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Does choosing to live in a discipline-based residential college make a difference in the engagement of university freshmen?

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DOES CHOOSING TO LIVE IN A DISCIPLINE-BASED RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE ENGAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITY FRESHMEN?

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development

by

Jody Allen Hammett

B.S., Louisiana State University, 1999
M.S., Louisiana State University, 2002
December, 2010
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wife, Angela, and our three children, William, Anna Claire, and Harrison. Completing a doctorate degree is something I have thought about for several years. However, my motivation to actually pursue and complete this goal was all of you. I hope that my education will help to provide an even better life for my family and set an example of the importance of higher education for each of my children. I love you all very much, and though it may not seem obvious, completing this degree was for you as much as it was for me.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of housing arrangement and selected personal and academic characteristics on the engagement of full-time university freshmen. A sample of 1,119 full-time freshmen was used in the study.

A 14-item Likert-type scale, the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire, was used to measure the engagement level of the students. Housing information was also self-reported, but all other demographic and academic information was obtained from the institution’s registrar’s office.

When compared to the overall mean engagement score, there were five significant findings. Significant differences were found between living off-campus, living off-campus with family, living on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges, and first-generation college attendance status and the overall mean. No significant differences were found between respondent’s gender or race when compared to the overall mean engagement score. Multiple regression analysis revealed an overall model of five predictors of engagement of freshmen students: ACT score, living off-campus, living off-campus with family, first-generation college attendance status, and living on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges. This model accounted for 6.6% of the variance in the level of engagement.

Findings suggested that, overall, students are only “mildly engaged,” and mean scores from items on the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire revealed that students are engaged with their peers, but not with faculty and staff. There was no difference in the engagement level among the various on-campus housing arrangements. Whether or not students lived on-campus or off-campus was what made the difference in students’ engagement level.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Rationale and Justification

The 1980s marked an important time for campus housing at universities throughout the country. Prior to this time, dormitories were thought of as just a place to provide shelter for students while they attended college. However, during the 1980s several factors converged changing the goals of campus housing. The quality of undergraduate education was being criticized for a lack of integrated learning, institutions began to consider retention rates as a way to manage enrollment, and engagement became recognized as a predictor of academic success. Learning communities gained popularity during this time in an effort to target all three of these issues (Shapiro & Levine, 1999; Matthews, Smith, MacGregor, & Gebelnick, 1997).

Tinto’s (1993) Theory of Departure stated that successful students are integrated into the academic and social functions of the institution. Later, Astin’s (1984) Theory of Involvement explained that students learn more when they are involved in the academic and social aspects of college. Similarly, Kuh’s (2001) idea of “student engagement” was defined by the amount of time students spent participating in “educationally appropriate” activities. This notion of integration, involvement, engagement, or the combination of the three is the crux of current learning community models. Furthermore, it was thought that the success attributed to learning communities is indirect, and is actually a result of this involvement and interaction (Pike, Shroeder, & Berry, 1997).

Empirical studies have shown that students who participate in a learning community demonstrate outcomes linked to success in college (Pike, 1999; Tinto, 1998; Zhao & Kuh 2004). Specifically, participants in learning communities have demonstrated higher academic achievement, been more likely to persist, and interacted more with faculty (Pascarella, Terenzini,
Blimling, 1994). Students in a learning community have also demonstrated greater gains of social and intellectual development and have been noted to be more engaged (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

In a learning community, by definition, students become part of a community of faculty and other students. This community is focused on academics and is structured to foster two types of connections: the connection of students and the connection of ideas. Students enroll in multiple courses together to facilitate the first connection, and the social interaction provided over a period of time promotes the second type of connection (Klein, 2000; MacGregor, 1991). In a learning community, students have courses that are linked and programming that helps them to become more involved with faculty and the other students.

Some learning communities have a living component and are known as living-learning communities or residential colleges. Residential colleges change the traditional structure of the university as they attempt to combine academic programs with the living environment in a residence hall. Empirical research has shown that students in residential colleges are more engaged and have higher persistence rates than those who do not participate (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

Learning communities are not all equally effective educationally (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999). Zhao and Kuh (2004) and Inkelas and Weisman (2003) suggested that additional research is necessary to determine which types of learning communities are more effective for different groups and outcomes. This research was designed to address this gap. The term learning community is a very broad term and has come to represent a variety of programs on campuses across the country. More research is needed to distinguish between the types of learning communities offered and the outcomes associated with them. Stassen (2003) found in her study of “modest” learning communities in a residential setting, that participants did benefit during
their first-year experience, but suggested that most of the recent research involving learning communities focuses on those without residential components and perhaps that the effects of the learning community may not be as great since the students already have the opportunity to interact with one another.

One type of living-learning program that has been studied little is disciplined-based residential colleges. A disciplined-based living-learning community has a slightly different twist on the increasingly popular residential college program. In this type of residential college, the academic dimension is even greater as faculty and staff from a given academic area join forces with student affairs staff to offer a unique living-learning experience. Programming in these residential colleges is actually tied to the student’s academic college. One might expect that if traditional residential college programs boast high success rates, then a residential college linked to a student’s field of study would foster an even more high-achieving, engaging environment leading to better grades and greater retention rates. Are students in these programs more engaged? Is there a difference in the engagement of students among different housing arrangements, including traditional residence halls, other living-learning programs, and off-campus housing, at the same institution? This researcher has found no studies that show if these differences exist. Since previous studies have shown that engagement leads to further desirable outcomes, namely greater academic achievement and higher persistence rates (Kuh, 2007; Pike, Schroeder, & Berry, 1997; Pike, 2000), it is necessary to determine what types of students are more engaged and the factors that lead to engagement.

The most commonly used surveys that institutions employ to determine the success of residential college programs are the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the National Study of Living-Learning Programs (NSLLP) and the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ). These national surveys are valuable when considering all students at a
university or multiple universities involved in learning communities. However, they are not appropriate for distinguishing among or between programs at an institution. In addition, all of the knowledge is gleaned from surveys as all of the data are self-reported, and no institutional data are used. Large-scale, multi-institutional surveys cannot assess participation in particular programs and then obtain actual data on the respondents as one can when studying a single program at one institution. Zhao and Kuh (2004) noted in the limitations to their study that the NSSE cannot be used to study the difference between different types of learning programs, that they can only base participation in learning programs on students responses on a survey and that all other data were self-reported. This study will demonstrate differences between types of living-learning programs while comparing these students to those living in traditional housing and off-campus. Demographic data will be obtained from the registrar’s office, not be self-reported, and thus not subject to questions about truthfulness.

**Problem Statement and Research Objectives**

Therefore, the primary purpose of this study is to determine the influence of housing arrangement and selected personal and academic characteristics on the engagement of full-time university freshmen. The research objectives are as follows:

1. To describe the demographic and personal characteristics of freshmen students at a large, public, research-extensive university in the South. These characteristics include:
   a. Housing arrangement
   b. Gender
   c. Race
   d. Size of high school senior class
   e. High school GPA
   f. ACT scores
g. First-generation college-attendance status

2. To determine the engagement level of the freshmen students at a large, public, research-extensive university in the South as measured by the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire.

3. To determine whether differences exist in the engagement level of freshmen students at a large, public research-extensive university in the South as measured by the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire among selected demographic and personal characteristics including:
   a. Housing arrangement
   b. Gender
   c. Race
   d. First-generation college-attendance status

4. To determine if a model exists which explains a significant portion of the variance in engagement of freshmen students at a large, public research-extensive university in the South as measured by the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire from the following personal and demographic characteristics:
   a. Housing arrangement
   b. Gender
   c. Race
   d. Size of high school senior class
   e. High school GPA
   f. ACT scores
   g. First-generation college-attendance status
Significance of the Study

Because discipline-based residential colleges are new at this large, public, Southern research-extensive university, it is important to know more about the outcomes of participation. The major goals of residential colleges typically include student engagement which is linked to increased student achievement and retention. It is imperative to know if students participating in the discipline-based residential college programs are more engaged than students who did not participate. These data will serve to evaluate the discipline-based residential college programs in relation to student engagement. The engagement level of all freshmen will be analyzed by housing type. Should results reveal low engagement scores, or that students in the discipline-based residential colleges are not more engaged than other students, program directors will be notified so that they can utilize the results when developing their activities for the next year. Other campus leaders may find the results useful as well when working with other groups of students including students living in traditional residence halls, theme-based residence halls, and those who live off-campus.

Should results reveal that students in discipline-based residential colleges, theme-based residential colleges, or even traditional housing on-campus are more engaged than students living off-campus, campus administrators and parents could find them useful. These findings would support the administration as they encourage freshmen to live on-campus. Parents would have further empirical evidence of the benefit of living on-campus and justification for the additional expense ($550.00/year in addition to residence hall rate at this institution) of their child living in a residential college.

Finally, should positive engagement results be found for any particular group of students, efforts can be made to offer the type of activities that was available to them to a larger group of students. If something is found to be working for students, it should be shared. It is desirable to
increase the engagement level of the freshmen group as a whole, and to do this, successful programs should not be kept for a select group of students (Kuh, 2007).

**Definition of Terms**

**Educational activities**—operationally defined as any university-sponsored activities in which students participate that promote academic success (Researcher defined).

**University Resources**—operationally defined as anything provided by the institution or that is part of the institutional environment that assists students. Examples include tutoring centers, clubs and organizations, libraries, etc. (Researcher defined).

**Integration**—for the purpose of this study, refers to the integration into the college environment. Integration means connecting to the social and academic systems within the institution (Tinto, 1973).

**Involvement**—for the purpose of this study, refers to involvement in college. Involvement is the investment in academic and social activities (Astin, 1984).

**Engagement**—for the purpose of this study, refers to engagement in college. Engagement is the amount of time and energy students spend participating in “educationally purposeful activities” (Kuh, 2003).

**Learning Community**—an on-campus program in which students share a curricular experience. Learning communities are usually tied to some type of common theme (Lenning & Ebers, 1999).

**Residential College or Living-Learning Program**—learning communities whose main features include an on-campus housing component (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).
**Discipline-Based Residential College**—operationally defined as a residential college for students in a particular major at a university. Examples include a Business, Engineering, or Agriculture Residential College (Researcher defined).

**Good Academic Standing**—operationally defined as having a 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale (Researcher defined).

**Persist**—operationally defined as returning to the institution each semester. This means the student is academically eligible and chooses to return to the university (Researcher defined.)

**First-Generation College Attendance Status**—Operationally defined as having parents who never enrolled in college (Researcher Defined).

**Limitations of the Study**

Although the entire population was surveyed, this study is limited because the data will only come from a single institution. Another limitation is the fact that students were interviewed at the completion of the freshman year and no follow-up will be conducted. Valuable data, data that could have strengthened causal inferences, could have been obtained from a longitudinal study following these students throughout their college career.

