personal commitment to their work to ensure students felt cared for and had the best chance of success:

That's an interesting question. I think if we were scored on our support to students, it's a 100% for the program and a 100% for me. When it comes to helping students transition into postsecondary programs, we have seen an extraordinary amount of success and that is because we provide students with the wraparound support they need. (F26)

Administrators also identified certain things they did extremely well and offered many examples of the work to support it. One administrator shared that, “I think on one level, we do this very, very well, sort of assessing students, and I think we do that extremely well. I'd almost say comfortably at a school level, maybe we have things to teach others” (A33).

In other categories, such as “transforming the institution”, there appeared to be a more tentative approach to what interviewees presented, and more difficulty identifying
specific activities that fell within that category. According to one administrator,
“Transforming the institutions, I think we’ve had some effect on the institution, not as much as I’d like to have but we certainly have, at least I think so” (A27).

Another administrator identified huge contributions in a specific area, but was clear about not impacting institutional structures, stating that, “Obviously, a lot of this stuff’s come up and as I say, even if we haven't sort of transformed the bylaws or policies of the institution, I think we've made a huge contribution, like in mental health” (A33).

One faculty identified difficulty in understanding what was meant by transformation of the institution, and suggested that it needed to be something that could be seen as changed at the institutional level to be seen as having an impact within this category. The faculty explained, “I am not sure what this means, but I don't think we have much impact on the institution, I need to see something that actually changed, because I'm speaking specifically about hard impact on the institution” (F57).

The comments received in the section on transforming the institution indicated that the participants did not feel this was an area where they had much impact.

The model itself clearly had strengths in particular areas and weaknesses in others. It strengths can be seen in the ease of application, the simplicity of the categories and the sense from the individuals interviewed that they would find it useful as a way of aligning their work within the division.

Generally, the model seemed to be easy to interpret, and participants did not seem to have any difficulty assessing their programs using this framework. The weakness in the model was seen when it was used as a filter to identify and assess activities within each of the categories. The Beatty-Guenter definitions are not clearly delineated, which left room for personal interpretation. As a result, it appeared that each participant
developed a personal interpretation for each category and selectively assigned activities in which they were engaged to different categories, depending on how that participant interpreted the meaning of that category or the work they were doing.

Therefore, in its present state, the model is not refined enough to assess or evaluate the choices that individuals made, or the accuracy of those choices, to the original intent of the Beatty-Guenter model. A set of well-defined categories with a checklist of proposed activities for each category would have netted a more accurate picture of the work of this division and given more insight into the gaps that exist.

The creation of a checklist would ensure greater accuracy and a more precise assessment tool. My research was focused on how well the model aligned to the current work of one access division and the usefulness of the model in its current form and, therefore, this recommendation is presented for future research and development.

**Analysis of the Seven Sub-questions**

The seven sub-questions provided the detail necessary to more fully understand the current structure within the division, the level of integration of this unit within the College, and the impact that other variables (i.e., government funding and policies), might have on the delivery of programs.

**Sub-question one** asked about how this postsecondary institution structured its access programs. This question enabled an exploration of the current structure within the division, and whether there was a current model or framework present that guided participants’ work. It also shed light on how the policies of current and previous governments influenced the program offerings within this division.

When asked about a mandate or mission for the division, administrators’ and faculty members’ answers had a great deal of similarity. Eight of the ten participants
indicated specific student populations instead of identifying a model, mission or mandate for the delivery of their programs. The list included students with mental health or addiction barriers to employment or academic success, those who did not complete high school, those upgrading current skills, and non-traditional learners. The majority of faculty and administrators felt that their mandate and mission were aligned with the principles of access, but did not define the principles. Participants suggested that offering educational opportunities for under-represented populations of students was the mandate. The approaches mentioned by both the faculty and the administrators were not truly frameworks or models, but rather approaches to the delivery of programming that varied significantly. Some participants mentioned more than one variable or approach that they felt guided the work. In total, there were eight different ideas reported by the faculty and administrator groups that had little consistency and were not representative of any framework or model.

When exploring the question related to the influence that the policies of current and previous governments had on the program offerings within this division, significant data was offered, and agreement was noted in the responses from faculty and administrators. The role that government policies played in general was seen to have had both positive and negative influences. All administrators and faculty stated that they felt that the policies of current and previous governments had a direct impact both on the original development of the Access Division within the College and, over the years, on shaping its programming and operations. On one hand, these policies allowed this College to become a system leader in some specific areas but, on the other hand, there were significant difficulties associated with the changes to the funding and policies that had negative impacts on the delivery of programs. Changes and reductions in government
funding were seen to have created pressure for the programs to align with funding outcomes, which presented significant challenges for programs to maintain flexibility and financial sustainability. The challenges cited seemed to revolve around ongoing funding issues such as increased focus on selection criteria and targeted outcomes, which appeared to make the administrative staff anxious about the impact of a new political mandate on the future of some program offerings. The faculty group identified the impact of funding decisions on the frontline programs and the students they taught. The difficulty of securing sustainable funding was noted by all as having constrained the design and development of new programs and their focus had, therefore, been on creatively refining and improving existing programs.

Regarding sub-question one, which asked participants to identify the model or framework currently in place within the division, the data suggests that there was no consistent, single model or framework within this division and that many approaches were used by staff. The impact of government funding and policies also emerged as a significant theme in the design and delivery of the programs in this division.

**Sub-question two** was constructed to address how the Access Division organized program delivery and support services and integrated them within a system of institutional services. When asked about the integration of programming that existed within the Access Division and between the division and the rest of the College, there seemed to be some consistency in both the faculty members’ and administrators’ responses. There was a common sense of working for the greater good of the division and an understanding that all programs worked within the same division but had limited contact with one another. Lack of integration and “working in silos” emerged as themes in this question and many participants identified that they did not really understand the
workings of other programs. Both faculty and administrators referenced the silos that existed within the division itself, but to a greater extent, the impact of the silos between this division and the rest of the College. Many participants reported feeling disconnected from the College as a whole. When asked about the integration between their area and the College, seven of the ten participants identified this was an area of difficulty for them, with the divisional/College connections being based on personal collaboration between themselves as individuals and postsecondary programs outside of the division. This collaboration was identified as the vehicle for integration and they expressed a need to establish stronger connections to integrate their work into the broader work of the College.

