

SOCIAL FACILITATORS OF AND BARRIERS TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER
STUDENT SUCCESS

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Abstract

Students who transfer to four-year institutions from community colleges often encounter difficulty within their classes post-transfer and tend to graduate at lower rates than their peers who began at four-year institutions as freshman (Bailey, Jenkins, & Leinbach, 2005; Jenkins & Fink, 2016). Reasons for these lowered rates of success have been explored, but have often focused on academic reasons while neglecting any possible social causes. The current review aimed to explore what is known about the impact of social factors, such as belongingness, on community college transfer students' rates of persistence and academic success at four-year institutions. The literature was searched in a systematic way using a three-part search strategy, through which 21 articles were deemed eligible to be included and further evaluated. Several social factors emerged, including sense of belonging, the stereotype of a community college transfer student, and additional considerations for student success as well as social support from family, peers, faculty, and advisors. Most students reported the social factors identified to play a role in their success at the four-year institution. The findings from each theme are presented and future directions for research and programs to be used to address those factors mentioned are suggested.

Keywords: community college student, transfer student, belongingness, social factors, social support, persistence, graduation rates, academic success

Social Barriers to and Facilitators of Community College Transfer Student Success

Transfer students are more likely to discontinue their studies and less likely to graduate with their bachelor's degree on time when compared to their first-year counterparts at four-year institutions (Bailey, Jenkins, & Leinbach, 2005; Jenkins & Fink, 2016). These lower rates of retention among transfer students may be seen among those from community colleges, as well as other four-year institutions (Bailey et al., 2005). Yet, transfer students from community colleges often face additional challenges once at their four-year institution that make their adjustment more difficult (Dennis, Calvillo, & Gonzalez, 2008; Laanan, Starobin, & Eggleston, 2010; Luo, Williams, & Vieweg, 2007; McGurie & Belcheir, 2013; Nunez & Yoshimi, 2017). This thesis will investigate the extent to which social barriers and facilitators account for the lower rates of graduation and academic attainment among the community college transfer student population.

Demographic Characteristics

As there is a lack of research looking at the community college transfer student population, there are currently no national data sets reporting their demographics. However, some information can be gathered about this population by looking at the general community college student population. Of those students enrolled at the community college level, a larger percentage are from disadvantaged groups compared to students at four-year institutions (Bailey et al., 2005). Students from underrepresented cultural groups, such as those with African-American or Hispanic backgrounds, were almost two times more likely to begin their education at a community college than a four-year institution (Shapiro et al., 2017). This was also true for those from lower socioeconomic statuses and among first-generation college students (Bailey et al., 2005). In contrast, four-year institutions were more likely to enroll students from the highest socioeconomic statuses and continuing-generation students (Bailey et al., 2005). It is also

important to note that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to begin college at all and of those that do, most choose to begin at community colleges (Bailey et al., 2005). The greater representation of these underrepresented groups at community colleges may suggest that students who transfer to four-year institutions are more likely to be of an underrepresented group.

A recent publication by Shapiro and colleagues (2018) using a data set from the National Student Clearinghouse has begun to explore the demographic differences in students who transferred from a community college to a four-year institution. Their research suggests that students from underrepresented cultural groups, namely those of African American or Hispanic backgrounds, were the least likely to successfully transfer from their community college to a four-year institution. This would suggest that even though the transfer rates among community college students are low, those from more traditionally disadvantaged groups face added challenges in transferring to the four-year institution (Bailey et al., 2005; Jenkins & Fink, 2016). Yet, these students do still successfully transfer and make up a portion of the community college transfer student population.

Graduation Rates

The graduation rates of transfer students from community colleges are consistently lower than students who began as first-years at four-year institutions (Bailey et al., 2005; Jenkins & Fink, 2016). Jenkins and Fink (2016) reported that only 42% of students who began at a community college successfully transferred to a four-year institution and completed their bachelor's degree within six years of starting their degree, while about 60% of students who began as first-years at a four-year institution completed their bachelor's degree within the same six years (Jenkins & Fink, 2016).

This difference in graduation rates for community college transfer students can also be seen among the underrepresented groups mentioned previously. Bailey, Jenkins, and Leinbach (2005) reported that community college transfer students who were the first in their family to attend college or came from low socioeconomic backgrounds were among the least likely to complete their bachelor's degree, while the same groups of students who began at a four-year institution had the best chance of completing their bachelor's degree. This difference might suggest that community college transfer students face unique challenges. Additionally, only 14% of African American and 22% of Hispanic community college transfer students completed their bachelor's degrees within six years, whereas 37% of white community college transfer students completed their bachelor's degree within the same six years (Bailey et al., 2005). The discrepancy in graduation rates within the community college transfer student population may suggest that the struggles faced by underrepresented groups add to the struggles of this population and do not explain them. These statistics may indicate that community college transfer students are encountering increasing difficulties after their transfer to the four-year institution that lead them to graduate at lower rates.

Academic Performance Post-Transfer

The difficulties community college transfer students experience at the four-year institution are often quantified by their lower grade point averages (GPA) and grades (Laanan et al., 2010). During their first semester post-transfer, community college transfer students often struggle academically in their classes. This leads to a distinct dip in their academic performance, resulting in a lower first semester GPA (Laanan et al., 2010). The performance change students see has become a trend termed *transfer shock* (Laanan et al., 2010; Scott, Thigpin, & Bentz,

2017). This dip in GPA demonstrates academic difficulties experienced by community college transfer students during their transition to four-year institutions.

The lower rates of retention and completion, in addition to the lower grades seen within the first semester, suggest community college transfer students are facing struggles post-transfer at their four-year institutions. Research on the community college transfer student population has primarily focused on the students' experiences within the transfer process or while still enrolled at their two-year institutions. The students' experiences once they have been admitted to the four-year institution and their experiences at the four-year institution have often been overlooked within the current research.

Existing Explanations for Students Lower Success Rates

Of the research conducted on community college transfer students post-transfer, the majority of studies focus on the influence of academic barriers on a student's persistence and academic success. Commonly identified academic barriers include a lack of academic preparation, inaccurate transfer advising, unfamiliarity with academic expectations, increased school size, and an increase in academic rigor (Frana & Rice, 2017; Lannan et al., 2010; Luo, Williams, & Vieweg, 2007; Nunez & Yoshimi, 2017; Scott et al., 2017). Researchers have found that these factors successfully predict a community college transfer student's smooth transition and future success at the four-year institution (Frana & Rice, 2017; Lannan et al., 2010; Luo et al., 2007; Nunez & Yoshimi, 2017; Scott et al., 2017). In addition to the impact of academic barriers, social barriers have also been established within the literature among other student populations.

Although not extensively researched among the community college transfer student population, social factors have been linked to student's rates of persistence and academic success

among general student populations. For these students, the absence of strong connections to faculty or peers causes students to feel more isolated at their four-year institution, leading to a decrease in their likelihood to persist and their academic performance (Bernardo, Esteban, Fernandez, Cervero, & Solano, 2016; Goguen, Hiester, & Nordstrom, 2010; Kelly, LaVergne, Boone, & Boone, 2012; Lillis, 2011; Nicpon, Huser, Blanks, Sollenberger, Befort, & Kurpius, 2006). In contrast, the presence of these relationships with faculty and peers creates a sense of community by providing them with a support system they can turn to with any trouble (Martiny & Nikitin, 2019). These support systems help to foster a sense of community and belonging, allowing students to feel a connection to their four-year institution. A student's level of belonging has been well-documented to promote academic performance as well as motivation to persist at the four-year institution (Lewis & Hodges, 2015; Lewis et al., 2017; Suhlmann, Sassenberg, Nagengast, & Trautwein, 2018; Walton, Cohen, Cwir, & Spencer, 2012). Even though current research on other populations establishes the influence of social barriers on student success, research on community college transfer students has often neglected to explore the impact these factors may have on the students' academic performance and persistence.

Possible Social Explanations for Academic Outcomes

Within the growing field of research on community college transfer students, possible social barriers and facilitators have been identified. Such factors include students' lowered feelings of belonging at their four-year institution, a lack of support from faculty and staff, fewer connections to peers, and individual characteristics of the student population (i.e., low help-seeking; Dennis, Calvillo, & Gonzalez, 2008; DeWine, Bresciani Ludvik, Tucker, Mulholland, & Bracken, 2017; Hlinka, 2017; Kippenhan, 2005; Lannan et al., 2010; Marling, 2013; Nunez & Yoshimi, 2017; Walker & Okpala, 2017). Another area identified that also requires further

research is the stereotype students' perceive as community college transfer students. The perception of a stereotype labeling students as lazy and less capable of their college level courses has been identified by students in qualitative studies, but the effects of such perceptions have not been explored (Lannan et al., 2010; Shaw, Spink, & Chin-Newman, 2018). Although these social barriers have been identified, they still require further exploration in order to fully understand their role in community college transfer students' lower rates of academic success and graduation.

The following review of the literature aims to investigate, in a systematic way, the impact of different social barrier and facilitator variables on community college transfer academic experiences and outcomes. As the literature is reviewed, those factors that emerge will be explored and examined for the strength of their impact on community college transfer student's four-year university experience. Additionally, the relative effectiveness of possible interventions used to counteract the lower rates of retention and graduation will also be assessed. As each factor and intervention is reviewed, limitations to the findings as well as specific areas in need of further research to fully understand how social factors influence community college transfer students' experience at the four-year university will be identified.