The students were being surveyed as close to the conclusion of the academic year as possible. This was necessary to get a more complete picture of their freshman year. Because of the timing of the survey, some limitations do exist. Follow-up e-mails were sent one and two weeks after the initial survey was disseminated. There was simply no time for a third and fourth reminder to be sent as suggested by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009). By this time, students had left the university for the semester, and it is unlikely they would have responded. Furthermore, it is unlikely that their response would have been the same.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Integration, Involvement, and Engagement

Why students drop out of college is a question many educators and academic institutions would like to have answered, and this is by no means a recent inquiry. Pike et al. (1997) pointed out that most early studies focus on students’ backgrounds and institutional characteristics, including Kohen, Nestel and Karmas (1978) and Pascarella and Terenzini (1980). Although, they added that more current research focused on social, psychological, and organizational factors. Spady (1970) indicated that students leave an institution because of a lack of a support system and shared values.

Tinto (1973) concluded that students who are successfully integrated into college become more committed, and this commitment aids in persistence. Specifically, Tinto stated that students need to be integrated into formal and informal academic and social systems. Formal academic systems include their academic performance, and informal academic systems include their interactions with faculty and staff. Formal social systems are extracurricular activities and informal social systems are their peer-group interactions.

Similar to Tinto’s idea of integration was Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement. The basic idea behind the theory is that students learn more if they are involved in the academic and social aspects of college life. A truly involved student invests physical and psychological energy in their academic environment. This means they spend time on campus actively participating in organizations or other campus activities and interacting with the faculty. The activities that they choose can be related to their interests. There are no other specific requirements; just involvement, although the quantity and quality of the involvement are important to the students’ learning and development.
More specific recommendations were detailed, however, in the widely recognized “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). The first principle noted was student-faculty contact which states that student-faculty contact motivates students, and that students who know faculty members will be more committed to their education. The second principle promoted the idea that cooperation among students was key for student success. Students who work with other students increase their involvement in learning and the collaboration with other students helps them to better understand the material. The encouragement of active learning was the third principle. Students need to get involved in their learning opportunities, and discuss, reflect, and apply their knowledge. The fourth practice for guiding education was prompt feedback. Students need the interaction with faculty and the feedback faculty can provide so that they can assess their knowledge. The fifth principle of good practice in undergraduate education was time on task. Students need to learn effective time management, and the institutions should establish expectations for them. Having high expectations was the sixth recommended practice as they lead to higher performance. The final principle was the respect for diverse talents and ways of learning. Individual talents should be recognized, and students should have the opportunity to showcase their talents and to be exposed to different learning environments.

Though not always explicitly mentioned, student engagement was a theme of all of Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) recommendations for good practice in higher education. Engagement is a key concept in student-faculty contact and cooperation among students as well as an important factor in the reflection and application needed for active learning, the interaction required for proper student feedback, and in the explanation of expectations that lead to proper time management. Furthermore, students who are more engaged are more likely to receive
expectations from faculty members and participate in environments where their talents can be revealed.

Engagement was more explicitly noted when the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was developed based on these “Seven Principles of Good Practice in Education” (Kuh, 2001). The instrument was designed to measure these practices. Kuh (2003) later defined “student engagement” as “the time and energy students devote to educationally sound activities inside and outside the classroom, and the policies and procedures that institutions use to induce students to take part in these activities” (2003, p. 25).

Kuh (2007) found through the results of a survey of students from over 600 institutions across the country, that student engagement is the major factor in determining academic success. Kuh used the results of this survey and his previous extensive research in the field to develop six steps institutions can use to engage students on their campuses. The first one was to teach first-year students how to find and use the resources available to them. Institutions cannot simply rely on orientation programs as one cannot learn all they need to know during such a short time. Kuh added that living on campus helps, but it does not ensure that students will take advantage of all the services offered. However, Kuh proposed that students participating in a living-learning community seemed to interact more with faculty and other students. The second recommended step was to make the classroom part of the community. This way, all students, even those who commute will get more out of their classroom experiences. Kuh’s third suggestion was that institutions develop systems to detect when students need help. Many students need academic support and plan to use the programs in place, but never do. Institutions should develop warning systems so they will be able to get students help when they need it. Another suggestion as to how institutions could help students become engaged was to provide them with a role model or get them involved in a meaningful activity. This type of involvement can range from being on
an athletic team to joining a fraternity or sorority, to working on campus. Kuh’s next recommendation was to make successful programs and activities available to larger groups of students. Unique programs that have proven to help students succeed should not be offered only to a select group of students. The final step in promoting student engagement was to remove roadblocks that keep students from succeeding. One example of this type of obstacle is the “run around” that many campuses unnecessarily give students. Students should be able to find the information they need when they need it (Kuh, 2007).

In summary, interaction, involvement, and engagement are important contributors to student success. These three ideas, though introduced by different scholars in different decades, are actually quite similar. Interaction, involvement, and engagement all refer to the social and academic time and energy students put into their education.

Change in Role of Student Housing

As previously stated, the goal of student housing at universities across the country has changed in recent years. The goal is no longer for student housing to simply be a dormitory providing students a place to live while attending college, but to take an active part in the learning on campus. This is a reality that was predicted in the early 1980s by Ostroth. Ostroth (1981) stated that residence halls must do more than provide students basic needs, and that they needed to “provide an educational environment as an integral part of the central teaching function of the college” (Ostroth, 1981, p. 65).

Blimling (1993) pointed out in a review of the literature that many studies note the positive influences of living on-campus rather than commuting to college. He went on to say that this living environment creates a social-psychological environment that is very different than the home environments. Students who live on-campus have a maximum opportunity for increased involvement on-campus. Pascarella et al. (1994) noted the many advantages of living on-campus
in their synthesis of the literature. They explained that living in the residence halls seemed to influence academic performance including persistence and graduation rates, had a positive influence on personal growth and development and values and attitudes, and may have a role in students’ cognitive growth. They concluded as in a prior synthesis that living on-campus rather than commuting is likely the “single most consistent within-college determinant of impact” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 611).

More recently, Blimling and Alschuler (1996) noted residence halls as one of the places where students learn, while Whitte and Nuss (1994) pointed out the importance of students’ residences and hall mates in their learning. Despite these findings, in the mid-1990s, it was still not evident as to how student housing would respond to this highlighted emphasis on learning in the residence halls (Johnson & Cavins, 1996).

Residential colleges or living-learning programs are one way that student housing professionals have addressed the shift to providing learning in the residence halls. The residential college or living-learning program is not a new idea. Rather it is a reinvention of the original concept of a living and learning environment introduced at Oxford and Cambridge in England in the 1800s (Ryan, 1995) and the similar programs that followed in the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s at Harvard and Yale (Alexander, 1998). The early residential colleges in the U.S. achieved success at first. This residential college system did not gain widespread acceptance as they were unable to “re-create the British system in which colleges were autonomous units of instruction” (Ryan, 1995, p. 14). However, there were several instances of the use of the living-learning idea across the country in the early 1900s (Alexander, 1998). In the original Oxford/Cambridge model of residential colleges, students and faculty lived together in the college, but this concept did not last in the U.S. as the German model with its emphasis on research became popular (Winston & Fitch, 1993). The downfall of the residential college was
increased as many colleges found that faculty and students living together was not working, and residence halls became more popular than living in colleges (Upcraft, 1982.)

The current design of the residential college or living-learning program is based on the early models; however, the major difference is that faculty do not live in the halls with the students. According to Shapiro and Levine (1999), students in a living-learning program live together in a specific residence hall and participate in programming and services offered by the hall. The programming includes such benefits as tutoring, courses held in the residence hall, lectures and academic advising. These living-learning programs were developed to integrate students’ experiences inside and outside of the classroom. This supportive living environment provides an opportunity for student to work with faculty, form stronger peer relationships, and participate in learning activities that would not exist in the classroom setting alone (Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews, & Smith (1990); Lenning & Ebbers, 1999).

**Types of Learning Communities and Living-Learning Programs**

Living-learning programs are one type of learning community. There are many definitions of learning communities, but for the most part, they center around common social and academic programming and enrolling a group of students in common courses (Bower & Dettinger, 1998). According to Lenning and Ebbers (1999), there were four types of learning communities. They were curricular learning communities based on enrollment in courses linked by a common theme, classroom learning communities involving the classroom as a community-building feature, residential learning communities where students live in the same hall and take common courses, and student-type learning communities geared toward specific groups of students. These learning communities provided students with the opportunity to attend activities outside of class to interact with other students. This is important for student retention and success (Astin, 1984; Tinto, 1993). Each type of learning community has two common structures. They enroll
students in courses together which aids students in connecting ideas from different academic areas. Secondly, students become members of an academic community through the social interaction available to them (Klein, 2000; MacGregor, 1991).

For the most part, living-learning programs and residential colleges are terms used interchangeably since Shapiro and Levine (1999) distinguished living-learning programs as a specific type of learning community. More recently, living-learning programs have been described or categorized in more detail by Zeller, James, and Klippenstein (2002) who developed a six-type model and Levine Laufgraben and Shapiro (2004) who divided the concept into three types of programs. Zeller et al. included residential colleges, living-learning centers, residential learning communities, academic residential learning programs, theme housing programs, and first-year experience programs in their six types. These six types were organized on the basis of the program’s goals. Levine Laufgraben and Shapiro expanded their original learning community typology (1999) to include residential colleges, residential learning communities, and residential education programs as types of living-learning programs. In contrast to Zeller et al., Levine Laufgraben and Shapiro classified programs according to the amount of academic and co-curricular integration. Although different, both ideas were developed anecdotally by practitioners who had a working knowledge of learning communities.

Inkelas, Soldner, Longerbeam, and Leonard (2008) were the first to develop an empirically-based typology of living-learning programs. Using data from the NSLLP, they “identified three structural types of programs: (a) small, limited resourced, primarily residential life programs; (b) medium, moderately resourced, student affairs/academic affairs collaboration programs; and (c) large, comprehensively resourced, student affairs/academic affairs collaboration programs” (2008, p. 495). Of the three types, the small and large programs “exhibited stronger self-reported outcomes” (2008, p. 495).
**Success of Learning Communities and Living-Learning Programs**

There have been several studies that have shown that students who participate in a learning community demonstrate outcomes that promote success in college (Lindblad, 2000; Matthews, 1994; Pike, 1999; Tinto, 1998; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Pascarella et al. (1994) found in their single-institution study that students in living-learning programs showed higher academic achievement, were more likely to persist, and interact more with faculty. Similarly, Tinto and Goodsell (1993) reported that freshmen students who participated in Freshmen Interest Groups (FIGs) involving linked courses had higher grades and were more likely to persist. Shapiro and Levine (1999) reported comparable results. They found that students participating in learning communities were not only more engaged, but were more likely to persist, and showed greater gains of social and intellectual development. Gabelnick et al. (1990) suggested that if the learning community incorporates a collaborative learning piece, participants will boast even higher grades, retention rates, in addition to a higher satisfaction rate. Inkelas and Weisman (2003) also found that an “academically minded and culturally inclusive atmosphere can be inferred to be vital in two important institutional goals: retention and tolerance for diversity” (2003, p. 359). The list of positive outcomes associated with living-learning programs continued with other studies. Blimling (1993) and Pascarella et al. (1994) found residential learning communities to be correlated with peer interaction, higher persistence rates, higher graduation rates, critical thinking, and reading comprehension.

