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Counseling and
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PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS
RELATIVE TO THE HELPFUL BEHAVIORS OF PEER MENTORS
WHO ASSISTED THEM DURING FRESHMAN YEAR COLLEGE ADJUSTMENT
IN A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION (179 pp.)

Co-Directors of Dissertation: Donald L. Bubenzer, Ph.D.
John D. West, Ed.D.

This research study was designed to address the research question: “What are the perceptions of African American college students relative to the helpful behaviors of peer mentors who assisted them during Freshman year college adjustment in a predominately White institution?” All participants of the study were undergraduate students attending Kent State University, for at least one semester and participants of The Student Multicultural Center’s “University Mentoring Program.” The goal of the study was to broaden our understanding of the contexts of African American freshmen on predominantly White campuses, as well as to add to the dialogue concerning how to be assistive to African American students in these environments.

Q-methodology was utilized to address the research question. The PQ Method software was used for data/factor analysis. The main source of information was 40 African American students (appropriate N for Q studies) who sorted a set of Q-sample statements (40) according to conditions of instructions and their subjective perspective. As a result of data analysis, four factors or student perspectives relative to mentor

helpfulness were identified. The Factors included, Factor 1: Providing Tips For Academic Success, Factor 2: Interpersonal Connectedness, Factor 3: Accessible and Knowledgeable, and Factor 4: Nurturing Friendship.

Relative to the significant diversity that exists among African American students, implications of this study suggest that different groups of students have differing perceived needs relative to the helpful qualities of a peer mentor. The continued study of related issues pertaining to mentoring and the college adjustment of African American freshmen may be helpful in aiding faculty and administrators in higher education, counselor educators, high school counselors, faculty and administrators, and programs that seek to serve African American freshmen.