Method

Search Strategy

A comprehensive search was completed that related to the community college transfer student population and the social factors influencing their experiences post-transfer. In order to search the literature in a systematic way, a search strategy was used that consisted of three main stages: the preliminary search stage, the main search stage, and the final search stage (see Figure 1). Throughout each search stage, a total of four databases within EBSCOhost at SUNY New

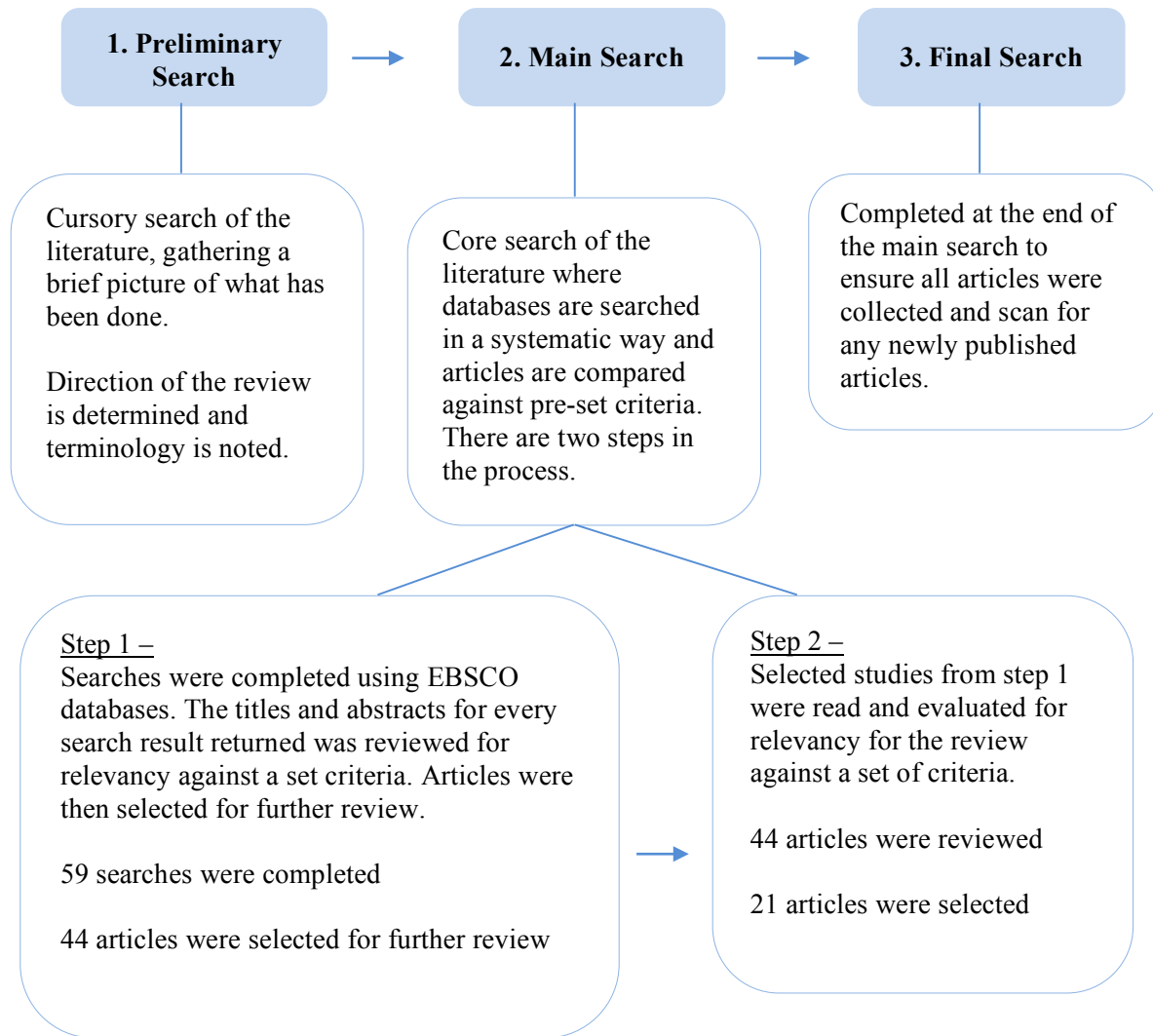


Figure 1. Search strategy flow-chart. This figure shows the steps through which the search of the literature was conducted.

Paltz were utilized (PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, Psychology Behavioral Sciences Collection, and ERIC).

Preliminary search stage. In the preliminary search stage, cursory information on the topic of community college transfer students was collected in order to identify possible directions, determine the scope of the review, and note the terminology most commonly used in the literature. During this stage, the researcher conducted broad searches within the outlined databases and evaluated the relevance of each study. Articles that looked at a community college transfer student population and evaluated the impact of at least one social factor on student persistence or academic success were selected for further review. Throughout the process, notes were taken on the identified social factors and their effects.

Main search stage. In the second search stage, the main search, the literature was searched in a systematic way in order to collect the articles used for the current review. This was done through a two-step process in which articles were reviewed and evaluated for their relevance to the proposed questions. In order to search the literature, a set list of search terms was created to use within the study. This was done using a word-tree format that allowed the researcher to keep track of what terms as well as what combination of terms had been used to avoid repeating previous searches. The tree consisted of the root word (“community college transfer students”) and several secondary terms (i.e. “stereotype” or “social support”) branching off from the root word. Each search consisted of the root word and one of the secondary terms, making a branch (see Figure 2). Once the results of the search term combination had been reviewed, the search term combination was checked off to indicate the completion of the search. Every possible combination in relation to the root word seen in the word-tree (Figure 1) was used.

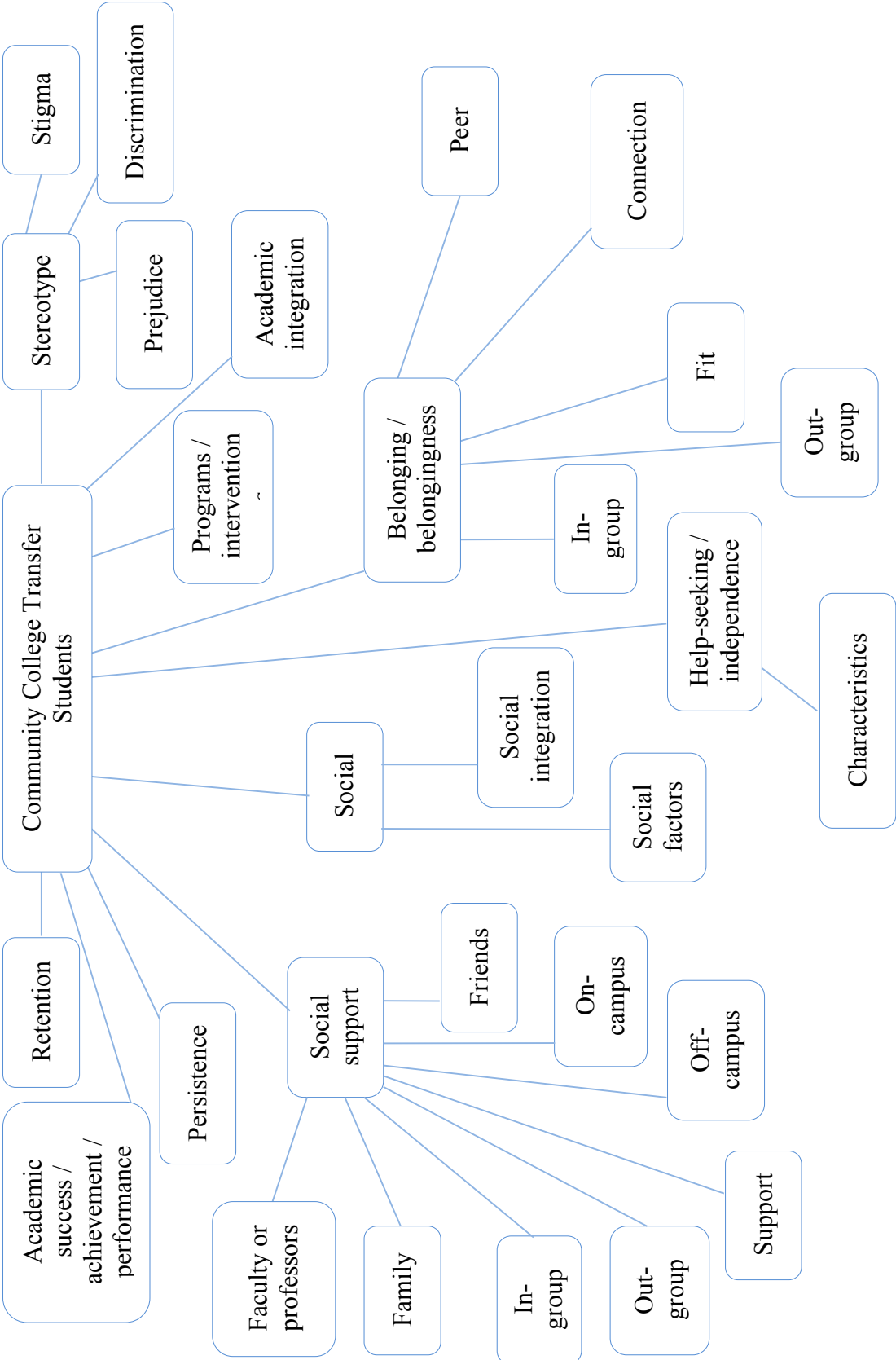


Figure 2. Search strategy word-tree. This was used to search the databases and keep track of each search completed. Each path consisted of one search and always contained the main word “community college transfer students”.

During the first step of the main search stage, the word-tree was used to search through the literature and initial decisions of article relevance were made. The abstract and title of each article returned from each search was read through and evaluated for relevancy. In order for an article to be deemed relevant, the abstract indicated that the focus population was community college transfer students, students were evaluated after they completed their transfer to the four-year institution, and social factors were evaluated within the article. A Word document was created for every search completed that included information regarding the components of the search and the articles returned. For each article returned in a search, the citation, decision regarding relevance, and decision reasoning was documented. Searches resulting in zero returned search results were also reported in one Word document. From the searches completed in the first stage, 44 articles were identified to be relevant across the databases and were included in the second step of the main search process.

During the second step of the main search stage, the full text of relevant identified articles were collected and read by the researcher. As the full text of each article was evaluated, the researcher made notes on the content of each as well as identifying the eligibility of the article for the current review. This information was noted in a master Word document where the date and in order in which each article was reviewed was also noted. In order to be deemed eligible during this step, the article focused solely on a community college transfer student population, evaluated these participants after their transfer to the four-year institution, evaluated some aspect of social experiences at the four-year institution and their impact on student success, and were quantitative or qualitative in nature. Of the 44 articles reviewed during this step, 21 (six quantitative and 15 qualitative) were determined to be eligible and included in the final review.

