**Enhancing African Student Well-Being and Success**

**Presenters: Jeff Gillingham, Moussiliatou Kokobissi (Health)**

**Faculty Mentor: Dr.  Heather Edelblute (Health)**

Purpose: African Immigrant students contribute to the diversity of West Chester University (WCU); however, little is known about how to promote their well-being, retention, and success. This is due to African immigrants often being grouped with African American students in academic research, masking any differences between these two groups.  Immigrant students may face unique challenges and stressors associated with adapting to life in the US which can affect their health and academic success. For this reason, we assess sources of stress and social support needs for African immigrant students at WCU.

Methods:  This study uses a qualitative design that relies on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with adult students born in Africa who have completed at least one semester at WCU (n=30).  Qualitative data are analyzed with NVivo 12 using a mix deductive codes developed from the interview guide and inductive codes that emerged in the analysis process.

Results: Preliminary findings suggest that transnational social connections represent both an important source of social support and a source of stress.  These connections are essential to cultural identity and feelings of connectedness but can also represent an additional responsibility. We find that various aspects of the migration process, such as communication barriers, can represent a source of stress.

Conclusion: African students have unique sources of stress that inform the support the university can provide to contribute to their success. We will provide a report to various departments on campus on how to better contribute to African student success at West Chester University.