Another aspect of integration identified was the lack of acceptance of students who had not been admitted directly into postsecondary programs. There was a sentiment identified by faculty and some administrators that these students were considered “less than” and were undervalued by other postsecondary programs within the division and the College as a whole. There was a sense that students were not necessarily welcomed in a way that supported successful transitions.

When asked about the interface between this area and environments external to the College, all participants identified stronger links between faculty, administrators and partner organizations as the key to both referrals into the programs or transfer sources for students who require specific supports. All participants agreed that the external community played a significant role in the delivery of their programs and in the support that the students continued to receive within their communities. The information collected also illuminated the lack of integration of programs within the division and also within the College as a whole and the stronger connection that the programs felt to
external partners. The theme of cultural bias first emerged in this question and continued to be identified throughout the questions that followed.

**Sub-question three** focused on the major successes and challenges that the Access Division had experienced in the delivery of services.

The successes identified included an increase in the profile of this division and the growth in articulation agreements which allowed for easier movement of their students within the College and to different universities and colleges. Participants reported that significant changes had been made to retention rates over several years, with many more students transitioning successfully into postsecondary programs. They gave the credit for the changes to the vision and leadership of the Dean and the Chair who brought a new sense of purpose and rigor to program delivery.

The three most significant challenges identified were: lack of internal and College-wide integration, dealing with cultural bias and discrimination and difficulty with collecting data. Participants expressed a real desire to help educate the whole College, to dispel the myths about the division’s students and enable greater success for them once they made the transition to regular programs. They felt that to do this successfully, there was a substantial need for better internal and College-wide integration of their area, a need to reduce the cultural bias and discrimination against their students and an increased ability to collect hard data. The lack of adequate data collection was also cited as a challenge for the programs, as it impacted the tracking of their students’ successes and therefore limited the programs’ ability to demonstrate effectiveness to the College and the funders. The participants identified a negative bias within the College toward these programs and their students, which was coupled with participants’ desire for the opportunity to cultivate a greater understanding of non-traditional learners. Many of
the challenges referenced a need for a culture shift within the College to reflect the kind of learners who were enrolled in the division.

The challenges identified in sub-question three are explored further in the emergent themes section as they were pervasive in the interviews and appeared in multiple locations.

Sub-question four focused on identifying the impact that this Access Division had, both in the past and the present, on the rest of the College. This question was designed to determine how the available evidence of the division’s impact was used to inform the transformation of the students and the institution, two of the categories in the Beatty-Guenter model. When asked about the impact on students, a majority of participants identified that their impact was fundamentally in the delivery of more students prepared for postsecondary programs. Others identified their work on issues that impact students, like poverty and mental health, as a form of “change work” that altered and improved the general attitude in the College toward non-traditional learners. There was agreement among both administrators and faculty that there were no standardized evaluations used across the division, and that evaluation tools used were ones that the rest of the College used as well. They felt that while current tools employed did give some useful data, creating evaluation tools that could reflect these programs more specifically would be of greater benefit, and could be used to inform institutional change. They expressed a need for a more robust tracking system for their students, and to start gathering outcome-based evidence to support and validate their work.

When asked about the impact of their division on the College, both faculty and administrators struggled to define the impact of the Access Division on the rest of the College and to give tangible examples of that impact. There were no references to
specific policies that had changed or had been influenced, or ways that things had been transformed as a result of their work. Comments focused on the positive influence the approach of this area had on others within the College. Throughout this section, the need to collect more robust data was repeatedly identified as a way to increase impact and influence the College’s policies and practices.

Sub-question four also identified the impact of the division on students and the institution itself. Although there were many examples of how students experienced personal transformation, identification of the impact on the institution itself seemed difficult to define and no substantial examples were noted. Again, the need for more robust and effective evaluation was identified by both faculty and administrators.

The findings from sub-question five were presented and summarized in the previous section on the Efficacy of the Beatty-Guenter Model (p.198).

Sub-question six focused on the implications for the implementation of this model or an expanded version of it.

There were a limited number of responses to this question, but great consistency in the answers from the faculty and administrators. Both groups felt that the model could allow for monitoring a student’s progress, and that the implementation of this model would require institutional “buy-in” from the leadership level. Implementation of the model would mean the delivery of a more comprehensive service to students, taking into account both their academic and social/emotional needs. There was a sense among the participants that if students were better supported, the division could anticipate improved academic results and/or more successful transitions into regular postsecondary programs. Participants also noted that the funding implications of implementing this type of model would be substantial. All participants felt that implementation would mean a large-scale
change for the College as a whole, with implications at all levels, and with a significant culture shift if this model were to be sustainable. There was also a sense that this change would create a domino effect whereby other College programs would be transformed by the integrated nature of the model.

Although challenges with the implementation of the model were identified in sub-question six, there was a sense of receptivity and excitement from participants about the impact that the potential changes could make on the lives of their students. This model offered them a standardized way of looking at student support and program delivery with the potential to increase the chances of student success.

Sub-question seven asked about changes that would improve the Beatty-Guenter model in terms of evaluating and establishing access programs. A majority of the participants identified that all elements in the model were applicable. Two suggested minor alterations to the language to reflect the nature of upgrading and pre-program offerings that are not aligned to the postsecondary environment. Those participants felt the model would be easier to adopt if the language used reflected the programs implementing it. Additionally, there was a request to focus the model on the opportunities and benefits that the implementation of this systematic model would produce to increase buy-in. The model should also assess the impact of constraints, potential risks and also determine the current level of influence within the division to implement systemic change.

The findings from sub-question seven indicated that the original categories outlined in the Beatty-Guenter model were very applicable to this division. The additions suggested were minor but would add more focus on specific context when applying this model to different settings.
Emergent Themes

After significant reflection on the data collected for this thesis, I observed emerging themes that directly impact the division, but were not captured within the framework itself. I grouped these supplemental themes into categories to more easily assess the issues that had materialized. These themes seem to relate to sub-question three: Are there factors which currently facilitate or impede the adoption of systematic models? The themes that emerged were related to organizational structure, strategic mandate and vision, cultural context, pathways, role of the Ministry and data collection.

Upon closer examination of each of these categories, it is clear to me that the application of any model, including the Beatty-Guenter model, can be a first step in establishing a model robust enough to capture both the vision and mandate of the Access Division and guide the implementation of effective programs. Careful consideration must also be paid to both the internal dynamics of the division, and the external factors that underpin the culture and context of the larger organization.