Final search stage. The final stage of the search strategy allowed the researcher to do a final “comb through” of the published literature in order to identify any remaining or recently published articles. This final search was completed after the articles were analyzed, but before the final paper was written. The same search terms and combinations used in the main search stage were used to examine the literature. Similar to the first step of the main search stage, the researcher reviewed the abstracts of each article to determine relevance. No new relevant or existing articles were identified through this process.

Analysis and Synthesis

As the majority of articles deemed eligible and included in the current systematic review were qualitative in nature, a narrative synthesis approach was used to synthesize the articles. Through this approach, all of the qualitative articles were reviewed and common themes were extrapolated. Each article was read thoroughly at least two times to ensure all major themes were noted. During the first reading, major emergent themes were identified. Once the first reading was completed, the researcher organized the emergent themes by identifying possible common terms to be used in reference to each theme. This was confirmed during the second reading, during which the researcher noted the articles that held each major theme as well as all relevant findings from the article. Once the articles were read and all themes were noted, a comprehensive list and hierarchy was created.

The quantitative articles were also reviewed and synthesized, although due to the small number of quantitative articles and the variability in the variables measured, a meta-analysis was not able to be completed. Instead, the researcher identified the common predictor and outcome variables used and compared the significance and effect size, when available, of each finding.

Results

Through the searches conducted, a total of 21 articles were identified. These articles were used in the current review. All articles looked at a community college transfer student population after they transferred to the four-year institution and evaluated the impact of various social factors on students' experiences. Social factors that emerged included social support from family (five articles), social support from peers (13 articles), social support from faculty (13 articles), social support from advisors (nine articles), additional considerations (nine articles), community college transfer student stereotype (four articles), and sense of belonging (13 articles; see Table 1). Eleven articles contained suggestions for programs to implement at four-year institutions in order to address the social factors above.

Table 1.
Articles found within each identified theme.

	Total	# of quantitative	# of qualitative
<i>Social support from family</i>	5	1	4
<i>Social support from peers</i>	13	4	9
<i>Social support from faculty</i>	13	6	7
<i>Social support from advisors</i>	9	3	6
<i>Additional considerations</i>	9	3	6
<i>Stigma / stereotype</i>	4	2	2
<i>Sense of belonging</i>	13	5	8

Social Factors

As students transitioned to four-year institutions, they encountered a variety of changes in their commitments and level of involvement outside of class. Berger and Malaney (2001) found that students were more likely to reduce their amount of work off-campus and their family commitments, while also increasing their amount of time spent studying and socializing. It is not clear the full impact of this shift in level of involvement outside of class, but the shift is suggested to be pertinent in order for students to succeed and adjust to four-year institutions (Berger & Malaney, 2001). Despite the importance of social involvement within this population, many students enter into their four-year institution without the intention to make new social connections. Instead, many of these students report being more focused on their academics and earning their degree (Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Lee and Schneider (2018) suggested that students interacted more with their academic advisors and professors than their peers post-transfer, further indicating community college transfer students are more focused on their academics.

While a student's academic involvement is important to their success and adjustment at the four-year institution, social factors are also influential. Throughout several studies, staff and students indicated that a balance between both social and academic involvement is key for student success (DeWine, Bresciani Ludvik, Tucker, Mulholland, & Bracken, 2017; Townsend & Wilson, 2008; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Berger & Malaney, 2001). The studies reviewed in the following sections indicate the joint influence of a student's interactions and involvement at the four-year institution with their feelings of connectedness and fit. It is also suggested that students' interactions and involvement may be further impacted by the stereotypes students encounter or amount of time they have available to become involved on-campus. The findings

from the following sections underscore the importance of understanding and evaluating the effects of social factors on the trajectory of community college transfer students and shed light on the need for further research within this domain.

Social support from family. Although many students move away from home in order to pursue their four-year degrees, a student's family still plays a pivotal role in their success at the four-year institution. Within the collected literature, a total of five articles, one quantitative and four qualitative, mentioned the impact of the students' support systems at home. Most students reported that their families provided emotional and motivational support throughout their transition and time at the four-year institution, allowing them to adjust to campus more smoothly.

Family members primarily helped community college transfer students by providing emotional support and motivational support when they struggled at the four-year institution. The emotional support provided by family members often took the form of providing encouragement to students. They did this by listening to students' concerns and encouraging them, and increasing students' confidence in their abilities (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Jackson, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017). Students interviewed by Shaw and Chin-Newman (2017) reported that family members counteracted their worries of feeling inadequate academically by reminding them of their successes and past performance, thus building their confidence. Families also helped to build students' confidence by expressing pride in their accomplishments throughout their education, despite their struggles at four-year institutions (Castro & Cortez, 2017).

By encouraging students, families also aided in motivating students to continue working towards their degree. All four of the qualitative articles that discussed familial support indicated that the encouragement families provided promoted their decision to continue pursuing their degree (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Ellis, 2013; Jackson, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017). One

way families' encouragement increased students' rates of persistence was by reinforcing students' academic aspirations and goals (Jackson, 2013). By doing this, families reassured students of their academic aims, leading students to decide to persevere and complete their degree. The connection between the amount of familial support students receive and their success at the four-year institution was furthered by the quantitative article addressing family support. D'Amico and colleagues (2014) found family support predicted students' academic and social integration at the four-year institution, suggesting that the emotional support families provide can also ease student experiences transitioning to their new school.

Although parents were most commonly mentioned by students interviewed across the studies, siblings and children were also pivotal in providing guidance and support. Two articles (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Jackson, 2013) indicated that siblings were a useful support, providing guidance about how to navigate the dynamics of college and the demands of college. Having a sibling who also attended college was especially useful for students whose parents had not gone to college and so were less able to help with the challenges they faced. Another participant reported that her daughter promoted her academic engagement (Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017). By asking about the student's assignments and checking in, the participant's daughter kept her mother connected to her coursework and motivated to complete the degree. Thus, although parents are the most common source of familial support, other family members can also provide this kind of support.

Despite the indications of support provided by participants in the previous articles, families did not always serve as a source of social support post-transfer. In two of the qualitative articles, participants recounted difficulties in balancing the expectations their family held for them and the demands their schoolwork required (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Jackson, 2013). In

Castro and Cortez (2017), one participant reported that because her parents did not attend college, they did not understand the demands required and did not know how to support her. In this case, the family disregarded the student's academic responsibilities to push for help around the house (Castro & Cortez, 2017). In experiences reported by students, there was a disconnect between the family's and the student's academic needs. Due to this lack of understanding, families were unable to provide the needed support and instead may have even hindered the student's success. Regardless of these negative experiences, the majority of students indicated that their family provided support that impacted their education positively (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Ellis, 2013; Jackson, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017).

Summary of social support from family. These findings suggest that families can provide an important area of support for community college transfer students by encouraging their capabilities and providing a listening ear during times of struggle (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Ellis, 2013; Jackson, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017). Family support boosted students' confidence and provided them with a connection to their school work, effectively reminding them of their reason for wanting to attain their four-year degree (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Jackson, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017). However, this impact may only be effective if the family has an understanding of the demands college and actively continues to communicate with the student (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Jackson, 2013). Although several studies suggested that the encouragement provided through their families helped promote their decisions to persist, a direct link has not been made within the literature between the two. Currently, no research has investigated effects of family interactions and support on indicators of academic performance (e.g., GPA, retention, persistence, graduation rates) among community college transfer students. Considering the small number of studies addressing this topic found within the review as well as

the indications of impact within the few studies found, future research should further explore the impact of lack of family support on students' experiences and academic success at the four-year institution.

Social support from peers. Interactions with peers at the four-year institution have been suggested throughout the literature to be an important source of support for community college transfer students post-transfer. A total of 13, four quantitative and nine qualitative, of the articles reviewed addressed the importance of creating a peer support system at the four-year institution. Of the nine qualitative articles related to peer interactions, four indicated that students themselves acknowledged the importance of making connections with their peers (Castro & Cortez, 2017; DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006; Starobin, Smith, & Laanan, 2016). Students interviewed by DeWine and colleagues (2017) explained that in order to feel satisfied at the four-year institution and to succeed academically, being involved and feeling connected to peers was pertinent. Similar to the kind of support provided by family members, peers were able to provide both emotional and motivational support by offering encouragement and a listening ear (Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017). Interacting with other students who understood the demands of college, community college transfer students were able to relate to their struggles and find support in overcoming them together.

In order to connect with their peers, students suggested a variety of methods to facilitate peer interaction. Common methods included campus events, student clubs and organizations, supplemental instruction, and living on campus (DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Flaga, 2006; Starobin et al., 2016; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Each of these activities allowed students to interact with peers in an environment in which students are normally expected and willing to make connections. Several students also mentioned the use of activities that are both socially and

academically beneficial, such as study groups and academic organizations within a student's major (Ellis, 2013; Flaga, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). By participating in clubs or organizations within a student's academic discipline, they are able to interact with and connect with students who share the same academic requirements and interests (Flaga, 2006). This allowed students to get to know more people at the four-year institution that they may see on a more regular basis and feel a heightened sense of belonging at the university.

Despite the multitude of avenues to become connected to peers, most of the students indicated struggling to find a friend group. Among the nine qualitative articles, eight discussed barriers students faced making connections with peers at the four-year institution (Flaga, 2006; Miller, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2008; Townsend & Wilson, 2006). The most common barrier reported was that current students often were part of pre-existing friend groups that were not willing to let others in (DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Miller, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2006). As the friend groups were not open to new people, the community college transfer students then had to find others who were not already part of a friend group on-campus or find a friend group open to new people. Some students interviewed by Castro and Cortez (2017) also reported feeling that they stood out among their classmates due to differences, such as their age, gender, or cultural background. By perceiving this difference between their classmates and themselves, the students felt that they did not belong and were not able to get as involved as they would have liked (Castro & Cortez, 2017). The barriers students face as well as the frequency with which they are reported by students suggests that fostering a peer support system is not a simple task. This is particularly concerning, as those without a peer support system often reported feeling isolated as well as having lower levels of academic performance (DeWine et al., 2017; Townsend & Wilson, 2008; Townsend & Wilson, 2006).