**Engagement and Learning Communities**

Whether referred to as integration, involvement, or engagement, the idea of these significant interactions are at the root of the learning community model. Furthermore, as student engagement in educational activities became recognized as a predictor of academic success in the late 1980s, the popularity of the current models of learning communities began (Shapiro &
Levine, 1999). During this same time period, the quality of the undergraduate experience in America was being criticized, calling for reform. Learning communities were a part of this reform. A third factor also encouraged the renaissance of learning communities. During this same time period, institutions began focusing on student retention as a way to increase enrollment in an effort to address their financial concerns (Matthews et al., 1997). Many different types of learning communities exist today. Most revolve around common social and academic programming. In most cases, students are enrolled in two or more courses together as to increase their engagement with one another and promote the ease of creating study groups. Living-learning communities take this idea a step further. In a living-learning community, students live together, take courses together, and participate in other educational activities with faculty (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

Living-learning programs seem to work because of engagement with the students. According to Tinto’s (1973) theory of student departure, institutions were more likely to retain students if they provide opportunities for the students to become connected both academically and socially. The three types of involvement that were influential on academic outcomes were academic involvement, faculty involvement, and peer group involvement (Astin, 1996). This level of involvement is the crux of a living-learning program. For students to show outcomes such as greater persistence and higher academic achievement, involvement is necessary. Living-learning programs provided tutoring, advising, peer groups, faculty interaction, cultural opportunities, etc. and thus fostered an atmosphere conducive to higher achievement (Shapiro & Levine, 1999). Inkelas and Weisman (2003) found that students participating in living-learning programs were more engaged and were more satisfied with their environment. The participants in their study found their residence environment to be more academically supportive as well. They noted the environment of the living-learning community was what helped promote such positive outcomes.
Again, it was the involvement: contact with faculty members, discussion groups with peers, and the overall “supportive residence environment” (2003, p. 59). Students who did not live in these environments were less engaged, and the engagement is directly linked to academic success. This success may be an indirect effect of the living-learning communities. The atmosphere of these programs enhances student involvement in academic activities, which directly affects student success (Pike et al., 1997; Pike, 2000).

**Measuring Engagement in Living-Learning Programs**

After reviewing existing literature, few studies were found where engagement was measured in living-learning communities. Many studies on learning communities exist. However, findings were limited when looking for studies specifically measuring engagement in living-learning communities.

Pike et al. (1997), a study of student persistence, was one of the first studies to show that students in residential learning communities were more engaged. The constructs used to measure engagement in this study were drawn from the work of Pascarella and Terenzini (1980). With respect to the current study, engagement was measured by two scales. The first one, peer group interactions, was comprised of seven items with a reported reliability of 0.84 (Cronbach’s alpha). Specific items in the first scale had factor loadings ranging from -0.37 to 0.82 and included the following items: since coming to this university I have developed close relationships with other students; the student friendships I have developed at this university have been personally satisfying; my interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my personal growth, attitudes, and values; my interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas; it has been difficult for me to meet and make friends with other students; few of the students I know would be willing to listen to me and help me if I had a personal problem; and most students at this
university have values and attitudes different from my own. The second scale, interactions with faculty, consisted of five items with a reliability of 0.83 (Cronbach’s alpha). Items in this scale were: my non-classroom interactions with faculty have had positive influence on my personal growth, values, and attitudes; my non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in class; my non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my career goals and interactions; since coming to this university I have developed a close, personal relationship with at least one faculty member; and I am satisfied with the opportunities to meet and interact informally with faculty members. There was a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

In this study, Pike et al. found that this population had a higher rate of faculty-student interaction which led to higher persistence rates, thus making residential learning communities indirectly related to improving persistence rates. Data from this study came from one institution where nearly 2,700 freshmen in traditional housing and freshman interest groups were surveyed during the fall semester. A 38% response rate was achieved. Ninety percent of respondents were white, and 70% of respondents were female. The average ACT of respondents was 25.3. There was a significant difference in the percentage of females and the ACT scores when compared to the research population, but the differences only account for 3% and 1% of the variance respectively. Because the data from this study came from one institution, findings cannot be generalized to all programs at all institutions. All students participating in freshmen interest groups were considered as one group and traditional housing students as another group. There were no comparisons of various types of living-learning programs.

Pike (1999) also found that students in living-learning communities were more involved. In the study, he administered the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) to students at a public research university in the Midwest. He distinguished among three different types of
programs at the institution. The first one was a humanities-based program, the second was a hall divided into theme-related floors, and the third contained all of the freshman interest groups which were groups of no more than 20 students who lived on the same floor of a hall and took courses together centered on an academic theme. In all, 626 students returned the CSEQ yielding a 26% response rate. Seventy percent of participants were female, and 89% of participants were white. Their mean ACT was 25.9. These statistics are slightly higher than those for the research population. Pike found statistically significant differences in the levels of involvement and interaction in these populations in comparison to students in traditional housing. His results were especially encouraging when comparing his study to others which find significant engagement levels. In other studies, the scales that measure involvement and interaction were measured together as engagement instead of measuring them as two separate constructs (i.e. Inkelas, Vogt, Longerbeam, Owen & Johnson, 2006; Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

Three scales were used to measure engagement as it related to the current study. The first scale was involvement in clubs and organizations, with a reliability of 0.90 (Cronbach’s alpha). The scale included 10 items from the CSEQ such as: attended a meeting of a campus club, organization, or student government group; worked on a campus committee, student organization, or project; met with a faculty member or staff advisor to discuss activities of a group or organization; and managed or provided leadership for a club or organization, on or off the campus. The second scale, interaction with faculty, had a reliability of 0.84 (Cronbach’s alpha). It included seven items from the CSEQ such as: talked with your instructor about information related to a course you were taking, discussed your academic program or course selection with a faculty member, discussed career plans and ambitions with a faculty member, and worked with a faculty member on a research project. The final related scale was interaction with peers. This scale had a reliability of 0.89 (Cronbach’s alpha) and consisted of 10 items
from the CSEQ. Some of the items included were: had serious discussions with students whose philosophy of life or personal values were very different from yours, became acquainted with students whose race or ethnic background was very different from yours, became acquainted with students whose interests were very different from yours, and had serious discussions with students from a country different from yours. Although Pike’s findings were significant, the study only involved one institution at one particular point in time. Furthermore, the results did not distinguish between the types of living-learning programs.

In contrast to Pike (1999), Inkelas and Weisman (2003) had a much larger sample and substantially higher response rate in their study at a highly competitive research institution in the same part of the country. They sampled 1,531 living-learning participants and 2,738 students in traditional housing at the institution. They had the resident advisors (RAs) distribute the survey and received a response rate of 61.2%. The living-learning sample had a greater number of females (58.9% versus 54.9%). In addition, the living-learning sample had a higher percentage of students whose parents obtained graduate degrees, and a greater percentage of the participants reported having SAT composite score of 1370 or higher. Significant results were again found as students participating in the living-learning programs were more engaged in program activities. Again, the study only involved one institution and cannot be generalized to all types of institutions.

Unlike Pike (1999), Inkelas and Weisman (2003) compared differences among three different types of programs at the institution. They divided the programs into curriculum-based (those with a goal of providing academic stimuli), transition (concerned with the transition of first-year students), and honors (challenging academic environment) groups. Although engaged in different ways, the transition and honors groups were more engaged than traditional hall
students. However, the curriculum-based group showed little to no difference in comparison to the traditional housing group.

In relation to the current study, Inkelas and Weisman (2003) measured engagement with four scales. The first scale, discussed academic issues with faculty member had a reliability of 0.76 (Cronbach’s alpha). It consisted of four items with factor loadings ranging from 0.60 to 0.70. They were: made an appointment to meet with an instructor in his/her office, visited informally with an instructor before or after class, asked instructor information related to a course, and communicated with instructor using e-mail. The second scale with a reliability of 0.82 (Cronbach’s alpha), was met socially with faculty member. It included four items with factor loadings ranging from 0.63 to 0.73. Specific items were: discussed personal problems or concerns with an instructor, visited informally with an instructor during a social occasion, went to a cultural event with an instructor, and discussed career plans and ambitions with an instructor. The next scale, discussed academic issues with peers, had a reliability of 0.73 (Cronbach’s alpha). Factor loadings for the three items ranged from 0.50 to 0.75. Items included in this scale were: discussed something learned in class, held discussions with students whose personal values were different than my own, and shared concerns about classes and assignments. The final engagement scale related to the current study was discussed sociocultural issues with peers. This scale had a reliability of 0.85 (Cronbach’s alpha) and included four items with factor loadings ranging from 0.64 to 0.73. The items were: talked about different lifestyles and customs; discussed views about multiculturalism and diversity; discussed major social problems such as world peace, human rights, equality, and justice; and held discussions with students whose political opinions were different than my own.

A multi-institutional study was conducted as Zhao and Kuh (2004) used the NSSE to study the success of students in learning communities. Although it was multi-institutional, the study
was on learning communities in general rather than specifically living-learning communities. In the study, student success was defined as “student engagement in educationally purposeful activities, self-reported gains in a variety of desired outcomes of college, and overall satisfaction with their college experience” (2004, p. 119). The NSSE was administered to college freshmen and seniors and assessed involvement, amount of reading and writing, participation in selected programs, perceptions of the campus and relationships on campus, and satisfaction with advising and the overall experience.

With respect to the current study, engagement was measured by six items regarding the students’ interaction with faculty members. This scale had a reliability of 0.76 (Cronbach’s alpha) with no factor scores reported. Specific items in this scale were measured by the frequency in which they occurred, and included: having discussed grades or assignments with an instructor during the current school year, having talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor during the current school year, having discussed ideas from your readings or classes with a faculty member outside of class during the current school year, having worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework during the current school year, and having received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance during the current school year. The final item asked if respondents had done or planned to work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements before they graduated.

Zhao and Kuh linked participation in a learning community to increased academic performance, engagement in educational activities, and satisfaction in college. Specifically, they found that freshmen participating in a learning community did not have higher grades but that seniors who had an experience with a learning community reported higher grades than students who had not participated. Another key finding was that “learning communities are positively
linked with more frequently interacting with faculty members, engaging in diversity-related activities, and having classes that emphasize higher order skills” (2004, p. 124).

Zhao and Kuh’s study defined learning communities as a program requiring students to take courses together. They did not distinguish between types of programs or whether or not the learning community had a residential component. Therefore, no differences were determined between types of learning communities. Because this was a multi-institutional study relying on self-reported data, no academic information from the institutions was matched with the survey respondents. The results were based solely on the responses to the NSSE (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). They did, however, include 365 institutions in their study with an average institutional response rate of 41%, showing that across the board learning communities in general were associated with these positive effects.

Inkelas et al. (2006) performed the first multi-institutional study on living-learning communities. They developed a new instrument, the National Study of Living-Learning Programs (NSLLP) to “investigate a broad range of college environments and outcomes related to student learning and development” (2006, p 40). Although this was considered a national study, this pilot study consisted of surveying only a random sample of students participating in living-learning programs at four institutions. There were over 5,000 respondents. Of these respondents, 70.3% were white and 60% were male.