Organizational Structure Dictates Direction

What emerged very clearly in the documents and the interviews was the influence that organizational structure had on the development of the Access Division and, therefore, on the ways that programs were structured and delivered. This division was originally structured to deliver Ministry-funded career preparation and job-readiness programs. The funding relationship between the Access Division and the Ministry continues since most of the programs in this division require funding tied to a specific target group or specific program delivery outcomes from the provincial government. The establishment of this area in its current form in 2009 was based on changes in College leadership and the re-configuration of departments, rather than on an external framework
or model. There were, in fact, few institutional policies that spoke specifically about access in any of the College documents, and limited attention given to access work in any strategic documents at the College level.

The “silo” approach and the lack of connection between programs in the division, or the division and the larger College, was referenced in both the faculty and administrator interviews. The program reviews also alluded to a sense of disconnection at the program level, which was reflected in comments about the distance participants felt between the division and the rest of the College. This separation was perceived as an obstacle to communications and also in the lack of impact their work had on the College. The lack of alignment and connection that participants felt would also have an impact on their ability to connect students into the larger College community, which is a feature described in the “connecting” section of the Beatty-Guenter model. It would be very difficult for participants to connect students when they personally felt isolated and on their own within their programs. By building stronger relationships and connections with other divisional areas, the faculty, administrators and, ultimately, the students could access a greater integration or “fit” with the College as a whole.

Participants appeared to want greater connection with the programs in their own area and with the College as a whole, and sought greater integration of the programs within the division and a closer alignment of the division with the College. Greater integration and alignment could increase the sense of collective influence and reduce the sense of isolation and differences experienced at the program level.
Developing a Strategic Mandate

A careful examination of College documents produced between the years 2006-2012 revealed little written information about this division in publicly accessible documents, which tended to focus on the College as a whole and not on any division in particular.

In the strategic documents produced by the College, the mission and mandate of access is mentioned as one of a series of principles. In the Academic Strategy documents, the work of this area is highlighted and described under the remedial section. In the College’s ten-year strategic planning document, the issue of access is not mentioned at all.

The literature review described the need for a strategic approach to delivering a mandate within an institution. The strategic approach would be seen in institutional documents and woven into values and principles at an organizational level. The absence of this type of visibility would make it difficult to achieve the buy-in that might be necessary for the adoption of a systematic model.

Information about this division was found in the College’s calendar and marketing materials for students, and in select feature stories in internal newsletters and annual reports. There was a notable change in the calendar from 2006-2012, with less focus on the transformation of individual students and more on education and employment outcomes. This shift likely reflects the changes in government funding, with an increased focus on employment by both the government and Central College during this time period.

The Multi-Year Accountability Agreement did document the work of this division, but the focus was on access in general and on particular groups of individuals
and the programs provided for them. There was no distinction made between the specific work of this division and others within the College.

There was no documentation found from 2006-2008 at the program level. From 2009-2012, there were business plans and some representation in the College’s annual reports. There were no college-wide access plans or strategic documents found that outlined the mission, mandate and overarching goals of access within this College. In contrast, there was a five-year Internationalization plan produced by the College during this same time period.

At the divisional level, there were vision and mission statements for the division itself, but they did not appear to be known by all of the participants interviewed. There were individual program reviews and business plans, but no overarching strategic documents that outlined the vision and detailed the work of this division. The documents that did exist were program-specific and focused on one area, group or initiative, and were not directly tied to a larger vision or approach for this area.

There were no reference documents to illumine the guiding principles of this area, nor a model from which all programs derived a unifying framework.

The division did have a written mandate that all participants were aware of, and there was great consistency in the description from all participants about the work of this division based on that mandate. The mission statement encompassed several categories within the Beatty-Guenter model from “supporting” students, to “connecting” them to other programs within the College, to “transforming” students who experienced this educational offering. This mission statement could be the basis for the construction of a more integrated approach to service delivery within this division.
Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (2009) suggests that if this work is core to the institution, it is seen in the leadership and investment in staff, as well as in the creation of full-time positions dedicated to the recruitment and retention of non-traditional students. A further indication of organizational commitment is orientation and ongoing professional development for staff on access and success. Currently, access at this institution seems confined to a few programs responsible for upgrading and transition of students. All faculty and administrators (100%) spoke of a real need to find many more points of integration to ensure the supports that students received upon entry follow them throughout their college career. They spoke of a general lack of coordination of services within the division even when there was mandate to support access within this institution. There appeared to be no clear connection between the different areas within the College or even a “roadmap” for the collective delivery of service, which could improve retention efforts significantly. A more coordinated plan between the access programs and the other areas of the college could be the natural bridge between this area and the other academic and service sides of the organization. If this bridge was created, it could increase flexibility to respond to students’ needs both in the application of administrative policies and to ensure support for the ultimate goal of success for all students. Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (2009) suggests a stronger connection between areas would “include clear communication strategies between departments and administrative services to share information obtained through early warning systems and safety nets” (p.11).

All faculty and administrators were clear about the absence of an accepted framework to guide or align their work. A majority of participants interviewed suggested that implementation of a service delivery model could enhance the collective focus of this
division and help individual programs to feel more connected through a common approach to the work.

**Cultural Context**

The cultural context speaks to the “climate” both in this division and in the College as a whole. The prevalent positive climate within this division came through in every interview and was based on participants’ deep understanding of both the clients they work with and their own work. This division serves the most diverse population of students within this College. Diversity of age, race, religion, language, academic ability and financial resources is most evident in this population of students. The ability of staff in this division to effectively create a climate where there is acceptance, understanding and active valuing of differences among individuals is paramount to the students’ success. That ability was evident in the people who were interviewed and was reflected in their answers. All interviewees were passionate about their mission to provide access to education for non-traditional students, and that passion and commitment were often cited as transformative in the lives of the students they taught. The participants also shared a sense that their students often were not accepted, and were viewed as existing on the margins of the College.

The faculty appeared most focused on the impact of negative attitudes on the students. This focus was evident in the examples they gave about their work to build students’ confidence and abilities that was then undermined by an uninformed opinion or careless comment. The administrators focused on the larger, systemic issues that prevented easy transition of their students to other areas in the College. They also noted the negative “knee jerk” reaction of some people to the issues inherent in supporting non-traditional learners.
Issues of cultural bias, stigmatization and stereotyping were described throughout the interviews, with over half of participants suggesting these issues were serious challenges that impeded student success. The cultural bias was felt to impact the transfer of students and sometimes their progress through the College. The cultural bias was also evident in the comments that staff made about themselves and the work they did, and how they felt the College undervalued their contributions. There was a sense that their programs were not well understood, and that their roles as faculty and administrators were not valued as much as their counterparts in postsecondary programs. The use of a more comprehensive model would allow for a collective discussion of this issue and also provide the opportunity to plan and develop training for a new approach. Such an approach would not live in individual programs or in the individual actions of faculty and administrators, but would rightly be addressed as a systemic issue of cultural bias.