It was also suggested that the four-year institutions did not offer enough opportunities for community college transfer students to become involved and meet others. Townsend and Wilson (2006) suggested that the university's current structure caters to incoming freshman by pushing social involvement opportunities for the first two years. This then creates the strong social bonds between current students that make it difficult for community college transfer students to find a support system among peers post-transfer. Students interviewed by Ellis (2013) indicated that they felt the university did not do enough to unite students. By not providing opportunities for students to interact, many felt isolated and detached from the university (Ellis, 2013). The lack of opportunities offered by four-year institutions might suggest that the difficulty students face in creating peer support systems is not solely due to their own efforts or lack of effort to meet others.

The four quantitative articles addressing the influence of a peer support system provided mixed findings on the direct influence they might have on students' outcomes at the four-year institution. Without a support system among peers, the four main quantitative articles suggested that students were less likely to succeed at and adjust smoothly to the four-year institution (Berger & Malaney, 2001; D'Amico et al., 2014; Laanan, 2007; Lee & Schneider, 2018). Three of the articles indicated that students showed higher levels of belonging and easier adjustment at the four-year institution if they were involved in clubs, attended school events, socialized more with peers, and participated in study groups (Berger & Malaney, 2001; D'Amico et al., 2014; Laanan, 2007). This suggests that socializing with peers leads students to feel more connected to the school, also allowing for increased social adjustment to the four-year institution. Participation in student organizations and socializing also predicted students' academic performance, with one study (D'Amico et al., 2014) indicating it increased with higher rates of participation and another

(Berger & Malaney, 2001) indicating that it decreased with higher rates of participation. This may be explained by the students need to balance their school and home life, leading to differing findings depending on the populations trends. Another explanation may be that the context in which students interact with peers may impact their academic performance differently. For example, students involvement in clubs and during classes also predicted their first semester GPA, suggesting that interacting with peers within an academic context is important for students' academic success (D'Amico et al., 2014). The authors also explored the impact of academically related social activities and consistently found that as this involvement increased, so did students' social adjustment and academic success at the four-year institution. This might suggest that the context in which peer interactions occur impacts the level of influence such interactions have on the student's academic trajectory. Additionally, although one article found no significant relationship between peer interactions and student persistence, the authors continued to suggest that a peer support system is still important and should be encouraged (Lee & Schneider, 2018). Overall, however, findings from the quantitative articles indicate that peer interactions and connections are integral in students' academic performance and adjustment to the four-year institution.

Summary of social support from peers. The articles reviewed indicate that, although difficult to foster, the social support students receive from their peers at the four-year institution is important for students' adjustment post-transfer (D'Amico et al., 2014; DeWine et al., 2017; Laanan, 2007; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Starobin et al., 2016; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Peers provide an important kind of emotional and motivational support, as they also endure the same challenges as community college transfer students and are able to relate to their struggles in the support they give (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Flaga, 2006; Ellis, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman,

2017). By having a peer social support system, it is suggested that students are more likely to adjust more smoothly to campus and foster a sense of belonging (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006; Starobin et al., 2016; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Some findings within the literature were mixed and possibly suggest the impact of context on the influence of peer supports on student outcomes (Berger & Malaney, 2001; D'Amico et al., 2014; Lee & Schneider, 2018).

Specifically, peer supports within the academic context, such as peer study groups, consistently increased students' academic performance, while other studies within a more social context found evidence for both increasing and decreasing a student's academic performance (Berger & Malaney, 2001; D'Amico et al., 2014). As this is not fully clear in the literature, future research is recommended to explore the role of context on students' academic performance. Future literature should also strive to understand the exact qualities peer support offers community college transfer students, as well as the impact these supports may have on students' rates of persistence.

Social support from faculty. Students reported a variety of experiences interacting with and receiving support from faculty at their four-year institutions, yet all influenced their level of success. The support faculty provided students included academic guidance, as well as encouragement and advice in transitioning to the university environment (Ellis, 2013; Jackson, 2013; Starobin et al., 2016; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). A total of 13 articles, six quantitative and seven qualitative, noted the influence of faculty interactions on students' outcomes at the four-year institution. Among the qualitative articles, students reported both negative and positive experiences connecting with faculty at their four-year institutions.

Of the five qualitative articles indicating students' negative experiences connecting with faculty, most experiences detailed by students focused on a lack of interaction between student

and professor (DeWine et al., 2017; Jackson, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Those interviewed by DeWine and colleagues (2017) indicated that their professors often seemed distant and unapproachable. As they were often busy and did not always appear interested in talking to students, several interviewed even found it difficult to meet with faculty (DeWine et al., 2017; Townsend & Wilson, 2006). As students often felt unable to approach or meet with their professors, this might suggest that they were uncomfortable with asking professors for help adjusting to campus or for guidance in their professional careers. Without this familiarity with faculty, students were not able to foster a social connection with their academic environment.

Of those students who did interact with faculty, many felt that the faculty were uninterested; these students were unable to develop relationships with their professors (DeWine et al., 2017; Jackson, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Without a strong connection to their professors, students reported questioning their role and fit at the university. This may have been especially true among students who were already struggling academically and lacked a support system among their peers. Jackson (2013) recounted a student's experience in which a professor failed to stand up for the student's right to express ideas during class, leading the student to withdraw from class discussions. The student's grade in turn suffered, while also causing her feel like her voice and presence in class was not valued (Jackson, 2013). Negative experiences with faculty can thus lead students to feelings of disconnection, decisions to persist, and academic performance. Considering academics is often the primary motive of many community college transfer students, lack of perceived support from professors may be more detrimental than a lack of support from family or friends.

In contrast to the negative experiences detailed by students, others felt they were able to develop relationships with their professors easily and found their support integral during their time at the four-year institution (Ellis, 2013; Jackson, 2013; Starobin et al., 2016; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Some students interviewed by Starobin and colleagues (2016) reported that faculty were approachable and open to discussing students' interests as well as providing guidance within their field and transitioning to the four-year institution. In working with these students, faculty were perceived as providing a valuable resource and connection for students within their academic discipline and to the university. This experience was echoed by students interviewed by Ellis (2013) who indicated that the majority of faculty encountered welcomed student conversations, yet noted that more of their interactions were done through email due to their busy schedules. This may suggest that although professors may be less available, they are still willing and able to provide important support to community college transfer students. Additionally, in order to receive support, students reported that they needed to be persistent and proactive in meeting and interacting with their faculty members.

These findings were also consistent among the quantitative articles evaluating the influence of faculty interactions on academic success, four-year institution adjustment, and persistence. Two studies found a statistically significant relationship between number of interactions with faculty, academic adjustment, and coping with problems (Lopez & Jones, 2017; Moser, 2013). The significant findings might suggest the positive benefits support from faculty provides to students. By interacting with faculty, students may feel more emotionally and mentally supported and so better able to address and work through their problems. This should also suggest that having these relationships would also improve their academic performance, since they feel comfortable approaching professors when needed. It is also important to note that

three studies did not find a significant relationship between students' number of faculty interactions and their persistence, adjustment, or academic success (D'Amico et al., 2014; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Moser, 2013). Yet, this did not mean that faculty interactions were not influential to students' four-year institution experiences. Due to the early timing of when the research was conducted, it was suggested that the non-significant findings may have been due to the lack of time students had to develop relationships with faculty prior to completing the survey (D'Amico et al., 2014; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Moser, 2013).

The way in which faculty were perceived by students appeared to show a consistent impact on students' academic adjustment. The more positive students perceived the faculty to be, the more likely they were to become academically adjusted (Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Laanan, 2007). If professors were deemed more approachable and easy to talk to, students might have been more likely to interact with the faculty, allowing them to receive the support they needed to succeed. This might suggest that the quality, in addition to the number of interactions students have with faculty, are integral to determine the impact of support received by faculty on community college transfer student success and persistence.

Summary of social support from faculty. As community college transfer students enter into the four-year institution as upperclassman, they are often already focused on future plans for their degree (Miller, 2013). Professors are in a unique and valuable position to help mentor students and guide them in the right direction, while also providing them a direct connection to the university. Students often have both positive and negative experiences with faculty, but overall agree that these interactions have an influence on their trajectory at their four-year institution (DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Jackson, 2013; Starobin et al., 2016; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). The number of interactions, as well as quality of

interactions students have with faculty, are pertinent in impacting students' rates of academic adjustment (Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Laanan, 2007; Lopez & Jones, 2017; Moser, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Studies reviewed did not indicate a connection between students' decisions to persist or their academic performance, although measurement timing may have interfered with detecting such effects. This would indicate that the impact of faculty support on students' rates of persistence and academic success needs to be further explored. Future research might explore the nuanced differences within students' perceptions of faculty and their willingness to interact as well as students' likelihood to approach faculty. Additionally, it may be suggested that faculty have an influence on students' experiences, yet it is not clear the exact qualities needed from faculty in order for students to benefit from faculty interactions and support.

Social support from advisors. While some articles indicated that staff and advisors provided a vital source of support impacting student success, others indicated that students received little help from advisors on campus (Cortez & Castro, 2017; Ellis, 2013; Jackson, 2013; Starobin et al., 2016). Of the articles evaluated, six qualitative articles and three quantitative articles, a total of nine, were found to address the influence of advisors or college staff on community college transfer student success.

Among the qualitative articles, most contained indications of community college transfer students' negative experiences interacting with staff and advisors, while only a few indicated positive experiences (Cortez & Castro, 2017; DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017). Ellis (2013) interviewed students who recounted poor experiences with their advisors, in which advisors were non-responsive to students concerns, lacked adequate availability to meet, and were seen as generally rude throughout their interactions. These

students reported that in order to receive guidance, students needed to be persistent or find ways to get information elsewhere (Ellis, 2013). This suggests that unless students were highly motivated, they were unable to receive much guidance from their advisors.

Advisors interviewed reported feeling similarly about working with the community college transfer student population (DeWine et al., 2017). They reported that advisors found it difficult to work with community college transfer students due to contradicting views held by advisors and students of the level of support needed, as well as the diverse needs within this student population (DeWine et al., 2017). In the same study, some of the students interviewed reported that they felt staff and advisors would often provide students with the information they needed, but would fail to explain why it was important or how it should be used (DeWine et al., 2017). This suggests a problem of communication between students and their advisors as to what they need and what can be provided. Without a proper understanding on both sides, students are unable to receive the support they might need from their advisors.