Inkelas et al. (2006) used four subscales to measure engagement as it related to the current study. Two scales were related to peer interactions, and two measured faculty interaction. The first scale, discussed academic and career issues with peers, with a reliability of 0.751 (Cronbach’s alpha) was comprised of four items with factor loadings ranging from 0.497 to 0.743. Items included in this scale were: discussed something learned in class, shared concerns about classes and assignments, talked about current news events, and talked about
future plans and ambitions. The second peer interaction scale, discussed sociocultural issues with peers, had a reliability of 0.864 (Cronbach’s alpha). The six items in this scale had factor loadings ranging from .697 to .760. Specific items included were: discussed social issues such as peace, human rights, and justice; held discussions with students whose personal values were different; discussed views about multiculturalism and diversity; held discussions with those with different religious beliefs; talked about different lifestyles and customs; held discussions with students whose political opinions are very different. The two faculty interaction scales were “course-related faculty interaction” with a reliability of 0.763 (Cronbach’s alpha) and “faculty mentorship” with a reliability of 0.775 (Cronbach’s alpha). Items in the “course-related faculty interaction” scale had factor loadings ranging from 0.591 to 0.692 and included items such as: visited informally with instructor before or after class, made appointment to meet instructor in his or her office, asked instructor for information related to course, and communicated with instructor via email. The “faculty mentorship” scale items had factor loadings ranging from 0.478 to 0.724. Specific items in this scale included: worked with instructor on independent project, worked with instructor involving my research, discussed personal problems or concerns with instructor, visited informally with instructor on social occasion, and went to a cultural event with instructor or class. A four-point response scale was used.

Items identified as being most relevant to participation in a living-learning community such as interaction, hall environment, diversity climate, and involvement in extracurricular activities were included in the NSLLP. Results revealed that living-learning students were more likely to have academic and cultural discussions with their peers and form mentoring relationships with faculty. There was not a statistically significant difference in the likelihood for living-learning students to interact with faculty on course related issues. It is suggested that
possibly these basic interactions are understood by all students since the living-learning students were more likely to form mentor relationships.

The previous studies mentioned provided evidence of increased engagement among participants in living-learning communities using quantitative methods. The only qualitative study measuring engagement in such a program offered different results as far as faculty and student interactions. Cox and Orehovec (2007) conducted focus groups, interviews, and observations for 12 months to gain an understanding of the faculty-student interactions at a residential college. Rather than quantifying interactions and involvement in activities to explain engagement, they used qualitative measures to develop a typology that included five types of faculty-student interactions ranging from disengagement to mentoring, with three other levels of contact and interaction in between. The most common type of activity witnessed was disengagement followed by incidental contact. Very little mentoring was witnessed.

Disengagement occurred from the lack of faculty at events or when students and faculty attended the same functions but talked amongst themselves rather than interacting with one another. One step up from disengagement was incidental contact where students and faculty spoke or waved acknowledging one another, next was functional interaction when they interacted for educational purposes, and then there was personal interaction when there was a relationship that could actually develop. The infrequent mentoring relationship was only determined as such when faculty assisted with professional development, lent emotional support, and were role models.

As Cox and Orehovec (2007) mentioned in the limitations to their study, one should not infer that the mentoring is the only beneficial type of relationship. All of the other types save disengagement can prove to be helpful interaction to students. Interestingly, relationships considered as the disengaged type could have been included as measures of engagement if this
had been a quantitative study. If students and faculty were attending the same program but not speaking to each other, they were considered disengaged. However, on a survey, the students would report that they attended a program with faculty members, thus increasing engagement levels.

All of the aforementioned quantitative studies suggested that because students self-select into the living-learning programs that there may be limitations in the success of the programs. The outcomes could have been a result of personal characteristics of the students who choose to participate. Because students’ expectations for their residence hall can predict their behavior, Wawrzynski and Jessup-Anger (2010) examined students’ “expectations for their college experience as they entered their living environment and how their expectations, coupled with their living environment, influenced student outcomes” (2010, p. 203).

In their study, the researchers only looked at “academically-based collaborative or combined living-learning environments” (2010, p. 203) at a public land-grant university in the Midwest. At this institution, other than a few exceptions, all first-years students were required to live on campus. They considered their study longitudinal because one survey was administered in the fall and the other was administered in the spring semester of the same academic year. Only a small sample of 95 students completed both surveys, yielding only a 13% response rate. This is a very low response rate and the data came only from one institution, but the sample was “mostly” representative of the larger population. Eighty-one percent of the respondents were female, and 92% were white. According to the researchers, the sample did not contain any nonresponse error since they only used data from respondents who completed the entire survey both semesters. The findings from this study cannot be generalized to all living-learning programs since the response rate was low and the data only contained information about one type of program from one institution. However, the findings are of interest as students’ expectations
before entering the living-learning program are compared between two types of living-learning programs. Results showed that the two groups of students did not differ in their expectations before enrolling but one group had greater peer interactions. The groups were not compared to students in traditional housing. This information would be far more valuable.

To measure engagement, a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from “not a chance” to “a sure thing” was used. As it relates to the current study, four scales were used. Factor loadings were not presented. The first scale, student-faculty interactions, had a reliability of 0.82 (Cronbach’s alpha). Five items in this scale included: interact with a faculty member about a personal issue; talk with a faculty member about academic or intellectual matters not related to class; talk to a faculty member about my career direction or goals; talk with a faculty member about my academic performance on assignments, papers, or tests; and talk to a faculty member about research opportunities. The second scale, peer academic interactions, had a reliability of 0.80 (Cronbach’s alpha), and consisted of four items: study with other students from my residence hall, work on class assignments with students in my residence hall, work on class assignments with classmates outside of class, and I am intellectually challenged by my peers in my classes. The third scale was “peer intellectual connections,” with a reliability of 0.72 (Cronbach’s alpha). Items included were: have conversations with peers about current, local, or national world events; have conversations with peers about personal values; have intellectually stimulating conversations with other students; and discussed ideas from classes with peers outside of class. The last scale, peer interaction, had a reliability of 0.67 (Cronbach’s alpha). It consisted of four items including: feel connected to a formal or informal group of other students, study with other students on the floor, feel that other members on the floor are serious about their academics, and study with other students in some face-to face study group.
Although the promotion of engagement is commonly listed as one of the benefits of living-learning programs, very few studies have actually been done that measure engagement when one considers the breadth of the programs covered under this heading. Over the last decade studies have moved from small single-institution studies to large multi-institutional studies including data from thousands of students. These studies have provided valuable data, but little research exists on the differences between types of living-programs at these institutions. In addition, very few studies link actual performance data from the institution to the responses on the surveys.

**Other Predictors of Engagement**

Previous studies measuring engagement in residential colleges have included background variables such as gender, race/ethnicity, ACT scores, parents’ education, major, housing arrangement, and participation in an honors program. Persistence to the sophomore year and cumulative GPAs at the end of the freshman year have been considered as outcome variables. Other characteristics that will be investigated in this study include size of high school class, high school GPA, and first-generation college-attendance status, which were not mentioned in previous research.

Pike et al. (1997) included gender, ethnicity, and ACT scores (as a measure of entering ability) as background variables in their study. These data were obtained from the institution. They also used freshmen GPAs as a measure of academic standing and considered persistence to the sophomore year. Chi-square statistics were used to develop a model that explains their data. According to Pike et al. (1997), “gender, support from significant others, and faculty-student interaction had positive effects on academic and social integration, and ethnicity had significant negative effects on academic and social integration” (1997, p. 616). They found that students’ entering ability was related to their academic integration but not their social integration.
Furthermore, academic achievement was found to be influenced by all three. Being female and interacting with faculty were both found to have a positive effect on academic achievement, whereas ethnicity was negatively correlated.

Similarly, Pike (1999) included background variables in his study on the effects of residential learning communities. Institutional data and responses to the *College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ)* were used to obtain data on gender, minority status, ACT scores, and high school class percentile rank. Again, chi-square statistics were used to find a model that adequately represented the data. In comparing responses of residential college students to traditional housing students, slightly fewer of the residential college students were female and they had higher ACT scores. No statistically significant differences were found for minority status or high school class percentile rank.

Inkelas and Weisman (2003) did not consider background variables in their study. They considered the effects of housing arrangements on engagement. Using analysis of variance tests, students’ involvement was compared among three types of living-learning participants and a control sample. One of the three types of living-learning programs was an academic honors program. Students in the living-learning programs were more engaged overall. Specifically, honors students were more likely to meet socially with faculty members and have academic discussions with their peers outside of class.

Zhao and Kuh (2004) used *t* tests to compare ACT and SAT scores and self-reported grades of students who participated in learning communities to those who did not participate. In their study, first-year students in learning communities entered with lower grades and ACT/SAT scores. Further regression analysis using the scores as a control variable showed that seniors who had participated in a learning community had higher grades. Next, they conducted a multivariate regression to examine the relationship between participation in the learning
communities and engagement. They controlled for enrollment status, residence, age, gender, class, race, SAT/ACT score, parents’ education, transfer status, Greek affiliation, sector, Carnegie classification, and total undergraduate enrollment. Because they controlled for these characteristics rather than building them into the design, differences were not examined. For the last objective of their study, Zhao and Kuh (2004) used logistic regression to determine characteristics of learning community participants. They found that all types of students participated, but that “first-year students from families with lower levels of parental education and students living on campus are more likely to get involved in learning communities” (2004, p. 127). In addition, females were more likely to have participated.

Inkelas et al. (2006) considered the outcomes of various demographic characteristics in their study of living-learning programs. Analysis of variance results revealed that women had more frequent interactions with peers and that African American students had less faculty interactions than white students and were less likely to have peer discussions. Asian Pacific Americans also had less frequent faculty interactions. White students were most likely to engage in peer discussions and develop faculty mentors. They also found that students whose parents had obtained a college degree were more likely to be engaged.

**Summary**

In reviewing the related literature on engagement and the success of living-learning programs, no articles were found that discussed the engagement level of students in various types of programs at an institution. This is a gap in the literature on living-learning programs. This research hopes to fill this gap. With institutions offering numerous types of living-learning programs, it would be helpful to determine which types provide an engaging environment leading to academic success.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Population and Sample

The target population for this study was defined as all freshmen students at large, public, research-extensive universities in the South. The accessible population was all full-time freshmen students at one large, public research-extensive university in the South. The entire accessible population was surveyed in late April through early May of 2010.

Approval of this research was granted from Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Protection prior to implementation. The study was given approval #E4460 (Appendix A).

Methodology

A survey was administered to the entire population. Students were asked to complete an electronic survey that was e-mailed to them via a software package called Student Voice. The survey was sent to the students from the Office of the First Year Experience at the university. Respondent rewards included appreciation, contributing to greater good, and a chance to win a $25 gift certificate to a local business. It was hoped that respondents would trust the researcher as the survey was being sent from their university administration and was related to their experiences at the institution. Following recommendations by Dillman et al. (2009) as closely as possible given the constraints of the project, multiple contacts were made. Follow-up e-mails were sent after one week and two weeks to non-responders. The original e-mail with the survey attached was sent each consecutive time. Questions from the survey along with a copy of the e-mail inviting them to participate are found in Appendix B.
Instrument Development

Two of the most well-known surveys used to measure engagement in residential colleges include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the National Study of Living Learning Programs (NSLLP). These are multi-institutional studies that rely only on self-reported data. These surveys cannot be used to determine differences between types of programs at particular institutions. After a review of the literature, it was determined that a survey would need to be created for the study. Because demographic information was available through the registrar’s office for this study, a survey was created that could be directly linked to the available data. An additional benefit to utilizing these data is that the survey was much shorter than the national surveys and as such could potentially increase the response rate.