**Learning Environment and Pathways**

The creation of a positive learning environment for students was a resounding theme that emerged through all the interviews, for both faculty and administrators. Putting student learning first seemed to be ingrained in decision-making and program development. There was a great deal of contact with students, and multiple supports were available to them. The most developed pathways into the College’s other divisions were those delivered in partnership with external agencies. These pathways were described as providing both a way into programs, and often as a source of continued support for students once they were in them. The pathways that seemed less developed were those that helped students transition into the postsecondary programs in the College. Those pathways into other programs seemed to be dependent on which access programs students came from, rather than on well-established pathways that articulated one
program to another. Transition planning for students in this division seemed to be more individualized based on the postsecondary program the student was attempting to enter, which may be more a reflection of individual relationships between programs and departments rather than the program policy or articulated pathways. Participants identified that some access pre-programs had secured agreements from the postsecondary programs for articulation of their students. There was, however, a desire by many to increase the number of pathways available to students and have these articulated between all access programs and the rest of the College.

**Role of the Funder**

The theme of Ministry funding was pervasive in all of the interview dialogues. Funding was seen to influence the direction of the programs as well as the delivery models that were employed. Additionally, it shaped the profile of the students who were admitted, and often controlled the outcomes expected. The programs had changed substantially in the six-year period studied due, in large part, to the funder’s expectations of certain outcomes, and also to ensure that specific populations were served. The funder’s influence was considered significant, since most programs in this area were externally funded and relied heavily on a sole-funding provider for the delivery of their services. If the government substantially changed direction or its support of the access funding policies, those decisions would have a major impact on program growth and development, program direction and, in some cases, the potential existence of the program. This situation appeared to cause stress for a number of faculty and administrators, as the decisions made in the past were often taken with little to no consultation and planning, and were seen as “arbitrary” and “cavalier”.
The difficulties regarding the funding of programs in the Access Division outlined by participants were significant, and the solutions they identified would require a change to current policies and project-specific funding. There was a desire to see a more “effective” funding response from the government for access programming and a call for more sustainable “line item” funding at an institutional level in response to the desired outcomes. Miner (2011) stated that, “Funding for college access programs is seldom an institutional ‘line item’ but is typically ‘soft money’ derived from short term government grants or philanthropic contributions” (p.41).

The literature confirms that governments have reduced specific barriers to student access through policy implementation (Dennison, 1987). As Anisef (1982) argues, it is ultimately publicly-elected government bodies that can implement programs to achieve equality in society. The approach that colleges need to take must be informed by research to successfully influence government funders and internal and external audiences. It is essential to demonstrate success both in numbers of students that access the system and the impact of that access on the individual’s long-term success. These data will help to shape the conversation within the college and with government funders.

**Data Collection and Evaluation**

The theme of data collection and evaluation also emerged in the research, with 60 percent of the participants suggesting it was an area that needed improvement. Participants reported a gradual increase in the profile of the division over the six years of the study and significant growth in the recognition of the important work that was being done since 2009, which they perceived had been driven by the new leadership in their area. This improvement was felt to be a good beginning that could, in fact, be increased with a focus on collection and distillation of the data available in the division. The lack of
a robust data collection system that was division-specific and encompassed all programs made it difficult for the divisional faculty and administrators to discuss the impact the division was having on the students and the College as a whole. As a result, there appeared to be a reliance on anecdotal information and stories, especially among faculty, to explain the work of the division, with little written about the outcomes achieved at both the student and divisional levels.

Miner (2011) suggests that, “There is relatively little primary research on the effectiveness of postsecondary access programs in Canada, although this began to change under the aegis of the now defunct Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation” (p. 12). The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation (2009) identified not only the barriers to postsecondary education but also that the systemic issues that prevent the larger systems from adequately addressing the issues of non-traditional students were the broad issues of system change and accountability. The Foundation called for a commitment to improve programs through evaluation based on the adequate collection and analysis of data, and for wide and effective communication of results and outcomes to influence system change. There was also a strong message that programs needed to be developed, implemented and tracked using theoretical models if any sustainable progress was to be made in this area.

One of the challenges inherent in collecting data is possessing the resources to do so. Given that the programs examined are externally-funded and rarely include funding for research, it is often difficult to do more than what is required in the area of data collection and evaluation. The funding that is provided is for program delivery, with a heavy emphasis on numbers of clients seen, with no money provided to launch any research or long-term tracking. The reporting templates allow for little additional
information to be gathered and limit the level of research that can actually be done through this mechanism. This theme presents a significant challenge that would need to be addressed to ensure that the evaluation framework devised could be delivered within the constraint of limited funding. Creating an opportunity for research and data collection that could potentially lead to more government attention and possible funding is a critical step in shifting the thinking about access programming. The solution might come from devoting more internal resources through the College's Institutional Research department, applying for research-based grants or fundraising to further the achievement of this goal.
Chapter Six: Discussion and Implications

This study focused on key research questions related to using the Beatty-Guenter model as a tool to examine access programming at one large urban Ontario college. The research employed both document and qualitative interview analysis to examine the extent to which the current approach to access programming aligned with the Beatty-Guenter model categories.

The study college is one of the 24 Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs), but these colleges are very diverse in character. Choosing to conduct this study within only one urban College organization eliminated the data and experiences of small or mid-sized urban and rural institutions and institutions outside of Ontario.

The interviewees voluntarily participated and therefore there is no way of assessing their depth of knowledge about the access programs within their own division or information at the institutional level. The people interviewed were practitioners within this department and potentially positively biased in representing the work and the impacts achieved. They do however have expertise based on their own experiences, and their responses can be given some measure of credibility as they apply within the Access Division setting. I would therefore suggest that there is much to gain for the participants within the study and for Central College.

The document analysis consisted of publically accessible documents and there could have been documents within the institution that were not uncovered by the search conducted. Therefore the document analysis should be considered extensive but potentially not exhaustive.
With those limitations in mind, the data collected suggest that a framework may be useful in programming for non-traditional students within this college division. The data also suggest that implementation of this framework would require some restructuring of systems and processes within the college setting. Although these findings cannot be generalized to any of the other Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, there may be some insights gained from the data analysis that might be of continued interest, not only to the study college, but also to other institutions and researchers as they grapple with creating a more comprehensive program design for access divisions. At a minimum, I hope that this study will spark conversations at other institutions.