In two more qualitative studies, students interviewed reported that they found their advisors from the community college to be more useful to them, even post-transfer at the four-year institution (Cortez & Castro, 2017; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017). In Cortez and Castro (2017), students interviewed reported that the advisors and staff they received support from at the community college would check in and provide assistance even after they transferred. Again, this suggests a lack of support provided by advisors at the four-year institution. Yet, aside from a lack of understanding, it is not clear if this lack of support is because they feel their advisors are not available or if this is due to another reason.

Although several articles indicated a negative environment surrounding student experiences with advisors, others acknowledged the benefits students' experienced while

working with their advisors (Jackson, 2013; Starobin et al., 2016). The two remaining qualitative articles presented students who recalled the usefulness of working with their advisors and staff at the four-year institution (Jackson, 2013; Starobin et al., 2016). Working with their advisors, students were able to gain valuable information about which courses to take and ensured that their courses transferred correctly (Starobin et al., 2016; Jackson, 2013). Additionally, advisors provided necessary guidance for navigating the four-year institution's new environment (Starobin et al., 2016; Jackson, 2013). Such support allowed students to feel welcomed at the four-year institution and to adjust more smoothly to the campus environment. Considering the other negative experiences, it is possible that receiving positive support is dependent on the advisor a student is given. To receive support, advisors who have a lower number of students on their caseload and are knowledgeable of the advisement of transfer students may be the best source of support for community college transfer students. Yet, despite the positive experiences, it is not clear the direct impact support from advisors may have on students' later success at the four-year institution.

The positive influence and impact of advisors' support was seen among the three quantitative articles (D'Amico et al., 2014; Laanan, 2007; Lee & Schneider, 2018). Meeting with an academic advisor predicted a student's likelihood of persistence, academic success, and academic adjustment at the four-year institution (D'Amico et al., 2014; Laanan, 2007; Lee & Schneider, 2018). This would suggest that academic advisors play a pivotal role in working with students in order to make them feel more comfortable at the university and within their academic environment. Lee and Schneider (2018) suggested that the academic advisor may be used to develop and encourage relationships between students and their professors or peers. As advisors

and staff are often the first people students interact with on campus, they may provide a pivotal role in preparing students for later experiences at the four-year institution.

Summary of social support from advisors. Advisors' early introduction to community college transfer students may play a pivotal role in setting up the student's later experiences and trajectory at the four-year institution (D'Amico et al., 2014; DeWine et al., 2017; Laanan, 2007; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Starobin et al., 2016). They are in the perfect position to encourage students to interact with faculty in their discipline, become involved in related organizations on campus, and promote their later success (Lee & Schneider, 2018). These interactions have led students to be more likely to persist, receive higher grades, and adjust more smoothly to campus (D'Amico et al., 2014; Laanan, 2007; Lee & Schneider, 2018). Yet, it appears that advisors only able to provide this support if they understand the needs of the community college transfer student and are available to provide these interactions (DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013). As the experiences reported by students varied within the literature, future research might explore the reasoning for these differences as well as what is needed in order for students to have a positive experience with their advisor. Additionally, future research should further explore the extent of influence advisors have on students' rates of persistence and academic success.

Additional considerations: living situation, family responsibilities, and work.

Throughout the literature, nine articles, three quantitative and six qualitative, addressed the role of additional factors that hinder the community college transfer student's ability to become socially involved and integrated. Students reported living off-campus, working off-campus, and having to care for children or others as common reasons for student's inability to become as involved on campus. Students were not as exposed to opportunities and often had less time available to participate in activities on-campus due to these other responsibilities.

Among the six qualitative articles, five identified the benefits of living on campus and the detriments of not living on campus (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006; Starobin et al., 2016; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). The primary benefit of living on-campus was that it provided students with more opportunities to become involved and meet others (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006). The fellow students in the dorms provided ample opportunities for students to interact, allowing them to find their social group faster, develop a sense of community, and connect with their peers (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006). Students interviewed by Flaga (2006) felt that they were more encouraged to attend university events, allowing them to become more socially acclimated. This allowed students to foster a stronger connection to campus and provided the avenue through which to foster this connection. By having this outlet, students did not need to worry about finding ways to make friends or create a support system. The increased social benefits was attributed to the close proximity of students to their peers as well as to campus events while living in the dorms (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006). Additionally, several students also mentioned the added benefit of being part of a transfer student community, providing students a group of peers with whom they could relate (DeWine et al., 2017; Starobin et al., 2016). This supplied students with an outlet and support system that was easily able to understand their unique set of needs as well as the struggles they encountered.

In contrast, living off-campus was indicated as a primary reason for students' lack of involvement at the four-year institution. Of those students interviewed who lived off campus, many reported that this made it more challenging to make friends (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Part of this was because students felt that they missed out on events to meet others (DeWine et al., 2017; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Students frequently felt that they would have had a better chance to meet others if they

had lived on campus since the experience would have pushed them to become more involved (DeWine et al., 2017; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). By not living on campus, students felt they were unable to become as involved and encountered more difficulty making friends. With this lowered level of involvement, students might have felt more disconnected from their peers and the campus environment. They did not have access to the pre-existing support group to connect to and instead had to actively seek out opportunities to get involved, yet this was not possible for many students who also had other responsibilities that did not allow them the time to seek out campus activities.

Of the qualitative articles, two also mentioned the influence of other responsibilities including work and dependent children. Students interviewed by Townsend, Wilson (2008), and Miller (2013) found that by having to work off campus or take care of their children, they were less able to participate due to time constraints. By hindering students' involvement, students are unable to foster the support systems that promote student success or belonging at the four-year institution. Some researchers suggested that these students need a better balance between their work life, home life, and school life in order to be able to become involved and participate in social activities on-campus (Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Although more balance may be a good solution, this may not always be possible for students who are working to bring home money for their family or to pay for tuition.

The quantitative articles that investigated the influence of other responsibilities further indicate their impact on community college transfer students' rates of success and persistence. Students were more satisfied with their university experiences when they lived on campus, worked on campus, and spent less time on family commitments (Berger & Malaney, 2001). Working fewer hours per week also predicted higher rates of social involvement and academic

success among community college transfer students (D'Amico et al., 2014; Lee & Schneider, 2018). By staying close to campus and restricting time on other activities, students might have been more able to participate in campus activities and focus on their academics, allowing them to be more satisfied with their experience, feel more like they belong, and improve their grades. Student who worked less had higher rates of persistence (D'Amico et al., 2014; Lee & Schneider, 2018). Overall, this indicates that by restricting outside work and distractions does not just allow students to become more involved on campus and promote their feelings of belongingness, but also allows them to focus on their academics and thus improve the likelihood of their decisions to persist. Yet, working less hours or separating from other responsibilities may not be possible for students who support their families or themselves.

Summary of additional considerations: living situation, family responsibilities, and work. The influence of additional consideration factors has clearly been linked to students' levels of involvement, academic success, and persistence across the qualitative and quantitative articles reviewed (Berger & Malaney, 2001; D'Amico et al., 2014; Lee & Schneider, 2018). These additional considerations included living off-campus, working off-campus, and taking care of children (Berger & Malaney, 2001; DeWine et al., 2017; Miller, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Students' additional factors restricted the time they had available to become involved on-campus and left them at a disadvantage (DeWine et al., 2017; Miller, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). While students acknowledged the increased rates of belongingness and connection to the four-year institution due to their higher levels of involvement when living on-campus or restricting outside responsibilities, quantitative studies further established this link between students restricted outside activities and their persistence at the four-year institution (Lee & Schneider, 2018). Future research may explore ways to mediate the relationship between

students' outside responsibilities and their on-campus involvement, academic performance, and decision to persist in order to help students that are unable to restrict their work hours or other responsibilities.

Stereotype of a community college transfer student. A growing number of studies have begun to explore the influence of the stereotype of a community college transfer student on later outcomes at the four-year institution. Among those articles reviewed, four articles, two quantitative and two qualitative, identified the impact and presence of the perception and experience of this stereotype by students. The community college transfer student stereotype was defined by students interviewed by Shaw, Spink, and Chin-Newman (2018) as being unprepared for the four-year institution's academic rigor, possessing a lower academic ability, and being a lazy student. Lopez and Jones (2017) have suggested that the stereotype may have formed due to the student's common experience of transfer shock, where their grades drop during their first semester. It is suggested that the lower performance may lead faculty or students themselves to view community college transfer students as less capable and lazy (Lopez & Jones, 2017). Considering the impact of faculty and peer support on student success, this explanation may be particularly concerning if true.

The community college transfer student stereotype has been experienced by students, but more often perceived and internalized. When experienced, students reported feeling underestimated by other students or faculty due to the stereotype (Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018). Students who perceived the community college transfer student stereotype reported its negative effects on their levels of confidence and belonging at the four-year institution. Specifically, it has led students to doubt their ability to perform well in the classroom and at times even whether they should continue in their education or if they belonged (Shaw &

Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018). As it lowered students' confidence in their academic ability, it also led them to question their decisions to persist and lowered their academic performance. This might suggest that the community college transfer student stereotype plays an important role in the decision-making process students use to determine their persistence at the four-year institution and also may function similarly to stereotype threat experienced by other underrepresented populations.

The stereotype encountered by community college transfer students has also been suggested to have an impact on the academic adjustment. Two quantitative studies have found that the more students perceive there to be a negative perception of transfer students at the four-year institution, the more challenging it was for them to adjust academically (Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Lopez & Jones, 2017). The construct of negative perceptions of transfer students focused on students' feelings of being inadequate and not accepted by the university, suggesting that if the stereotype is perceived by students, they are more likely to feel ostracized and isolated (Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Lopez & Jones, 2017). The connection students feel to the university plays a pivotal role in their ability to perform well academically and their decisions to persist at the four-year institution. If students feel isolated and disconnected from the university and have associated lower levels of adjustment, they may be more likely to drop-out or see their grades suffer.