The survey was developed as part of a larger project and consists of various scales ranging from Likert-type to anchored scales. Most of the questions used for this study were developed to measure the amount of engagement in academic and social activities students participated in during their freshman year.

There was one open-ended question on the survey that could provide some valuable candid data. The question asked if they would like to share anything else about how their housing arrangements affected their academic experiences this year. For the complete list of questions, refer to Appendix B.

Students’ housing location was self-reported on the survey. All other personal and academic data were obtained from the institution’s registrar’s office. Students supplied their identification number when completing the survey. The data from the registrar’s office were linked to the responses on the surveys using the students’ e-mail addresses, and then all identifiers were destroyed.
Response Rate of Survey

The electronic survey was sent to 4,583 full-time freshmen at the university on April 19, 2010. After three weeks, with two reminders being sent (one on April 26, 2010 and one on May 3, 2010), 1,341 or 29.26% of the students responded. However, of these respondents, 221 students did not complete the entire survey, and one student’s data were unable to be obtained from the registrar’s office due to use of an e-mail address that was not on file. The final result was 1,119 usable surveys for a response rate of 24.42%.

Demographics of Accessible Population

Data available on the accessible population at this large, public, research-extensive university in the South were obtained from the Office of Budget and Planning at the institution. Total first-year freshman enrollment for the beginning of the 2009-2010 academic year was 4,789. Only 10 of these students were enrolled part-time. The largest group of the students were white (\(n = 3,795\) or 79.24%) and 994 (20.76%) were non-white. The freshman class was 52.62 % (\(n = 2,520\)) female and 47.38% (\(n = 2,269\)) male. The average ACT score of the class was 25.5 and the average GPA on a 4.0 scale was 3.49. Most of the students (67%) lived on-campus. Data on senior class size and first-generation college attendance status were not published for the institution.

Data Summary and Analysis

Data collected in this study were analyzed as described for each of the objectives listed below.

Objective One

Objective one is descriptive in nature and was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. The variables gender, race, size of high school senior class, and first generation college-attendance status are nominal variables that were analyzed using frequency counts and
percentages. The variables high school GPA and ACT scores are interval variables that were described by calculating means and standard deviations.

The housing category variable was formed by combining some of the categories in the original data. Students living in traditional residence halls was kept as one category, those in honors housing were combined with theme-based residential colleges to form the second category, students in discipline-based residential colleges remained the third category, the two off-campus categories (within five miles and further than five miles away) were combined to form the fourth category, and the final category was students living off-campus with family. The size of high school senior class variable was developed by creating ranges from the information provided. The original data provided the number of students in the senior class for every respondent. Each respondent was assigned a senior class size range: 0-100, 101-200, 201-300, 301-400, and over 400. The first-generation college-attendance variable also had to be computed. Data were provided for the education level of each respondent’s mother and father. The data were classified to determine which students’ mothers and fathers had attended college. Next, the data were combined to find the students who had neither parent attend college. This resulting group was used as the first-generation college-attendance variable.

**Objective Two**

Objective two is descriptive in nature. The questionnaire that measured the level of engagement by students was treated as a Likert-type scale, and thus an overall mean engagement score was calculated for each participant and means and standard deviations were calculated for each question. The following questions and their scales made up the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire:
1. In thinking of the past year as a student at LSU, please indicate the frequency with which you engaged in the following activities:

   0 = Never (or not answered)
   1 = About once in the past academic year
   2 = About twice in the past academic year (about once a semester)
   3 = Three to six times in the past academic year (about once every other month during school)
   4 = Six to 12 times in the past academic year (about once a month during school)
   5 = Weekly during school
   6 = More than once a week

   a. Met with a faculty or staff member during office hours or an appointment
   b. Attended a faculty or staff-led discussion, lecture, or presentation outside of class
   c. Met informally with a faculty or staff member outside of class or office hours
   d. Discussed career plans and aspirations with a faculty or staff member
   e. Discussed academic issues with a faculty or staff member outside of class or office hours
   f. Discussed career plans and aspirations with another student(s)
   g. Met in an organized study group or informally with other students to prepare for an academic assignment
   h. Discussed academic issues with another student(s) outside of class
   i. Discussed a social concern, political issue, or world event with another student(s) outside of class
   j. Developed a friendship with a student from a different background (culture, ethnicity, religion, etc.)

2. In thinking about your participation in a variety of activities during the past year at LSU, indicate how involved you have been:

   0 = Never (or not answered)
   1 = About once in the past academic year
   2 = About once a semester
   3 = About once every other month during school
   4 = About once a month during school
   5 = Weekly during school
   6 = More than once a week

   a. In activities with an academic emphasis (outside of class)
   b. In activities with social emphasis
   c. In campus student organizations
   d. In an activity where you were fulfilling a leadership role
Objective Three

Objective three is comparison in nature and was analyzed using One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) calculations. The ANOVA performs a comparison of means when there are two or more levels of a variable, using the $F$ statistic. When using ANOVA, it is first necessary to use the Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variance to determine if the group variances are equal.

When group differences are found using ANOVA, post hoc tests are employed to determine the location of the significant differences between the groups. The Tukey multiple comparison procedure was employed in this analysis as it is “appropriate for pairwise comparisons following a significant $F$ ratio in the ANOVA when the group sizes are equal” (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003, p. 378).

Objective Four

Objective four was accomplished through multiple regression analysis with the overall engagement score representing the dependent variable for the multiple regression equation. Independent variables were: housing arrangement, race, gender, first-generation college attendance status, high school GPA, high school senior class size, and ACT score.

Multiple regression is a statistical procedure that involves predicting criterion values from examining the relationships between the predictor values (Hinkle et al., 2003).

Multiple regression identifies the best combination of predictors (independent variables) of the dependent variable. Consequently, it is used when there are several independent quantitative variables and one dependent quantitative variable. To produce the best combination of predictors of the dependent variable, a sequential multiple regression selects independent variables, one at a time, by their ability to account for the most variance in the dependent variable. As a variable is selected and entered into the group of predictors, the relationship between the group of predictors and the dependent variable is reassessed. When no more variables are left that explain a significant amount of the variance in the dependent variable, then the regression model is complete. (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005, p. 14)
Three of the independent variables were interval and four were categorical and thus had to be dummy coded in order to be placed in the regression. Each level of the variables of housing arrangement, gender, race, and first-generation college attendance status were recoded to dummy variables prior to analysis. Dummy coding refers to the process of assigning different numbers or codes to the levels of categorical data. The assigned numbers represent mutually exclusive subsets of the variables and indicate group membership or exclusion within the level of the variable that allow for facilitated analysis such as multiple regression (Pedhazur, 1997).

Next, as is most commonly used in the behavioral sciences to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between variables, Pearson’s Product Moment Correlations were calculated between each variable and the engagement score. Collinearity tests were done to determine the degree of redundancy that existed between the variables. Variance inflation (VIF) and tolerance levels (TOL) were computed. Smaller tolerance levels (< .01) indicate high collinearity. SPSS only eliminates predictor variables in a model that have tolerance levels less than .0001 so the researcher must monitor the tolerance. Variance inflation values, which are the reciprocal of tolerance values, can also indicate collinearity. Large VIF values indicate strong relationships (Hinkle et al., 2003). For this study, tolerance and variance inflation criteria set by Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2009) were used. They suggest that collinearity is not an issue if TOL values are greater than 0.1 and VIF values are less than 10.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the influence of housing arrangement and selected personal and academic characteristics on the engagement of full-time university freshmen. The entire population of freshmen at a large, public, research-extensive university in the South was surveyed yielding 1,119 usable responses for a 24.42% response rate. Findings and analysis of the engagement survey data are presented in this chapter. Results are arranged and presented by research objective and include objectives one through four.

Objective One

Objective one was to describe the demographic and personal characteristics of freshmen students. These characteristics included:

a. Housing arrangement
b. Gender
c. Race
d. Size of high school senior class
e. High school GPA
f. ACT scores
g. First-generation college-attendance status

Housing Arrangement

The original sample was first classified by housing arrangement. Respondents were asked to describe their housing arrangement for the past year. Choices were on-campus in a traditional residence hall ($n = 312, 27.9\%$), on-campus in a theme-based residential college ($n = 136, 12.2\%$), on-campus in the Honors College Residence Hall ($n = 106, 9.5\%$), on-campus in a discipline-based residential college ($n = 153, 13.7\%$), off-campus, less than five miles ($n = 262, 23.5\%$),
23.4%), off-campus more than five miles away (n = 35, 3.1%), commute from home or from another family member’s home (n = 93, 8.3%), or other (n = 22, 2.0%). Responses were combined to form five major response choices: on-campus in traditional housing, on-campus in theme-based residential colleges (includes honors housing), on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges, off-campus, and off-campus with family. Responses as “other” were considered non-applicable and therefore considered as missing data. Table 1 illustrates the number of responses by housing arrangement.

Table 1
Housing as Reported by the Freshman Respondents to the Student First-Year Experiences Survey at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Arrangement</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-campus in traditional housing</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-campus</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-campus in theme-based residential colleges</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-campus in discipline-based residential colleges</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-campus with family</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1097</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Twenty-two respondents either failed to respond to this item or responded as “other.”

**Gender**

Regarding gender, data from the institution’s registrar’s office revealed that the largest number of freshmen respondents (n = 734, 65.7%) was female. Three hundred eighty-four students (34.3%) were male. Data were not available for one student. Table two illustrates data regarding gender of the respondents.
Table 2
Gender Distribution of Freshman Respondents to the Student First-Year Experiences Survey at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>n^a</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aData were not available for one respondent.

Race

The third variable on which the respondents were described was race. Institutional data showed that the majority of the respondents were white (n = 908, 83.8%). Seventy-eight (7.2%) of the respondents were black or African American, 51 (4.7%) of the respondents were Hispanic, 43 (4.0%) of the respondents were Asian, two (0.2%) of the respondents were American Indian or Alaskan native, and one (0.1%) of the students was native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Eleven (1.0%) of the respondents indicated their race as “other,” and data on race were not available for 25 respondents. Table 3 illustrates data regarding race of the survey respondents.

Table 3
Race Distribution of the Freshman Respondents to the Student First-Year Experiences Survey at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>n^a</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1094</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aData were not available for 25 respondents.
Size of High School Senior Class

The respondents were also described according to the size of their high school senior class. Institutional data revealed that class sizes ranged from 11 students to 1,361 students. Ninety percent of the respondents came from senior classes with fewer than 456 students, with less than 3% coming from classes with over 800 students and only four (0.3%) coming from a class having over 1,000 students. The mean class size was 260.90 (SD = 178.82). As for the ranges of respondents’ senior class sizes, 179 (17.8%) were in classes with 0-100 students, 285 (28.3%) with 101-200 students, 233 (23.1%) with 201-300, 145 (14.4%) with 301-400, and 166 (16.5%) with over 400 students. Senior class size data were not available for 111 respondents. See Table 4 for an illustration of data on ranges of senior class sizes.