This research provided a broad examination of the literature related to access, with a focus on Canadian content and college impact models, as the basis to explore current practice within one large urban college. The literature review presented the history of access within the Ontario college system, and offered an understanding of the importance of access, and how increasing access can address some of Canada’s current economic challenges.

While the review of the literature on access uncovered extensive narrative on individual students and the barriers to accessing postsecondary education, there was a noticeable absence of literature on specific frameworks or on evaluations of models in the delivery of access programming. Several participants suggested that a holistic and systematic approach in the design and delivery of access programs was necessary at the institutional level. Given the scope of this research limited information was gathered on
this topic. A comprehensive review of the institutional barriers preventing the application of a more systematic model in the delivery of access programming would inform this work moving forward.

This research has offered some insight into the efficacy of the Beatty-Guenter model as a tool to examine the access programming at one large urban Ontario college during the timeframe of 2006-2012. The intent was to explore whether a model for the delivery of an access mandate would be seen as useful to a group of individuals who were delivering access programming at that time.

The document analysis, as well as the institutional records that were analyzed, identified that there appeared to be more alignment to the Beatty-Guenter model in the years 2006-2009. The language of these documents shifted notably in 2010 from an emphasis on supportive learning to one on skills achievement.

The interviews created a portrait of a deeply committed group of faculty and administrators who were working diligenty to support the success of non-traditional students. The interviews provided substantial information that suggested there was significant alignment to the Beatty-Guenter model in access programming, especially in the categories of “sorting”, “supporting”, “connecting” and “transforming students”.

The interviews also identified that there was consistency in how both faculty and administrators viewed the limitations and challenges of delivering their programs, as well as their successes.

The findings of the study revealed support for the efficacy of the Beatty-Guenter model by the majority of participants interviewed. The greatest alignment to the Beatty-Guenter model was seen with the four categories of “sorting”, “supporting”, “connecting” and “transforming students”.
“connecting” and “transforming students”. The least alignment was noted with the “transforming the institution” category. While the model was able to identify gaps in service delivery, further refinements to the model would be necessary to ensure a more accurate assessment of each category. The findings demonstrate that the Beatty-Guenter model was seen as useful to frame programming for non-traditional students within the study setting. Although this knowledge does not lend itself to developing larger principles for generalization, it does provide information for others in the realm of program design within their own organizations. The findings also shed light on the challenge of program and organizational structures that impede the adoption of a more systematic model of access program delivery within a community college setting.

Based on the data collected and analyzed in my research study, I offer the following recommendations for policy, practice and further research, which may help to implement a more systematic approach to access programming if a college should choose to do so.

Implications for Policy

To implement a more systematic model in the delivery of access programming within the College system it is important to identify where there are opportunities to impact provincial ministries’ policies and the institutional systems that govern post secondary organizations. Government policy and funding criteria drive decision-making and funding possibilities within the institutions they govern, and a well-defined funding mechanism can support or undermine the implementation of new program approaches.
A review of MTCU policies related to increasing access to postsecondary education reveals a long history of identifying and attempting to address issues of equitable access with policy and funding approaches.

As previously stated by Jones and Field (2013), government funding tools are the most commonly used mechanisms to increase access. The current policy approaches tend to be tied to increasing access for specific populations. These targeted approaches focused on individuals are inadequate when considering a more systematic approach to access programming that requires a program-level focus. The current approaches also do not take into account the need for long-term, sustainable funding to support the creation of a robust model to address the needs of students throughout their educational experience.

Jones et al. (2013) suggest that although we have details about the historical policies intended to improve access, there continues to be a lack of data to determine whether the desired outcomes have been attained through these policy approaches to funding. Government policy-makers need to be clear about evaluating changes in access when creating substantial new policies and introducing new funding mechanisms to impact more system wide change. This evaluation directive will encourage colleges to implement more comprehensive approaches to provide education to non-traditional learners.

A Ministry plan would need to be implemented that outlines clear inclusion of more systematic programs and provides the necessary means to deliver comprehensive student support as well as the attainment of targets. These programs will need evaluation tools that measure and track individual and program progress within the implementation of institutional action and reforms.
Recasting the Multi-Year Accountability Agreements could provide another opportunity to identify comprehensive access programs in addition to the targets and mandatory quotas tied to funding, which would be a leverage point within institutions, especially if coupled with the allocation of funding and adequate resources to address data collection and research.

The development of a long-term, sustainable funding framework based on systematic program models is essential if progress is to be made in the delivery of comprehensive access programs. The new funding framework must include service delivery and the critical requirements of data collection and evaluation.

Financial assistance to students is another area of policy that could impact participation rates of non-traditional students. Jones et al. (2013) identified a number of financial incentive programs that help to motivate students to pursue postsecondary education and suggested that the focus of financial aid that would increase access should focus on tax credit and targeted funding. Although financial aid is a critical part of ensuring that individuals have adequate financial support to enter the postsecondary environment, it is as equally important that the institution is financed to provide the kind of systematic and comprehensive support required to them to be successful once admitted.

Performance based funding is another lever that could be utilized to create an incentive for institutions employing more comprehensive strategies with non-traditional learners. The incentive could be tied to the student profile, and indicators such as retention and graduation rates could be identified. Research could be conducted on the
actual, gaps and potential new comprehensive models of delivery that would inform the development of a comprehensive plan.

A call for a system-wide assessment of the current state of access programming in the college system is required as well as an examination of the policy levers that could have impact the implementation of a more comprehensive strategy to attracting and educating more non-traditional learners.

**Implications for Practice**

What became clear through the literature review and implementation of this research study was that the systematic delivery of access programming is not commonplace in the literature or in practice. Multiple reasons for this became evident from the data collected along with the identification of a significant number of hurdles to overcome to put a more coordinated strategy into practice. It is important to outline these findings to ensure a greater understanding of what would be required to implement a more systematic model that could influence practice within a postsecondary environment.

Implementation of the model explored in this study in a college setting would be a complex task, as it would require significant changes at both the institutional and program levels to ensure implementation of the necessary components.