Although there do not appear to be any programs set to counteract this influence, students interviewed provided suggestions and experiences that allowed them to overcome the stereotype. Students interviewed by Shaw and colleagues (2018) recounted that their community college professors warned them and prepared them for the change in difficulty and possible interactions they may have with this stereotype prior to transfer. By being informed, students were able to

acknowledge their true abilities and prevent the stigma from lowering their confidence. Students also emphasized the importance of their family and friends in counteracting the influence of the stereotype, who reminded students of their capabilities and past success in order to fuel their future success and maintain their confidence (Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017). The social support provided by faculty, family, and friends allowed students to prepare for the possible influence of the stereotype and maintain their level of confidence and prevent later feelings of isolation. This might suggest that the social support serves to prevent the influence of this stereotype and uplift students.

Summary of the stereotype of a community college transfer student. So far, only four articles have addressed the influence and possible impact of the community college transfer student stereotype of lowered capability at the four-year institution (Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Lopez & Jones, 2017; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018). This has been suggested to lower the confidence of students, leading them to question their belonging and fit at the university, and diminish their likelihood to persist (Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Lopez & Jones, 2017; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018). Studies reviewed in the current paper have addressed the existence of this phenomenon, but still need to explore the prevalence of the stereotype and further substantiate its effects on the community college transfer students' four-year institution outcomes. As most of the studies have been conducted within the last 5 years, it is possible that more research may be moving towards evaluating this stereotype. Regardless, this is an area in need of more research.

Sense of belonging. One of the primary factors linked to community college transfer student success was feelings of fit and belonging at the four-year institution. Students most commonly established their sense of belonging at the university through a connection to the

campus, their peers, or the faculty. Feelings of fit or belonging were investigated in 13 of the reviewed articles, with five being quantitative in nature and eight being qualitative in nature. When students felt that they did not fit in among the campus population and did not possess any connection to campus, they struggled more in their academics and were less satisfied at the university (DeWine et al., 2017; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). If a student feels no connection to their four-year institution and is also struggling academically, they may not feel as much of a need or reason to stay and persist. The lack of belonging could lead some students to consider dropping out or leaving school more than those who do feel they belong.

Among five of the qualitative articles, several students indicated the importance of having a strong connection with the campus environment (DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Starobin et al., 2017; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). For many, this took the form of living on campus, which allowed students to become more involved in campus life (DeWine et al., 2017; Starobin et al., 2016). In contrast, by not living on campus, students felt that they missed out on important connections with their peers and often felt disconnected from university traditions (Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). This made it more difficult for students to find peers they could relate to and feel integrated into the campus culture, leading them to feel more isolated. Others felt that the university made very little effort to facilitate programs and supports for community college transfer students to help unite the student population (Ellis, 2013). This was reported to have led students to feel that the university did not value their student population on campus (Ellis, 2013). It created a disconnect between students and the university environment, further leading them to question their fit on campus. If there are no activities or events to attend where a student feels that they belong, they cannot become connected to the university.

The primary area students related to fostering a sense of belonging on campus was their connections to peers at the four-year institution. This was found among all eight of the qualitative articles. Although some were able to make friends easily, the majority of students interviewed across studies indicated consistent struggle (Castro & Cortez, 2017; DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Flaga, 2006; Miller, 2013; Starobin et al., 2016; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Many students indicated that their struggle to meet others was due to the friend groups among other students that were pre-existing and often not willing to let in new people (DeWine et al, 2017; Ellis, 2013; Miller, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2006). Without this support system, many students reported feeling disconnected and like they did not fit in. This also might have been more challenging for non-traditional or underrepresented students who have reported having a difficult time finding others who can relate to their specific struggles (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). This leads them to feel isolated beyond the isolation felt by community college transfer students as a whole. These findings suggest that without a support system among peers community college transfer students begin to question their position at the four-year institution and feel further disconnected from their academic environment.

A few students within two of the qualitative articles also indicated the role of faculty members in fostering a connection to the university (Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Students interviewed by Townsend and Wilson (2006) indicated that when they did not hold a relationship with their professors and felt that they were disinterested in the students, they felt they were viewed as just a number in their classes. This led students to feel that there would be no point in going to class, since they would not be noticed (Townsend & Wilson, 2006). The relationships students had with their faculty members gave them a sense of

connection to the university and their academic environment that motivated their continued persistence. Without this, students were more likely to consider leaving their classes and possibly even the university. This disconnect with faculty was also experienced by students struggling in their courses (Townsend & Wilson, 2008). This might suggest that students who were unable to connect with faculty then suffered academically, as they were unable to connect and adjust to the academic environment. Additionally, if students are already struggling with their academics, the lack of connection with faculty might further their lowered feelings fit. In other words, this might double the effect on a student's sense of belonging.

The impact of belongingness on the community college transfer students' rates of persistence and academic success at the four-year institution was investigated in the five quantitative articles reviewed (Berger & Malaney, 2001; D'Amico et al., 2014; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Laanan, 2007; Lopez & Jones, 2017). Two of the five quantitative studies investigating a student's level of belonging found a relationship between students' socialization on-campus and their feelings of belonging at the four-year institution (Berger & Malaney, 2001; D'Amico et al., 2014). Through participating in organizations on campus, studying with peers, and socializing with peers students felt more like they belonged at the four-year institution (Berger & Malaney, 2001; D'Amico et al., 2014). This furthers the argument that participating in social activities and fostering social support from peers plays a pivotal role in fostering the community college transfer students sense of belonging. This relationship also extended to the students' feelings of academic fit and adjustment at the four-year institution (Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Laanan, 2007; Lopez & Jones, 2017). Three of the quantitative articles indicated that the more a student felt that they belonged and were connected to the four-year institution, the more academically adjusted they were (Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Laanan, 2007; Lopez & Jones,

2017). This would suggest that a student's sense of belonging also influences their academic success and perceptions of the academic environment.

Summary of sense of belonging. The reviewed articles create a strong connection between the students' social involvement and academic adjustment on-campus with their feelings of belonging at the four-year institution (D'Amico et al., 2014; DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). A student's sense of belonging primarily came from their connections to their peers on-campus, as well as their connection to campus itself and faculty (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Several qualitative articles also provided some suggestion that sense of belonging is linked to students' decisions to persist, as a lack of belonging leads students to question their role at the four-year institution and may lead to a drop in their grades (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006; Miller, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). As this was not found among the quantitative articles, future research should explore the extent of this impact as well as the existence of this relationship. Since it was not clear if a lack of belonging produced negative outcomes on students' rates of academic success, research should explore the connections between students' feelings of belonging at the four-year institution and their academic performance.

Summary of social factors. The social factors that emerged within the current review all influenced students' adjustment to the four-year institution. Social support received from family, faculty, peers, and advisors functioned as a facilitator for student adjustment when students had positive experiences, but when they had negative experiences this functioned as a barrier to students (D'Amico et al., 2014; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Laanan, 2007; Lopez & Jones, 2017;). This was also true for sense of belonging (D'Amico et al., 2014; Jackson & Laanan, 2015;

Laanan, 2007; Lopez & Jones, 2017). If students had other responsibilities or encountered the community college transfer student stereotype, these factors served as barriers, hindering students' ability to adjust (D'Amico et al., 2014; Lee & Schneider, 2018). As every identified factor was linked to a student's ability to adjust, it is clear that social factors influence a student's experiences at their four-year institution post-transfer. Yet, it is still not clear if these factors hold a direct effect on their rates of academic success and persistence.

The community college transfer students' rates of academic success were only directly related to a few factors. These included additional factors and social support from peers, advisors, and faculty (D'Amico et al., 2014; Lopez & Jones, 2017). The presence of other responsibilities within additional considerations served as a barrier, taking away students' time to work on their school work and get involved (Miller, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). On the other hand, social support served as a facilitator, promoting students' academic performance by providing encouragement and help when needed (DeWine et al., 2017; Starobin et al., 2016; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Although no direct links were made, within the student interviews, the stereotype perceived and sense of belonging were suggested to influence students' academic performance (D'Amico et al., 2014; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018). The stereotype served to cause students to question their academic abilities, thus performing worse in school, while a lowered sense of belonging was suggested to distract students and was often the result of a lack of social support from peers, which is directly linked to academic success (Castro & Cortez, 2017; D'Amico et al., 2014; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Although many of the factors did not indicate a direct influence on rates of academic performance, it is evident that the social factors detailed here still impact the

community college transfer students' academic success rates at the four-year institution, just in more indirect ways.

The influence of social barriers on students' rates of persistence also remain unclear, as only two themes were found to be directly related to a student's decision to persist. These included a facilitator, the social support received from faculty, as well as a barrier, the additional factors that hinder students' involvement at school and time (D'Amico et al., 2014; Lee & Schneider, 2018). While these two factors indicated profound impacts quantitatively, all of the other factors discussed were suggested to impact a student's decision to persist more indirectly within the qualitative articles reviewed. Students suggested that without proper social support systems among peers, family, and faculty, they often felt isolated and were less able to deal with the struggles they faced (DeWine et al., 2017; Jackson, 2013; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). This often led students to question their place at the school and their ability to complete their degree. Students also doubted their decision to persist when they felt that they did not belong and were faced with the community college transfer student stereotype, indicating their inadequate ability for succeeding at the four-year institution (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006; Miller, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Although these factors were not as directly implicated in affecting the community college transfer student populations' decisions to persist, the findings still indicate their influence in a more indirect way.

Among the social factors that emerged within the literature, many did not hold strong connections to students' outcomes at the four-year institution. Part of this was due to the lack of research exploring different social factors impact on students' likelihood of persistence. This is the primary area in need of future research as well as the major limitation within the current

review. It should also be noted that the articles reviewed for each social factor also produced many mixed findings that did not always indicate direct impact on the community college transfer student populations' trajectory at the four-year institution. Within each of these areas, it is suggested that future research explore the extent to which each factor influences student outcomes as well as the prevalence of their impact on this population.

Programs

Within the literature on community college transfer students at the four-year institution, only two articles were found to evaluate existing programs for community college transfer students. The first program was evaluated by Auerbach and Williams (2013) and aimed to promote engineering students' academic experiences and future career options. This program consisted of informal meetings, workshops, and events that students were required to attend. The largest benefit students found from these events were the connections made with faculty and peers during the informal meetings attended. Students reported this to promote a sense of community among the students and also led them to form tutoring relationships and study partnerships (Auerbach & Williams, 2013). The program was reported to be fairly effective, with only two students out of 31 not persisting (Auerbach & Williams, 2013). One major limitation of this program review is the focus on an engineering community college transfer student population. In order to fully understand the effectiveness of this program on community college transfer students, the program would need to be implemented with a broader population.