Table 4
High School Senior Class Size of Freshman Respondents to the Student First-Year Experiences Survey at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Sizea</th>
<th>n^b</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-100 students</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-200 students</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-300 students</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-400 students</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 400 students</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1008</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aMean class size was 260.90 (SD = 178.82).
^bData were not available for 111 respondents.

High School GPA

Next, respondents were described based on their high school GPA. According to institutional records, the mean high school GPA for the freshmen students that responded to the survey was 3.48 on a four-point scale (SD = 0.39). GPA data were not available for 26 students.
ACT Scores

ACT scores were available for all but three of the respondents. Data obtained from the institution revealed that the ACT scores ranged from 14 to 36. The mean ACT score for the freshmen students that responded to the survey was 26 (SD = 3.46).

First Generation College Student Status

Finally, it was determined whether or not students were first-generation college students. For purposes of this study, first-generation college attendance status was conceptually defined as having parents who never enrolled in college. In the records obtained from the institution’s registrar’s office, the specific type of college education was not specified; merely whether or not the parents attended or graduated from college. Of the respondents only 89 (8.2%) were determined to be first-generation college students. Data used to determine this status came from the educational level of each parent. For the mothers’ education, choices were: attended junior high school (n = 5, 0.5%), attended high school (n = 27, 2.5%), high school graduate (n = 156, 14.2%), attended college (n = 217, 19.7%), college graduate (n = 579, 52.6%), attended professional school (n = 12, 1.1%), and professional school graduate (n = 105, 9.5%). There were 18 students who did not submit educational information for their mothers. For the fathers’ education, choices were: attended junior high school (n = 9, 0.8%), attended high school (n = 40, 3.7%), high school graduate (n = 154, 14.1%), attended college (n = 183, 16.7%), college graduate (n = 523, 47.8%), attended professional school (n = 17, 1.6%), and professional school graduate (n = 167, 15.3%). There were 26 students who did not submit educational information for their fathers.

Objective Two

Objective two was to determine the engagement level of students as measured by the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire. Individual mean engagement scores were calculated
for each student and each of the 14 items included in the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire. The possible range of measurement for engagement with faculty and peers was on an academic year time-basis. The range for each item in the questionnaire and for the students’ engagement scores was 0.0-6.0 (0 = never, 1 = once a year, 2 = twice a year, 3 = 3 to 6 times per year, 4 = 7 to 12 times per year, 5 = weekly during the year, and 6 = more than weekly during the year). Students’ individual engagement scores ranged from 0.0 to 5.43 with a mean of 2.37 and a standard deviation of 1.01. Means of items in the questionnaire ranged from 0.93 to 3.97.

To aid in the interpretation of the responses on the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire, the researcher established a classification scale as follows: 0.0-0.99 = not engaged, 1.0-2.99 = mildly engaged, 3.0-3.99 = moderately engaged, and 4.0-6.0 = strongly engaged. This interpretive scale corresponds with the time-basis range in which the survey was answered. No items on the questionnaire were identified as “strongly engaged.” One item was identified as “not engaged,” seven items were identified as “mildly engaged,” and six items as “moderately engaged.” All of the items classified as “moderately engaged” involved students interactions with other students and one item relating to engagement in social activities. The items classified as “mildly engaged” related to students interactions with faculty and staff and their participation in student organizations and academic activities outside of class.

The type of interaction being measured was also determined for each item in the questionnaire. Items measured either academic or social interaction for students’ engagement with faculty and with other peers. For specific items included in the questionnaire, type of interaction being measured, the mean engagement scores and standard deviations, and the engagement classifications, see Table 5.
Table 5
Means, Standard Deviations, and Questionnaire Item Classifications as Reported by Freshman Respondents to the Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire Survey at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Type of Interaction Measured</th>
<th>(M^b)</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
<th>Classification^c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussed career plans and aspirations with other students</td>
<td>Academic-Peer</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>Moderately Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed academic issues with another student(s) outside of class</td>
<td>Academic-Peer</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>Moderately Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed a social concern, political issue, or world event with another student(s) outside of class</td>
<td>Social-Peer</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>Moderately Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in activities with social emphasis</td>
<td>Social-Peer</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>Moderately Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met in an organized study group or informally with other students to prepare for an academic assignment</td>
<td>Academic-Peer</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>Moderately Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed a friendship with a student from a different background</td>
<td>Social-Peer</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>Moderately Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met with a faculty or staff member during office hours or an appointment</td>
<td>Academic-Faculty</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>Mildly Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in campus student organizations</td>
<td>Social-Peer</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>Mildly Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in academic activities (outside of class)</td>
<td>Academic-Peer and Faculty</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>Mildly Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in an activity where you were fulfilling a leadership role</td>
<td>Social-Peer</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Mildly Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a faculty or staff led discussion, lecture, or presentation outside of class</td>
<td>Academic-Faculty</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>Mildly Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed career plans and aspiration with a faculty or staff member</td>
<td>Academic-Faculty</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>Mildly Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed academic issues with a faculty or staff member outside of class or office hours</td>
<td>Academic-Faculty</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>Mildly Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met informally with a faculty or staff member outside of class or office hours</td>
<td>Social-Faculty</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>Not Engaged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continued)*
(Table 5 continued)

aType of interaction measured as determined by the researcher.
bMean values based on the 6-point Likert-type response scale 0 = never, 1 = once a year, 2 =
twice a year, 3 = 3-6 times per year, 4 = 7-12 times per year, 5 = weekly during the year, and
6 = more than weekly during the year.
cInterpretive Scale: 0.0-0.99 = not engaged, 1.0-2.99 = mildly engaged, 3.0-3.99 = moderately
engaged, and 4.0-6.0 = strongly engaged.

Objective Three

Research objective three was to determine whether differences exist in the engagement level
of freshmen students by selected demographic and personal characteristics including:

a. Housing arrangement
b. Gender
c. Race
d. First-generation college-attendance status

The statistical test used to measure the differences was ANOVA for these variables, and
homogeneity of variance was assumed following the Levene’s Test. The Tukey post hoc tests
were used if significant difference were found to determine at which levels the differences were
significant.

Before testing for differences, data were reviewed for normality, outliers, and distribution
using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0. Alpha was controlled for in
all tests at the .05 level of significance. The overall mean engagement score for students using
the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire was 2.37 (n = 1,119, SD = 1.01).

Housing Arrangement

A comparison of the overall mean engagement score among various housing arrangements
was accomplished using ANOVA. Engagement scores for students living off-campus were
lower than those for students living on-campus. Sample sizes, mean engagement scores, and standard deviations by housing arrangement are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6
Mean Engagement Scores and Standard Deviations by Housing Arrangement for Freshman Respondents to the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Arrangement</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus in Discipline-Based Residential Colleges</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus in Theme-Based Residential Colleges</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus in Traditional Housing</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Campus</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Campus with Family</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1119</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aTwenty-two respondents either failed to respond to this item or responded as “other.”

*bMean values based on the 6-point Likert-type response scale 0 = never, 1 = once a year, 2 = twice a year, 3 = 3-6 times per year, 4 = 7-12 times per year, 5 = weekly during the year, and 6 = more than weekly during the year.

*cReported as overall mean and standard deviation.

The Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances exceeded the .05 level, resulting in the ability to demonstrate homogeneity of variances among housing groups $F = 1.50 (4, 1092), p = .201$. The results of the ANOVA were significant $F = 12.81 (4, 1092) p = .001$. Table 7 illustrates the Analysis of Variance.

Table 7
One-way Analysis of Variance Results Illustrating Differences in the Housing Arrangement of the Respondents to the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p^a$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>49.69</td>
<td>12.42</td>
<td>12.80</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>1059.48</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1096</td>
<td>1109.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because a significant difference was found, Tukey post hoc tests were used to determine where differences exist. The post hoc tests indicated significant differences in mean engagement
scores only between those groups of students living on-campus (on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges, \( n = 153, M = 2.67, SD = 1.06 \); on-campus in theme-based residential colleges, \( n = 242, M = 2.50, SD = 1.01 \), and on-campus in tradition housing, \( n = 312, M = 2.45, SD = 1.01 \)) and those living off-campus (off-campus, \( n = 297, M = 2.12, SD = 0.91 \) and off-campus with family, \( n = 93, M = 2.02, SD = 0.93 \)) indicating that students living on-campus regardless of the housing type are more engaged than those living off-campus as measured by the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire.

Engagement scores for students living on-campus in traditional housing were not significantly different than students living on-campus in theme-based residential colleges (\( p = .974 \)), nor were they significantly different than those for students living on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges (\( p = .172 \)). The scores for the traditional housing group were significantly different than those for students living off-campus (\( p = <.001 \)) and for those students living off-campus with family (\( p = .002 \)). Engagement scores for students living in theme-based residential colleges were not significantly different than those for students living on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges (\( p = .483 \)), but they were significantly different than those for students living off-campus (\( p = <.001 \)) and those for students living off-campus with family (\( p = <.001 \)). Similar results were found for the students in discipline-based residential colleges. In addition to the scores not being significantly different than those in theme-based residential colleges, they were not significantly different from scores for students in traditional housing (\( p = 0.172 \)), but they were significantly different than both off-campus groups (\( p = <.001 \)). Engagement scores for students living off-campus were significantly different than all three groups of students living on-campus (\( p = <.001 \)), but they were not significantly different than those for students living off-campus with family. Scores for students living off-campus with family were also significantly different than scores for students living on-campus in traditional housing (\( p = .002 \), students
living on-campus in theme-based residential colleges \( (p = .001) \), and students living on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges \( (p = <.001) \).

**Gender**

Differences were also examined in relation to the gender of respondents and the overall mean engagement score. After a determination of equal variances was established through the Levene’s statistic, \( F = 3.06 \) \((1, 1116)\), \( p = .079 \), ANOVA results revealed no significant difference at the .05 level in overall mean engagement scores between male and female respondents, \( F = 0.42 \) \((1, 1116)\), \( p = .517 \). Although not significant, the overall mean engagement score for males \( (n = 384, M = 2.40, SD = 1.06) \) was slightly higher than for females \( (n = 734, M = 2.36, SD = 0.10) \). Sample sizes, mean engagement scores, and standard deviations are illustrated in Table 8.

**Table 8**

Mean Engagement Scores and Standard Deviations by Gender for Freshman Respondents to the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>( n^a )</th>
<th>( M^b )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total(^c)</td>
<td>1119</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Data were not available for one respondent.

\(^b\)Mean values based on the 6-point Likert-type response scale 0 = never, 1 = once a year, 2 = twice a year, 3 = 3-6 times per year, 4 = 7-12 times per year, 5 = weekly during the year, and 6 = more than weekly during the year.

\(^c\)Reported as overall mean and standard deviation.