The Millennium Scholarship Foundation Report (2009) identified four qualities seen in any transformational change that fosters institutional adaptation to under-represented groups: clarity of vision and values, improving programs through data and evaluation, innovation and flexible responses to student needs and building bridges across the institution. When these qualities were explored in this case study, the challenges of
adopting a more systematic approach that could lead to a transformational change became clear.

The Millennium Report suggested that clarity of vision and values relating to the success of non-traditional students should be visible in the institution’s mission, in the leadership approach, in the investment in staff positions as well as in the orientation and professional development of all staff. This clarity is evident in the divisional-level vision and mission, but is not represented in the vision, mission or mandate of the institution as a whole. There was negligible reference to the work of this area in any of the college-wide documentation reviewed.

The second quality was a commitment to improve programs through evaluation, which was identified as a challenge by both faculty and administrators in this study. They noted a lack of robust data, and no consistency or rigor in the collection of information that could be used to make evidence-based decisions.

Openness to innovation and flexible responses based on student needs was the third quality and although there were many individual examples given about specific accommodations for learning made by faculty and administrators, there was no evidence that this was a consistent approach or policy that was embraced by the division.

The fourth quality was “building bridges” that connect different groups and programs across the institution and reach into the community. This quality was evident in the community outreach efforts and partnerships that this division had with community organizations. This quality was not observed in the lack of connection between the programs within the division, the “silos” that a majority of those interviewed felt existed within the division and, particularly, between this division and the College.
The Beatty-Guenter model is complex and multi-layered. Structural changes are required to achieve a total alignment with the College’s practices and to ensure the smooth implementation of all aspects described in the model. Institutional commitment would be necessary to ensure that access and success were part of the mission, vision and values at the institutional level and were acted upon by the Access Division, but also where required throughout the whole organization. This commitment would impact policy and structural decisions, and would be reflected in program design and pathways as well as in the creation of more flexible options for the delivery of educational programs. Kirby (2009) suggested that reorienting the structures, policies, processes and procedures within the postsecondary education system is necessary to accommodate non-traditional learners but recognized that this task is extremely difficult as the current structures are based on tradition and culture.

Strong leadership at all levels of the institution would be especially critical in the adoption phase of the model because the institution would have to examine its practices and adjust its delivery systems and culture to align with the goals and challenges of non-traditional learners. College leaders, who face significant funding challenges, would need to re-evaluate priorities for investment. Berger (2007) suggested that the challenge Canada faces is not in maintaining the status quo, but of reorienting its postsecondary sector so that it can educate greater numbers of non-traditional students from previously under-represented groups.

College leaders would need to take an active stance to influence government funding decisions, policies, processes and program practices that facilitate the transition and success of under-represented groups in postsecondary institutions. Difficult funding decisions would have to be made to ensure that there were sufficient resources to
accomplish the recruitment, admission and retention of these students, as well as the evaluation of the programs they attended.

Specific systematic strategies would be needed to address student needs from academic, financial, social and cultural perspectives to ensure successful outcomes from transition to graduation. Systems to study and evaluate these strategies would need to be implemented to ensure that the models met their stated objectives and provided feedback for continuous improvement.

Cross-functional teams would need to be developed to detail the model, map out implementation and come to consensus on solutions to increase access across the college. Decisions would have to be made to create a consistent service offering so that all students, regardless of program, would benefit from the resources. This new way of operating could present some challenges to the current program delivery model. One consideration related to changes in program delivery is the required change in the roles of faculty and staff, which could be challenging to implement in a unionized environment. Job categories and expectations are clearly defined and restrictions of job functions may limit flexible delivery options. Successfully making a transition of this magnitude would require the engagement of both Human Resources and the Union Local.

To create this integrated experience, seamless delivery would need to be entrenched in a college-wide culture where the success of all students was at the heart of the dialogue. System-wide structures to provide solutions to students’ barriers in both academic programs and service areas would need to be created with the authority to solve issues and integrate solutions quickly into everyday practices. Evaluation and continuous quality improvement would drive the decisions in this new model, with student achievement and satisfaction as the critical yardsticks by which success was measured.
Beatty-Guenter’s (1994) model appears to provide an approach to increase access for non-traditional students and indicates the structural changes required in institutions to ensure their success within a postsecondary environment. Without these changes, it would be difficult to make significant movement toward creating a systematic model of practice.

**Implications for Research**

Ideas for further research that may provide more information on systematic models of access to postsecondary education program delivery will be explored in this section. This research has provided a small window into a very complicated and multifaceted area of focus: increasing access and success of non-traditional students in postsecondary environments.

As the Beatty-Guenter model is only one systematic approach, it is important to do further research to test whether the Beatty-Guenter model is an appropriate framework to employ, or if there are other frameworks that could more accurately address the needs of students and institutions.

Additional research using a multi-site case study protocol could add confirmation to the findings of this study. If the results of a multi-site case study were found to be aligned with the findings of this study, it would increase the validity of this model and create further documentation and validation of the work undertaken.

I would further suggest that much could be learned by adding student stakeholders as another group to be interviewed as part of this research. Students provide a unique perspective as consumers of the services provided, and their input would add more depth to this study. Interviewing students enrolled in an institution’s access programs and capturing their experiences through each of the Beatty-Guenter categories would provide
another perspective on the usefulness of this model and could also identify gaps that may have been overlooked. The student perspective is not presented in this study and is not generally found in the current literature on access to postsecondary education.

Research conducted on each of the Beatty-Guenter categories could also add great value by expanding knowledge in the field of access, and it would be useful to determine which interventions have the most impact on success and retention within each of the categories. This investigation could result in the development of evaluation and feedback tools to estimate the impact of the model within each of the categories, which would also be a useful area of research.

In addition, refinement of the Beatty-Guenter category definitions with detailed descriptions of each section would enhance the model’s clarity and provide a tool that could be applied with more consistency.

The creation of a standard gap analysis tool based on the Beatty-Guenter model would also improve the accuracy of the assessment results, increasing the validity of data produced and augmenting the possible assessments in the replication of this study.

Conclusions

This study evaluated the use of a systematic model for the delivery of service to non-traditional students and increased understanding about the use of a conceptual framework in the delivery of service to this population. The literature revealed that the information in this area is not well-developed.

Currently, there are a significant number of programs delivering education to non-traditional students through access programs at colleges, but little documentation exists in the literature about the use of a systematic framework for delivery or evaluation of the impact of program interventions or outcomes.
This case study attempted to enrich the theoretical and conceptual knowledge in this area and increase the focus on an area that impacts many colleges delivering access programs. In addition to examining the Beatty-Guenter model, the research explored the implementation of the model’s categories as a filter to develop a gap-analysis for a college’s Access Division, but this tactic proved to be a limiting tool.