The second program was evaluated by Austin (2006) and functioned to provide older community college transfer students with financial, academic, and social supports in order to increase graduation rates. Students in the program attended monthly meetings, were assigned a faculty mentor, and were offered support services on campus. The monthly meetings provided

students with opportunities to meet with others in the program, allowing them to foster a peer support system and promote their feelings of belongingness (Austin, 2006). Students suggested that a support group where those in the program can discuss and share common struggles would have been useful and would further improve the existing elevated levels of belongingness (Austin, 2006). The faculty mentors appeared to be only useful to students if they were paired with a professor who was willing to work with them, as some students expressed positive benefits of a faculty mentor while others were unable to meet with their faculty mentor (Austin, 2006). The program was reported to be successful in graduating students, but no statistics were provided due to the qualitative nature of the article. This program was also specific to the older community college transfer student population, adding a major limitation to the program review. Again, program effectiveness would need to be investigated using a broader student community college transfer student population.

Summary of reviewed programs. Each program evaluated provided some combination of social supports as well as academic supports, but appeared to need some improvement. Most notably, students in the program evaluated by Austin (2006) indicated a need for more support from fellow students through a support group within the program. Additionally, both appeared to be effective, but a more extensive review would aid in evaluating the effectiveness of each program. Specifically, the review done by Austin (2006) failed to provide quantitative information on the success rates of students and instead only provided qualitative interviews. Finally, both programs looked at a specific subset of the community college transfer student population. This does not allow for the generalizability of the programs to the wider community college transfer student population. The lack of generalizability also indicates the need for future

evaluations of broader programs focusing on this population as a whole to understand the types of program elements that promote students success.

Program suggestions. While most articles did not evaluate existing programs, nine quantitative and qualitative articles provided suggestions for future programs based on their findings (DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Flaga, 2006; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Miller, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). The main overarching suggestion provided within four of the nine studies pushed the urgency for universities to acknowledge the diverse needs of the community college transfer student population (DeWine et al., 2017; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Miller, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Additionally, staff interviewed by DeWine and colleagues (2017) indicated the importance of improving support services to reflect the distinct struggles this population faces. This indicates that the issue is not only seen by students, but also faculty and staff. The primary way suggested to enact these changes was through training to inform faculty and staff of the diverse needs of and struggles community college transfer students might face (DeWine et al., 2017; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Miller, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). By having faculty and staff on campus that are trained to work with this diverse student population, they can be more cognizant of the challenges these students often encounter to prepare students in how to approach their problems, as well as provide more specific help for their needs. This may also aid in enhancing the relationships students have with faculty and staff. Through policies that enforce the acknowledgment of the specific needs of the community college transfer student population among faculty and staff, students may also feel like they are valued by the four-year institution.

The other primary suggestion for four-year institutions was the implementation of social activities geared towards getting the community college transfer student population more involved. Among those articles that provided suggestions, eight of the nine provided some suggestion of a need for programs that facilitate student engagement on campus (DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Flaga, 2006; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Miller, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). The development of more clubs and organizations relevant to the students' academic interests, as well as the promotion of involvement within these organizations by faculty and staff, were the main ways of implementation provided (Ellis, 2013; Flaga, 2006; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Miller, 2013; Shaw et al., 2018; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). In becoming involved with these organizations, students would gain more opportunities to meet their peers and feel connected to the university.

Another suggestion to facilitate involvement was the creation of student mentorship programs on campus to allow students to meet with others who might be similar to them (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006; Miller, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017). By having a mentor at the four-year institution, students would have a peer support on campus that they can turn to with questions or concerns. Additionally, by having a mentor that is also a community college transfer student, they can share their experiences and troubles experienced at the four-year institution. This practice has been suggested to help students feel less alone and learn of possible solutions or resources to remedy their struggles (Shaw et al., 2018). Finally, the creation of transfer student communities and on campus dorms for community college transfer students were suggested to allow access to the support living among peers can provide while in close proximity to campus (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006). In fostering a greater level of involvement among the community college transfer student population, students are suggested to

feel a stronger sense of community on campus, leading them to feel more comfortable with their four-year institution and so increase their desire to persist.

Summary of program suggestions. The programs suggested aim to facilitate students levels of engagement on campus, both with their peers as well as with faculty and staff (DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Flaga, 2006; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Through making faculty and staff more aware of students' needs and common struggles, as well as encouraging students' participation in clubs and organizations, community college transfer students would be able to interact more with their surroundings and create the integral support systems at their four-year institution (DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Flaga, 2006; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Miller, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). This then increases the student's sense of belonging and comfort level at the university, allowing them to turn to others within their network for help and increasing their likelihood of decisions to persist. Considering the low number of programs working with community college transfer students that have been evaluated by researchers, work in the future may aim to conduct more program evaluations or implement the suggestions provided to then examine their true effectiveness.

Discussion

A review of the literature was conducted to evaluate the impact of social barriers and facilitators on community college transfer students' rates of persistence, academic success, and adjustment at the four-year institution. Factors identified included social support from family, social support from peers, social support from faculty, social support from advisors, additional factors, stereotype of community college transfer students, and sense of belonging. As all social factors explored were directly linked to students' rates of adjustment at the four-year institution,

it is clear that social factors do impact the community college transfer student's experiences post-transfer (D'Amico et al., 2014; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Laanan, 2007; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Lopez & Jones, 2017). Thus, it is not clear that social factors directly affect student's rates of persistence or academic success. The only factors that suggested a direct link to a student's persistence were additional considerations and social support from advisors, while social supports from faculty, peers, and advisors as well as additional considerations predicted student's rates of academic success directly (D'Amico et al., 2014; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Lopez & Jones, 2017). While this might suggest that social factors are not linked to community college transfer student outcomes post-transfer, this may not be the case. Several of the studies also indicated that social factors influenced students' rates of graduation and academic success through more indirect routes. These mixed findings might suggest that social factors do not directly influence students' rates of persistence or academic success, but that they instead interact with the academic factors these students face. This argument is further supported by several of the articles reviewed that suggest that social and academic contexts overlap.

Several of the studies reviewed found that social activities within the students' academic realm, such as participating in study groups with peers or interacting with faculty, provided more direct benefits to students (D'Amico et al., 2014; Flaga, 2006; Ellis, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). These overlapping factors led students to perform better academically, while also allowing them to adjust more smoothly to campus and serve as a social outlet for students (D'Amico et al., 2014; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). The possible overlap of these two realms has been suggested previously by Townsend and Wilson (2008), Bahr and colleagues (2013), and Sandelli (2017), yet it may be suggested that academic and social factors are dependent on the each other in order for students to persist within this population. So, in

order for students to feel academically integrated they must also feel socially integrated through their interactions with faculty as well as peers inside and outside of the classroom. This idea is supported through research indicating that transfer students tend to conceptualize social involvement within the context of the classroom, further indicating the overlap of social and academic realms (Lester, Leonard, & Mathias, 2013). This might then indicate that instead of looking at social and academic factors as separate entities, they should instead be explored together. Future research may benefit from exploring how these two domains, historically viewed as separate, are in fact intertwined. This may also be extended to each of the areas explored within the current review.

Findings from the review suggest that social factors, such as social support and feelings of belongingness, play an important role in shaping students' experiences at the four-year institution (DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Flaga, 2006; Jackson, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Starobin et al., 2016; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Sources of social support primarily provide students with encouragement, an increase in confidence, and a source of advice as students face challenges (Ellis, 2013; Flaga, 2006; Jackson, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Starobin et al., 2016). Although support was identified from a variety of sources, peers and faculty members appeared to be the most influential sources of support. These sources predicted students' academic performance and adjustment at the four-year institution, but were often difficult for students to develop (D'Amico et al., 2014; DeWine et al., 2017; Jackson, 2013; Laanan, 2007; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). This aligns with past research on general student populations that have indicated peer and faculty support to promote students' academic success, yet it is still unclear the extent to which they provide an impact (Goguen et al., 2010). As these factors were not suggested to directly impact the community

college transfer students' rates of persistence, the findings also contradict what has been found previously within more general populations (Brooms & Davis, 2017; Goguen et al., 2010; Lillis, 2011). It may be suggested that future research explore the extent to which these social supports impact students' success post-transfer and the exact benefits received from these supports that lead to their higher rates of academic performance.

The remaining sources of support, family and advisors, were effective at times, but appeared to provide mixed outcomes (Castro & Cortez, 2017; Elis, 2013; Jackson, 2013; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Starobin et al., 2016). This contradicts past research indicating that family support and positive relationships with faculty led to higher rates of persistence in students (Kelly et al., 2012). As very few articles were found relating to these supports, it may be that currently there is not enough research on these supports to make conclusive results. Additionally, it is possible that the impact of these supports is dependent on other factors, leading to mixed findings. Future research should further explore the influence of these support systems and consider the role of other factors in order to better understand their impact on students' levels of persistence and success at the four-year institution.

The existence of additional considerations for students, such as living off-campus and working more than 20 hours a week, were suggested to detract from students' experiences on campus by limiting the amount of time they had available to get involved (Berger & Malaney, 2001; Miller, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). These outside responsibilities made developing social support systems on-campus more difficult, often leading students to feel less satisfied with their university experience and lower their likelihood of persistence (Berger & Malaney, 2001; Lee & Schneider, 2018). As students had less time to get involved on-campus, they were unable to foster the support systems needed to succeed academically or feel that they belong. Although

this was relatively well established, future research should further explore the prevalence of this barrier to students and investigate ways to mitigate its influence on the community college transfer student population.