**Race**

Comparisons for differences in engagement were calculated for the variable “race” following collapse and recoding of the levels of racial background into the dichotomy “white” and “non-white.” This was performed in an effort to reduce the danger of achieving spurious results after statistical analysis revealed that 83% of the respondents were white and that race category
American Indian or Alaskan Native had only two subjects and category Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander had only one subject.

The sample was recoded to include whites, as the data indicated, and non-whites, which included combined levels of Black or African American, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Mean engagement scores were slightly higher for whites ($n = 908, M = 2.39, SD = 1.02$) than non-whites ($n = 187, M = 2.32, SD = 0.10$). See Table 9 for sample sizes, mean engagement scores, and standard deviations for the recoded racial distribution.

Table 9
Mean Engagement Scores and Standard Deviations by Recoded Race Distribution for Freshman Respondents to the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Group</th>
<th>$n^a$</th>
<th>$M^b$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1119</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$Data were not available for 25 respondents.

$^b$Mean values based on the 6-point Likert-type response scale 0 = never, 1 = once a year, 2 = twice a year, 3 = 3-6 times per year, 4 = 7-12 times per year, 5 = weekly during the year, and 6 = more than weekly during the year.

$^c$Reported as overall mean and standard deviation.

Following the recoding procedures, an ANOVA was performed to determine if a difference existed between the engagement score for whites and non-whites. Levene’s statistic exceeded the .05 level, $F = 0.03 (1, 1093), p = .853$, resulting in the assumption of homogeneity of variance between the two racial groups. ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences in engagement between whites and non-whites, $F = 0.85 (1, 1093), p = .358$.

First-Generation College Attendance Status

Data provided on mothers’ and fathers’ education levels were used to determine first-generation college attendance status for each respondent. Those students who had neither parent
who had enrolled in college were considered first-generation. A comparison was made on the engagement scores of students who were considered first-generation and those who were not. Mean engagement scores for students who were first-generation ($n = 89, M = 2.03, SD = 0.97$) were lower than those who had one parent attend college ($n = 207, M = 2.35, SD = 0.96$) and those who had both parents attend college ($n = 788, M = 2.42, SD = 1.02$). For an illustration of means and standard deviations, see Table 10.

Table 10
Sample Sizes, Mean Engagement Scores, and Standard Deviations by First-Generation College Attendance Status for Respondents to the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Education Classification</th>
<th>$n^a$</th>
<th>$M^b$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Generation</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Parent Attended College</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Parents Attended College</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1119</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$Data were not available for 35 respondents.
$^b$Mean values based on the 6-point Likert-type response scale 0 = never, 1 = once a year, 2 = twice a year, 3 = 3-6 times per year, 4 = 7-12 times per year, 5 = weekly during the year, and 6 = more than weekly during the year.
$^c$Reported as overall mean and standard deviation.

After a determination of equal variances was established through the Levene’s statistic, $F = .90 (2, 1081), p = .406$, ANOVA results revealed a significant difference in overall mean engagement scores by first-generation college attendance status, $F = 6.22 (2, 1081) p = .002$. Tukey post hoc tests revealed that the first-generation group has significantly different engagement scores than the students who had one parent attend college ($p = .031$) and the students who had both parents attend college ($p = .001$). Table 11 illustrates the Analysis of Variance.
Table 11

One-way Analysis of Variance Results Illustrating Differences in the First-Generation College Attendance Status of the Respondents to the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p^a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.53</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1081</td>
<td>1089.68</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1083</td>
<td>1102.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective Four**

Objective four was to determine if a model existed which explains a significant portion of the variance in engagement scores as measured by the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire and the characteristics of housing arrangement, gender, race, ACT score, high school GPA, high school senior class size, and first-generation college attendance status. This objective was accomplished by using multiple regression analysis with the overall mean engagement score as the dependent variable and the personal and demographic characteristics used as independent variables. Data analysis consisted of Pearson’s Product Moment Correlations and stepwise multiple regression analysis where the probability of $F$ to enter the equation were set at .05, and the probability for $F$ to be removed from the model was set at .10.

Correlations were run on significant variables ($p < .05$) found earlier when comparisons were made. These variables included (a) housing arrangement ($p = < .001$) and (b) first-generation college attendance status ($p = .002$). Other variables included in the regression model were ACT score, high school GPA, and size of high school senior class. These variables are interval-level variables that could not be analyzed using ANOVA, thus significance had not been determined.
There was one outlier discovered upon inspecting the data. Upon reviewing the data, the respondent’s mean engagement score was determined to be beyond three standard deviations from the mean. This respondent’s data were not included in the regression analysis.

For the analysis, dummy coding was completed for the categorical variables, housing arrangement and first-generation college attendance status. Dummy coding was used with “on-campus in traditional housing” as “1” and all other categories: on-campus in theme-based residential colleges, on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges, off-campus, and off-campus with family, were coded as “0.” This dummy coding procedure continued in the same manner until each housing choice was recoded as “1” with all others as “0.” The variable, first-generation college attendance status, was treated each way with each of its three levels including: first-generation, one parent attended college, and both parents attended college.

For descriptive purposes, correlations were computed between the independent variables and the dependent variable. For interpretation of correlations, Davis’ (1971) scale for describing the strength of the measure of association was used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.00 - .09</td>
<td>negligible association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.10 - .29</td>
<td>low association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.30 - .49</td>
<td>moderate association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.50 - .69</td>
<td>substantial association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.70 and higher</td>
<td>very strong association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>perfect association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pearson’s Product Moment Correlations between each independent variable (housing arrangement-all levels, gender, race, high school senior class size, high school GPA, ACT score, and first-generation college attendance status) and the dependent variable (mean engagement score) are presented in Table 12.

Table 12
Relationships Between the Independent Variables and the Overall Mean Engagement Score of Respondents to the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>r^a</th>
<th>p^b</th>
<th>Davis Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.016</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>Negligible Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>Negligible Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus in Theme-Based Residential Colleges</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>Negligible Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Senior Class Size</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>Negligible Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School GPA</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>Negligible Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Generation College Attendance Status</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Low Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Campus with Family</td>
<td>-.103</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Low Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus in Discipline-Based Residential Colleges</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Low Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Campus</td>
<td>-.147</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Low Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Low Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aPearson’s Product Moment Correlation
^bTwo-Tailed Alpha .05

Stepwise multiple regression was conducted to determine which of the statistically significant correlated variables (on-campus in theme-based residential colleges, high school senior class size, high school GPA, first-generation college college-attendance status, off-campus with family, on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges, off-campus, and ACT) were predictors of engagement. Regression results indicated that the best overall fit to be the fifth model as indicated by a statistically significant $F = 16.77 \ (p < .001)$ and an adjusted $R^2 = .066$. See Table 13 for an illustration of the five models and their adjusted $R^2$. 

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Table 13
Regression Models and Percent of Variance Explained for the Engagement Level of Respondents to the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Predictors</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$\text{Adj } R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>37.41</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT, and Living Off-Campus</td>
<td>28.26</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT, Living Off-Campus, and Living Off-Campus with Family</td>
<td>24.23</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT, Living Off-Campus, Living Off-Campus with Family, and First Generation College Attendance Status</td>
<td>19.80</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT, Living Off-Campus, Living Off-Campus with Family, First Generation College Attendance Status, and Living On-Campus in a Discipline-Based Residential College</td>
<td>16.77</td>
<td>.066</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fifth model indicated five significant predictors of engagement. The regression equation is $y = 1.411 + (.04) (X_1) + (-.29) (X_2) + (-.38) (X_3) + (-.28) (X_4) + (.19) (X_5)$. Of these five, two were positively related: ACT ($B = .041, t = 4.75$) and living on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges ($B = .186, t = 2.06$). Three of these predictors were negatively related: living off-campus ($B = -.290, t = -4.11$), living off-campus with family ($B = -.380, t = -3.47$), and first-generation college attendance status ($B = -.282, t = -2.61$). Based on the absolute values of the coefficients, the strongest predictors were ACT ($Beta = .140$) and living off-campus ($Beta = -.127$). The difference between these two variables (.13) was less than the difference between living off-campus and the third highest predictor (living off-campus with family, difference = .27). A summary of the regression model is presented in Table 14.
Table 14
Multiple Regression Analysis of Engagement Level for Respondents to the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire at a Large, Research-Extensive University in the South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36.41</td>
<td>37.06</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27.33</td>
<td>28.27</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>1116</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>24.31</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>1115</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1118</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.88</td>
<td>19.88</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>1114</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1118</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.89</td>
<td>16.77</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>1113</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Predictors: (constant), ACT
- Predictors: (constant), ACT, Living Off-campus
- Predictors: (constant), ACT, Living Off-campus, Living Off-Campus with Family
- Predictors: (constant), ACT, Living Off-campus, Living Off-Campus with Family, First-Generation College Attendance Status
- Predictors: (constant), ACT, Living Off-campus, Living Off-Campus with Family, First-Generation College Attendance Status, Living On-Campus in a Discipline-Based Residential College

(table continued)
(Table 14 continued)

Dependent variable: Overall Mean Engagement Score

Variables in the Equation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$adj\ R^2$</th>
<th>$R^2$ change</th>
<th>$F$ change</th>
<th>Sig $F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>37.06</td>
<td>&lt; .001&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.220</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>18.88</td>
<td>&lt; .001&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.248</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>15.65</td>
<td>&lt; .001&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>.013&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.043&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Predictors: (constant), ACT
<sup>b</sup> Predictors: (constant), ACT, Living Off-campus
<sup>c</sup> Predictors: (constant), ACT, Living Off-campus, Living Off-Campus with Family
<sup>d</sup> Predictors: (constant), ACT, Living Off-campus, Living Off-Campus with Family, First-Generation College Attendance Status
<sup>e</sup> Predictors: (constant), ACT, Living Off-campus, Living Off-Campus with Family, First-Generation College Attendance Status, Living On-Campus in a Discipline-Based Residential College

Dependent variable: Overall Mean Engagement Score

Variables not in the Equation for Model Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>Sig $t$</th>
<th>Partial Correlation</th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HS Size</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.970</td>
<td>1.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS GPA</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.533</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.857</td>
<td>1.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.892</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.956</td>
<td>1.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.844</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>.943</td>
<td>1.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living On-Campus in Theme-Based Residential</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.851</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>.705</td>
<td>1.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictors in the Model: (constant), ACT, Living Off-campus, Living Off-Campus with Family, First-Generation College Attendance Status, Living On-Campus in a Discipline-Based Residential College

Dependent Variable: Overall Mean Engagement Score

(table continued)
(Table 14 continued)

Model Five Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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*Note: Regression model based on overall mean of dependent variable.*

Figure one depicts a histogram of standardized residuals for the dependent variable of the overall mean and indicates a normal distribution. An analysis of outliers was also completed by examining influential observations. According to Hair et al. (2009), influential data points are cases that have influence on the estimated regression line and Cook’s D is a measure of the influence of an observation on all the predicted values. No Cook’s D values exceeded the maximum parameter of 1.0.