In addition, factors that impede the implementation of a more systematic access model at the college level emerged through the process of analysis and were documented for further exploration.

More research on the development of systematic models to guide the delivery of postsecondary access programming is needed. This research could lead to the development of a clear, coordinated, systematic approach that considers the needs of non-traditional students and creates institutional responses to those needs that offer students greater potential for educational success.
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Appendix A

Administrator Informed Consent

Date

Dear NN,

I am currently completing the requirements for a doctorate at the University Of Toronto. In order to meet the requirements of the program, I am undertaking a study entitled: **Access: A Case study Analysis in one Ontario College: Exploring a Strategic Framework for Future Directions in Institutional Program Design**

The study will provide detailed information on what currently exists within one college institution and produce comprehensive documentation of the current role of Access Programming. It will also map a systematic coordinated strategy and program model that spans the course of a student’s experience within their Postsecondary experience. This understanding could inform future program planning in the areas of evaluation and efficacy of programs at your institution as well as establishing a template for more comprehensive approaches within the College system as a whole.

In order to begin collecting my data I need your written consent. Below is a description of the study and the requests I will be making of your staff.

The study will have three components: 1) document analysis, 2) interviews with 10 participants, the Senior Administrator, as well as key leaders in the Access division (1 Dean, 3 Chair /Director/Managers and 5 faculty/counsellors) within the Access department 3) thematic reference to research framework.

Après-interview request for documents will be provided initially to collect background information. Subjects will be well informed about the
nature of the study and their participation, including the assurance that they may withdraw at any time. In addition, they may request that any information, whether in written form or audiotape, be eliminated from the project. Participants will at no time be judged or evaluated, and will at no time be at risk of harm.

All information that the participants provide will be fully confidential. The observation notes, interview tapes, transcripts, notes and journals will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my office. All identifiable digital data will be encrypted consistent with U of T policy. All information will be reported in such a way that individual persons, communities cannot be identified. All data collected will be used for the purposes of a doctoral thesis and perhaps for subsequent research articles. All raw data (i.e. transcripts, field notes) will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study.

This study will be carried out in Ontario, under the supervision of Dr. Charles Pascal from the Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. You can reach them at Research Ethics Board Chair at your college or the University of Toronto. UT contact information: ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416.946.3273.

I am grateful to have your collaboration and expertise in carrying out this research study.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (416) 415 5000 # 2614 or at bpipiton@georgebrown.ca.
You may also contact my supervisor Dr. Charles Pascal 416.716.7245; e-mail at: charles.pascal@utoronto.ca.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Brenda Pipitone

Administrator’s signature

_________________________
Appendix B

Informed Participant Consent

OISE/U of T Letter head

Date

Dear NN,

I am currently completing the requirements for a doctorate at the University Of Toronto. In order to meet the requirements of the program, I am undertaking a study entitled **Access: A case study analysis in one Ontario College: Exploring a Strategic Framework for Future Directions in Institutional Program Design**

The study will provide detailed information on what currently exists within one college institutions and produce comprehensive documentation of the current role of Access Programming. It will also map a systematic coordinated program model that spans the course of a student’s experience within their postsecondary experience. This understanding could inform future planning in the areas of evaluation and effectiveness of programs at both of these institutions as well as establishing a template for more comprehensive approaches within the College system as a whole.

The study will have two components: 1) document analysis, 2) interviews with 10 participants, A senior college leader, as well as key leaders in the Access division (5 Deans/Director/Managers and 5 faculty/counsellors) within the Access department

Après-interview request for documents will be provided initially to collect background information. Subjects will be well informed about the nature of the study and their participation, including the assurance that they may withdraw at any time. In addition, they may request that any information, whether in written form or audiotape, be eliminated from the project. Participants will at no time be judged or evaluated, and will at no
time be at risk of harm. The interview will be conducted by my research assistant Nancy Miyagi to increase confidentiality.

She may ask questions for clarification or further understanding, but will be mainly there to listen to you speak about your views, your program delivery, experiences, and the reasons you believe the things you do. At any time before or during the interview you are free to decline to answer any questions or terminate the interview process. After the interview, she will write brief notes to assist me in providing more detail to the interview.

It my intention to have each interview audio taped and later transcribed to paper; you have the option of declining a taped interview. Your interview will be assigned a number that will correspond to your interviews and transcriptions. Within four weeks your transcript will be sent to you to read in order for you to add any further information and ensure that it has captured the interview information correctly. All information will be reported in such a way that individuals, colleges and programs will not be identifiable.

All information that the participants provide will be fully confidential. The intent is that no individual will be identifiable from these results. Data will be analyzed and reported in a manner that does not identify individuals and, in some cases; context will be kept confidential to ensure anonymity. Participants’ names will not appear in any report, publication or external presentation resulting from this study. Data will only be Accessible to me and my thesis committee members. The observation notes, interview tapes, transcripts, notes and journals will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my
office. All identifiable digital data will be encrypted consistent with U of T policy. All information will be reported in such a way that individual persons, communities cannot be identified. All data collected will be used for the purposes of a doctoral thesis and perhaps for subsequent research articles. All raw data (i.e. transcripts, field notes) will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study.

This study will be carried out in Ontario, under the supervision of Dr. Charles Pascal from the Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. You can reach them at Research Ethics Board Chair at your college or the University of Toronto. UT contact information:

ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416.946.3273.

I am grateful to have your collaboration and expertise in carrying out this research study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (416) 415 5000 # 2614 e-mail at bpipiton@georgebrown.ca.

You may also contact my supervisor Dr. Charles Pascal 416.716.7245; e-mail at: charles.pascal@utoronto.ca.

Sincerely
Brenda Pipitone

By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

Name: __________________________ College __________________________
Signed: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Please initial if you would like a summary of the findings of the study upon
Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my Thesis research study.

The interview will take about an hour of your time and the questions are attached below so that you will have a chance to read through them in advance of the interview process.

I employed a research assistant to conduct the interviews to ensure your confidentiality and allow you to speak freely about your thoughts and opinions. During the interview you will be asked questions about your role, the Access department’s strategy and the impact of the Access Centre within the College. She may ask questions for clarification or further understanding, but will be mainly there to listen to you speak about your views, experiences, and the reasons you believe the things you do.