A relatively new, emerging area within the literature reported on the influence of the community college transfer student stereotype on experiences post-transfer. This stereotype was defined as perceiving community college transfer students as lazy and less capable of performing well academically at the four-year institution (Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018). Students found the presence of these stereotypes to lower their levels of confidence, leading them to question their decision to persist (Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018). The student's responses to the stereotype align with the literature on stereotype threat, indicating the profound influence this may have on the community college transfer students' success post-transfer (Harrison, Stevens, Monty, & Coakley, 2006; Martiny, & Nikitin, 2019; Schmader, 2010; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Taylor & Walton, 2011). As there were only a few articles reviewed that articulated and explored the influence of this stereotype, direct connections were unable to be made to student outcomes. Regardless, several indications of a possible relationship to students' academic performance and persistence were found within the studies (Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Lopez & Jones, 2017; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018). This connection would align with previous research on stereotype threat, indicating its direct impact on lowering students' academic performance and likelihood to persist due to their drop in confidence and concerns about confirming the stereotype (Harrison et al., 2006; Martiny, & Nikitin, 2019; Schmader, 2010; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Taylor & Walton, 2011). Considering the small number of studies exploring the impact of the community college transfer student stereotype and the possible pertinent influence this may have on student outcomes, future

research should aim to understand the extent of the stereotype's impact and its prevalence among the student population.

One of the main areas of concern for community college transfer students was their sense of belonging at the four-year institution. Among the articles reviewed, 13 indicated that sense of belonging had an impact on student experiences (Berger & Malaney, 2001; D'Amico et al., 2014; DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Lopez & Jones, 2017; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Without a connection to the university or university population, these students often felt isolated and began to question their role at the school (DeWine et al., 2017; Flaga, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). Their sense of belonging also played an important role in facilitating the student's level of satisfaction at the university and their likelihood to adjust (Berger & Malaney, 2001; D'Amico et al., 2014; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Lopez & Jones, 2017). As this factor was seen among the previous social factors mentioned, it may be that sense of belonging serves as a mediating or moderating factor to students' rates of success at the four-year institution. Additionally, with the mixed findings among previous studies, it is possible that a lowered sense of belonging is integral to students then experiencing lower rates of academic performance and higher rates of drop-out. This idea might be supported by Townley and colleagues (2013), as they found participation in a student club to increase GPA only if the students also held a sense of belonging at the school. This might further suggest that students' sense of belonging and their rates of involvement interact to impact their academic and persisting outcomes at the four-year institution. Future research should aim to understand how a student's sense of belonging interacts with the other social factors to influence the community college transfer student's rates of academic success and persistence.

Applied Recommendations

At the conclusion of several of the studies reviewed, programs or initiatives geared towards counteracting the barriers and promoting the facilitators of student success were suggested. The primary recommendation provided included creating policy and training programs for faculty and staff at four-year institutions to facilitate awareness about the diverse needs of community college transfer students (DeWine et al., 2017; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Miller, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). In doing this, faculty and staff are suggested to then be able to provide more direct and targeted support to students, while also understanding the need for the variety of support given. The other primary area of improvement included developing programs to encourage social engagement among community college transfer students (DeWine et al., 2017; Ellis, 2013; Flaga, 2006; Jackson & Laanan, 2015; Lee & Schneider, 2018; Miller, 2013; Shaw & Chin-Newman, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). This would allow students a better avenue to meet others going through the same struggles and foster a support system to help them complete their degree at the four-year institution. Although these were suggested throughout the literature, only two programs were evaluated and focused on working with specific community college transfer student populations (Auerbach & Williams, 2013; Austin, 2006). Moving forward, research should explore the effectiveness of the suggested interventions by testing the use of each intervention on a more general community college transfer student population. There also needs to be a more thorough evaluation of existing programs for this student population in order to gain a strong understanding of what has been effective in promoting students' persistence and academic performance.

Limitations

Throughout the studies included, few looked at persistence and those only looked at students' likelihood to persist. This deficit in methodology provides a large gap within the literature and limits the conclusions that can be drawn about the impact of social factors on community college transfer students' graduation rates at the four-year institution. As many of the articles that did evaluate persistence only looked at students' perceptions of their own likelihood to persevere, this may not reflect students' true rates of persistence and so may fail to provide accurate information. Additionally, no studies within the literature reviewed evaluated students who did not persist. This leaves out an important subset of the population that could help identify and explain the extent to which social barriers influence students' decisions not to continue their education.

The populations used within several of the reviewed articles evaluated a specific community college transfer student population. Of those reviewed, specific populations included Hispanic students, engineering majors, STEM majors, female STEM majors, and non-traditional students (Auerbach & Williams, 2013; Austin, 2006; Castro & Cortez, 2017; Cortez & Castro, 2017; Miller, 2013; Starobin et al., 2016). These sub-populations provide important information on community college transfer students and the impact of additional traditionally underrepresented groups, but this may not allow for the findings to be as generalizable. Yet, despite the influence this may have on the findings, the themes identified were identified across studies and prevalent within the broader community college transfer student population.

Directions for Future Research

The overwhelming majority of studies included within this review used qualitative methodology. While this provided valuable information about the students' own perspective on their experiences, this presented a deficit within the literature in understanding the direct effects

of these experiences on community college transfer students' rates of persistence and academic success post-transfer. In addition, the quantitative research conducted often looked at different outcomes and used a variety of measures, which made comparing the findings across studies difficult. Only two studies, Jackson and Laanan (2015) and Lopez and Jones (2017), presented consistent findings, as they both used the Laanan Transfer Student Questionnaire to evaluate students' adjustment to the four-year institution. They successfully presented near identical findings through the use of the questionnaire, but as other studies used modified version of this measure or other questionnaires altogether, the studies' findings were not able to be compared. Future research should move towards using more quantitative methodologies to explore and create a strong foundation for the impact of each social factor evaluated here, as well as utilizing a consistent approach to evaluating this population.

Despite the wealth of qualitative studies and rich information provided, many of the questions were broad in scope. The questions used focused on inquiring about the overall transition experiences of students or their experiences becoming socially involved on campus. This did not allow students to go into depth about specifics of how each social factor impacted their experiences and what components of them are most influential. Since the information provided by participants could be so broad in scope, covering a variety of topics, this might not have allowed the researchers to include a comprehensive report of the students' experiences. By asking more specific and targeted questions, like about a specific social factor, the researcher would be able to report the specifics of the common experiences students have surrounding the factor, the prevalence of positive or negative experiences, and the exact ways in which the factor leads to different outcomes. Future research should document and explore the intricacies of these

factors to better understand their nuanced differences and to help explain the mixed findings presented here.

The populations evaluated here focused solely on the community college transfer student population and did not use any comparison groups to evaluate the differing impacts on various outcomes between student populations. This did not allow a baseline for which students to be compared to, thus lacking an important population to help gauge the unique aspects of the population and exact benefits or deficits of each identified factor. Populations to be used in the future as comparison groups might include first-year students or non-persisting community college transfer students. The first-year student population may help to identify the more unique aspects of this population, while the non-persisting population would provide integral information on the extent of each factors impact on persistence. Future research would benefit from including these comparison groups, as well as expanding the community college transfer student population studied to those who choose to leave school.

As mentioned previously, most social factors do not appear to directly influence students' rates of academic success or persistence. Yet, they may instead indirectly impact these outcomes by interacting with other factors, such as academic struggle. As this has not been explored within the literature, future research is recommended to explore what other variables social factors interact with to influence the trajectory of community college transfer students post-transfer, as well as the specifics of how these factors work interact. It is recommended that research begin by reevaluating the existing measures used for the community college transfer student population. As the Laanan Transfer Student Questionnaire is the measure most often used and contains a distinct split between social and academic factors, it may be useful to consider the use of a scale that looks at student experiences that fall within both the social and academic domains (Laanan,

2004). This may include students' experiences in or outside of the classroom that are social in nature and are related to their academics, such as student interactions with faculty, student's class participation, and student participation in peer study groups (D'Amico et al., 2014; Ellis, 2006; Flaga, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2008). In doing this, researchers would be able to not only look at these factors separately, but also consider the possible integral influence of an intertwined social and academic domain.

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Appendix A

Description of articles table.

Article #	Article	Year	Quant or Qual	Outcome Variables
1	<i>Auerbach & Williams</i>	2013	Quant	Adjustment; persistence
2	<i>Austin</i>	2006	Qual	Academic and social integration; persistence
3	<i>Berger & Malaney</i>	2001	Quant	Academic success; student satisfaction
4	<i>Castro & Cortez</i>	2017	Qual	Student experiences; adjustment
5	<i>Cortez & Castro</i>	2017	Qual	Social support experiences
6	<i>D'Amico et al.</i>	2014	Quant	Academic and social integration; academic success; persistence
7	<i>DeWine et al.</i>	2017	Qual	Adjustment
8	<i>Ellis</i>	2013	Qual	Adjustment
9	<i>Flaga</i>	2006	Qual	Adjustment
10	<i>Jackson</i>	2013	Qual	Student success (adjustment; persistence)
11	<i>Jackson & Laanan</i>	2015	Quant	Academic and social adjustment
12	<i>Laanan</i>	2007	Qual	Academic and social adjustment
13	<i>Lee & Schneider</i>	2018	Quant	Persistence; social and academic involvement
14	<i>Lopez & Jones</i>	2017	Quant	Academic success and adjustment
15	<i>Miller</i>	2013	Qual	Academic success; adjustment; persistence
16	<i>Moser</i>	2013	Qual	Academic success; satisfaction; ability to cope with problems
17	<i>Shaw & Chin-Newman</i>	2017	Qual	Adjustment
18	<i>Shaw, Spink, & Chin-Newman</i>	2018	Qual	Adjustment; persistence
19	<i>Starobin, Smith, & Laanan</i>	2016	Qual	Student experiences (academic and social)

20	<i>Townsend & Wilson</i>	2006	Qual	Adjustment; student experiences (social and academic)
21	<i>Townsend & Wilson</i>	2008	Qual	Academic and social integration; persistence

Appendix B

Themes found within each article.

	Article Number																					Total:
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
<i>SS Family</i>				X		X		X		X							X					5
<i>SS Peer</i>			X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X		X		X		X	X	X	13
<i>SS Faculty</i>						X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	13
<i>SS Advisor</i>					X	X	X	X		X		X	X				X		X			9
<i>Additional Considerations</i>			X			X	X		X			X		X					X	X	X	9
<i>Stereotype</i>											X		X				X	X				4
<i>Belonging</i>			X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X				X	X	X	13
<i>Program Suggestions</i>	X	X					X	X	X		X		X		X		X	X			X	11
Total:	1	1	3	3	1	6	6	6	4	3	4	4	5	3	4	1	6	2	5	4	5	

Note. SS = social support. Total = total number of themes found in each corresponding article.