At any time before or during the interview you are free to decline to answer any questions or terminate the interview process.

It my intention to have her audio tape each interview and then later transcribed the interviews; you have the option of declining a taped

Appendix C

Interview Letter to Participants
Your interview will be assigned number that will correspond to your interviews and transcriptions. Within four weeks your transcript will be sent to you to read in order for you to add any further information and ensure that the information has been captured correctly. All information will be reported in such a way that individuals, colleges and programs will not be identifiable.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. In addition, you may request that any information, whether in written form or audiotape, be eliminated from the project. Participants will at no time be judged or evaluated, and will at no time be at risk of harm.
Appendix D

Expanded Interview Questions

Research Question #1: How does the Postsecondary educational institution currently structure the Access Programs?

   a. What model is used in the Access division to develop and implement programs and support services?
   b. Is there a particular framework employed or theoretical model that underpins the delivery of Access Programming?
   c. What is the current model mandate or mission?
   d. How have the policies of current and previous governments influenced your offerings?

Research Question #2: How is the access division integrated within the system of institutional services?

   a. What interface exists between the Access division and other areas in the college?

Research Question #3: What are some of the major successes and challenges that the access division experiences in the delivery of services?

Research Question #4: How would you describe the impact of the Access Program at your college?

   a. What type of information does your department use to assess the impact it is having?
   b. What type of information does your department use to inform institutional change?

Research Question #5: What model is used in the Access Programs to organize and provide outreach, connection, support, and transformation?

   The Beatty-Guenter Model

Having had a chance to review the Beatty-Guenter framework that also includes outreach and awareness elements, what parts of this model already exist in your setting? Briefly elaborate why/why not
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<tr>
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<td>Transforming the institution</td>
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</table>

Do you feel the model provides a useful guide to the delivery of Access Programs for under-represented groups?

a. Are there additional elements this model should capture?

b. Are there elements that you feel are not applicable to your setting?

Research Question #6: What are some implications for the implementation of this or an expanded version of this model?

Research Question #7 Are there changes that would improve it for the sake of evaluating and establishing Access Programs?
Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Script

Welcome and thank you for your participation today. My name is XXX and I have been asked by Brenda Pipitone to conduct this interview with you. The interview information I will collect today will provide the data for the research Brenda is engaged in as part of the fulfillment of the requirements her PhD. Thank you sharing with me the written information about your area and this follow-up interview will take about 60 minutes and will include a series of questions regarding your knowledge and experience in your current role and experiences as a manager/faculty/practitioner.

The purpose of this study is to conduct is a case study of this college's access model and the extent to which it aligns with one access typology, developed by Beatty-Guenter (1994). The study will apply the Beatty-Guenter model as a filter to the current access model employed at this Ontario college and ascertain the value of the Beatty-Guenter model as a framework for service delivery.

I would like your permission to tape record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you convey. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please feel free to let me know. All of your responses are confidential. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used to develop a better understanding of the way in which your current area delivers programming.

At this time I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. Brenda Pipitone is the responsible investigator, specifying your participation in the research project: Access: A Case study Analysis in one Ontario College: Exploring a Strategic Framework for Future Directions in Institutional Program Design.

You and I have both signed and dated each copy, certifying that we agree to continue this interview. You will receive one copy and Brenda will receive the other copy once a number has been assigned and all identifying information has been removed. This information will be kept under lock and key, separate from your reported responses.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop, take a break, or, please let me know.

You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission we will begin the interview.

One model that takes a systemic approach one step further is proposed by Beatty-Guenter (1994), whose access typology provides a framework that could be adopted by Postsecondary institutions to address some of the barriers that underrepresented students encounter. Beatty-Guenter outlined the structural changes needed in institutions to ensure access to the Postsecondary environment.
The model addresses categories around which to structure interventions: outreach, sorting, supporting, connecting and transforming

**Outreach Strategies**

“Outreach and awareness strategies are those designed to promote accessibility for under-represented students by encouraging positive attitudes toward PSE through outreach and awareness programs in partnership with high schools, elementary schools and community-based agencies” (Canada Millennium Foundation, 2009, p 7).

**Sorting Strategies**

“The strategies in this category [sorting] tend to involve the identification of student characteristics in order to create strata that can be matched with appropriate and targeted retention techniques”

**Supporting Strategies**

“Students’ success at college is affected by problems they encounter in their lives outside of school …”…..the retention strategies that are considered under the heading of supporting are those that reach out to support the students in their lives outside the realm of college.

**Connecting Strategies**

Connecting strategies develop and foster relationships between students and the institution. They promote the integration of the student into college life by creating opportunities to become a member of a community. These approaches increase the sense of attachment that students have to the institution and to their peers.

**Transforming Students**

“… transforming involves strategies intended to effect changes in students, such as remedial education or career counselling, or changes in institutional character, such as curricular reform or instructional professional development, three important retention techniques fit into the transforming category that targets students: (a) learning assistance programs, (b) remedial education programs, and (c) career counselling program”

**Transforming Institutions**

The primary focus of these strategies at the institutional level is the examination of policies and procedures at the structural level of the Postsecondary institution itself. It is an assessment of the way in which the institution modifies its approaches to create a welcoming and supportive environment for underrepresented groups to increase their success.
### Appendix F

**Document Analysis Worksheet**

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<td>C. Questions for follow up</td>
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Adapted from National Archives and Records Administration Washington, DC 20408
Appendix G - Internal linkages within the Division

WORK AND COLLEGE PREPARATION
- Participate in “Choices” and OD Thursdays
- “Samuel curriculum”

LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
- Faculty cross-appointed
- HEQCO – EES

COMMUNICATIONS
- Increase Gen Ed and ESL offerings

IMMIGRANT AND TRANSITIONAL EDUCATION
- Embed ESL faculty in COMM courses

Appendix H1 - External linkages within the College

CCET
- WTTI

BUSINESS
- “Build Connections”
- Workplace Comm courses

CBMS
- Level 1 English

CHCA
- IELTS & OTHER TESTING
- Aboriginal Symposium & curriculum

ASIA
- Choices & Open Door Thursdays

Design
- AU & CCWET

Con Ed
- IMMIGRANT & TRANSITIONAL
- COMMUNICATIONS

WORK & COLLEGE PREPARATION
- Prep & Liberal Studies
- EAP - ESL
- MARKETING
- ELTI
- REGISTRAR'S OFFICE
- INTERNATIONAL
- RESEARCH

CONTACTS