Multivariate normality and homoscedasticity were examined through the generation of a residuals P-P plot (see Figure 2). The P-P plot illustrated that the distribution meets the assumption of normality and homoscedasticity. Collinearity was not a problem as no tolerance statistic was close to zero. The five TOL statistics ranged from .873 to .98, and the variance inflation factors (VIF) ranged from 1.020 to 1.146. Collinearity is not a usually a problem as long as TOL amounts are greater than 0.1 and VIF values are less than 10. (Hair et al., 2009).
Figure 1

Histogram Depicting Standardized Residuals for the Dependent Variable Overall Mean on the Student Academic/Social Engagement Questionnaire
Figure 2
P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals for the Dependent Variable Overall Mean on the Student Academic/Social Engagement Questionnaire
Comments Made by Respondents

At the end of the survey, respondents were invited to share anything else about how their housing arrangement had affected their academic experiences over the last year. A total of 351 comments were made that were reviewed by the researcher (see Appendix C). The first stage of the analysis was the recognition of categories and placing the categories under themes. The following are the emergent themes: 1- Self-awareness of study needs, 2 – Off-campus living equates to less time to study and participate in activities, 3 – On-campus living – roommate problems resulted in lack of study time, 4 – On-campus living – benefits are study buddies and ease of getting to class. The comments below support the themes.

1. Self-awareness of study needs
   a. Living off-campus was probably better for me in terms of concentrating on school work.
   b. Staying at home freshman year enabled me to keep on track and out of the way of unnecessary occurrences.
   c. Could not study well in dorm! I always went home to study.
   d. I liked studying at home I didn’t I have as much distraction and didn’t have to worry about bills and cleaning.

2. Off-campus living equates to less time to study and participate in activities
   a. Living off of campus has made it hard to attend extra study session and activities on campus.
   b. Living off campus greatly affected my academics in a very negative way. I was less motivated to do school work because for me to do school assignments with others I had to commute.
c. Living at home made it difficult for me to feel a part of campus life this year. I felt out of the loop and knew very little about the activities on campus.
d. I was not able to afford living on campus, and the commute I feel made things harder on me.

3. On-campus living – roommate problems resulted in lack of study time
   a. Roommates! This has a very big impact, especially on a students’ mental health.
   b. My dorm arrangements affected my academic experience because my old roommate was mentally unstable and insane-making it rather difficult to concentrate and study.
   c. My experience was awful. I got placed with a roommate who was loud and drunk all the time, and my grades suffered terribly.

4. On-campus living – benefits are study buddies and ease of getting to class
   a. I find that living on campus is a great experience for students in their first year. It provides many opportunities to succeed in courses and interact with the students whom you live with. There are times when I have to get out of the dorm in order to study due to the distractions.
   b. I think living in a residential college really helped me this past year because a lot of the students in my classes lived in my residential college.
   c. I lived in the dorms with roommates who had similar majors, and occasionally, we would help each other with our mutual classes.
   d. Academically, it was a great place to live. I lived in Acadian Hall and loved it. Very dedicated and studious group of students lived there which encouraged me to do well in school as well. Being around it all the time influenced me to try harder and do better in school.
e. It helped me focus on my studies as I had no excuses to not go to class being so close to example.

f. It was very helpful to live in the science residential college because I was always around people who were studying the same things as me and could help me if I had questions. Also the dorms functions such as supper with the scientists were cool because I got to talk to my professors outside of the class which made them seem more personable.

g. It was awesome because I met many people and really enhanced my college experience. I would recommend any incoming students to live on campus first.

h. It was easier to get to classes on time.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of housing arrangement and selected personal and academic characteristics on the engagement of full-time university freshmen. The specific research objectives were:

1. To describe the demographic and personal characteristics of freshmen students. These characteristics include:
   - Housing arrangement
   - Gender
   - Race
   - Size of high school senior class
   - High school GPA
   - ACT scores
   - First-generation college-attendance status

2. To determine the engagement level of the freshmen students as measured by the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire

3. To determine whether differences exist in the engagement level of freshmen students as measured by the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire among selected demographic and personal characteristics including:
   - Housing arrangement
   - Gender
   - Race
d. First-generation college-attendance status

4. To determine if a model exists which explains a significant portion of the variance in engagement of freshmen students as measured by the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire from the following personal and demographic characteristics:
   a. Housing arrangement
   b. Gender
   c. Race
   d. Size of high school senior class
   e. High school GPA
   f. ACT scores
   g. First-generation college-attendance status

**Procedures**

The target population for the study was defined as all freshmen students at large, public, research-extensive universities in the South. The accessible population was all full-time freshmen students at one large, public, research-extensive university in the South. The entire accessible population (n=4,583) was surveyed for the study.

Students were invited by the Office of the First Year Experience at the university to complete an electronic survey via e-mail in late April, 2010. Follow-up e-mails were sent after one week and two weeks to non-responders. A copy of the e-mail invitation and the questions from the survey can be found in Appendix B. Data collection was complete in early May 2010. A total of 1,341 (29.26%) of students responded to the survey. However, of these respondents, 221 students did not complete the entire survey, and one student’s data were unable to be obtained from the registrar’s office due to use of an e-mail address that was not on file. This resulted in a final response rate of 24.42% or 1,119 usable surveys.
Data used for this study were also collected from the aforementioned surveys and from the institution’s registrar’s office. Various items with Likert-type scales that were used to measure the amount students engaged in academic and social activities were used from the survey to create the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire. Housing arrangement was also self-reported on the survey, but all other academic and demographic information was obtained from the registrar’s office for each respondent. A summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in this chapter by research objective.

**Summary of Findings**

**Objective One**

Findings in objective one indicated that most of the respondents lived on-campus with 312 (28.4%) living in traditional residence halls, 297 (27.1%) living off-campus, 242 (22.1%) living on-campus in theme-based residential colleges, 153 (13.9%) living on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges, and 93 (8.5%) students living off-campus with family. The largest number of students was female ($n = 734, 65.7\%$). Regarding race, the majority of the students were white ($n = 908, 83.0\%$).

Respondents came from high schools with senior class sizes ranging from 11 to 1,361 students. Ninety percent of the classes had fewer than 456 students, with less than 3% having over 800 students. Ranges of senior class size were as follows: 179 (17.8\%) were in classes with 0-100 students, 285 (28.3\%) with 101-200 students, 233 (23.1\%) with 201-300, 145 (14.4\%) with 301-400, and 166 (16.5\%) with over 400 students. The mean high school GPA for the freshmen students that responded to the survey was 3.48 ($SD = 0.39$) on a 4.0 scale and the mean ACT score was a 26 ($SD = 3.46$). Of the respondents, only 89 (8.2\%) were first-generation college students.
Objective Two

Findings in objective two revealed the mean engagement scores. The individual students’ mean engagement scores ranged from 0.0 to 5.43 (on a 6.0 scale) with a mean of 2.37 and a standard deviation of 1.00. Mean scores of items on the questionnaire ranged from 0.93 to 3.97. A scale was developed to aid in the interpretation of scores as follows: 0.0 – 0.99 = not engaged, 1.0 – 2.99 = mildly engaged, 3.0 – 3.99 = moderately engaged, 4.0 – 6.0 = strongly engaged. No items on the questionnaire were identified as “strongly engaged,” one item was identified as “not engaged,” seven items were identified as “mildly engaged,” and six items were classified as “moderately engaged.” In general, the items with higher mean engagement scores were for items related to students’ interactions with other students. Lower scores were for found for students’ interactions with faculty.

Objective Three

ANOVA results revealed that there were no significant differences between males or females when compared to the overall mean engagement score of students. There were also no significant differences when race (white or non-white) was compared to the overall mean engagement scores. However, significant differences were found when the overall mean engagement score was compared to respondents by housing arrangement and first-generation college attendance status. Using post hoc comparisons, mean engagement scores for all of the on-campus housing groups (on-campus in traditional housing, on-campus in theme-based residential colleges, and on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges) were found to be significantly higher than the mean engagement scores for off-campus groups (off-campus and off-campus with family). Significant differences were also found when the overall mean engagement score was compared to respondents by first-generation college attendance status.
Mean engagements scores for the first-generation students were significantly lower than students who had one or both parents attend college.

**Objective Four**

Findings for objective four were based on a multiple regression analysis. Pearson’s Product Moment Correlations were used to measure the relationship between the predictor variables and the overall mean engagement score. Significant correlations found were: on-campus in theme-based residential colleges \( (r = .073, p = .007) \), high school senior class size \( (r = .077, p = .005) \), high school GPA \( (r = .078, p = .005) \), first-generation college college-attendance status \( (r = - .101, p = < .001) \), off-campus with family \( (r = -.103 \ p = < .001) \), on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges \( (r = .121, p = < .001) \), off-campus \( (r = -.147, p = < .001) \), and ACT \( (r = .180, p = < .001) \).

Significantly correlated variables were then entered into the regression model. ACT, high school GPA, and high school senior class size were first entered into the model. Only ACT was considered a significant predictor of engagement \( (B = .041) \). This variable explained 3.2% of the variance in engagement. Additional variables, living off-campus \( (B = -.290) \), living off-campus with family \( (B = -.380) \), first-generation college attendance status \( (B = -.282) \), and living on-campus in discipline-based residential colleges \( (B = .186) \) also found to be significant predictors. These five variables together explained a total of 6.6% of the variance in freshmen student engagement.

**Conclusions**

**Conclusion One**

The profile of the typical respondent in the current study is a white, female student living on-campus who had at least one parent that attended college. The high school senior class
size of the respondents varied. The average high school GPA was 3.48 on a 4.0 scale and the average ACT was a 26.

The demographics of the typical respondent are quite similar to those of the typical freshmen at this large, public, research-extensive university in the South during that academic year. Eighty-three percent of the respondents were white, and 17% of the respondents were non-white. This is comparable to the freshman class in which 79.24% of the students were white and 20.76% were non-white. Somewhat dissimilar are the results for gender and housing status. As for gender, 65.7% of the respondents were female and 34.3% were male, whereas 52.62% of the freshman class was female and 47.38% was male. Results for housing location revealed that 77.6% of survey respondents lived on-campus while 67% of the freshman class lived on-campus. The academic backgrounds of the groups were almost identical. The mean high school GPA for respondents was 3.48 on a 4.0 scale; it was 3.49 for the freshman class. The mean ACT score for respondents was 26, and the mean ACT score for the freshman class was 25.5. It should be noted that the entrance requirements for the institution are a 22 ACT and 3.0 GPA which reduces the variability in the range of scores. Overall, the respondents are similar to the freshmen class; and therefore, results can be generalized to the freshman class at this large, public, research-extensive university in the South.

Current research results concur with findings in the literature as far as the larger number of research participants being white and female. Studies that included such descriptions of their sample include Pike et al. (1997) with a sample that was 90% white and 70% female, Pike (1999) with a 89% white and a 70% female sample, Inkelas et al. (2006) with a sample that was 70.3% white and 60% female, and Wawrzynski and Jessup-Anger (2010) with a sample that was 92% white and 81% female. Similar mean ACT scores were also found in the two
studies that reported them. Pike et al. (1997) and Pike (1999) found the mean ACT scores of their participants to be 25.3 and 25.9 respectively, compared to the mean ACT score of 26 in the current research. Thus, respondents tend to be white females with ACT scores in the mid-20s.

**Conclusion Two**

Somewhat surprising, students are not engaged with faculty. The mean engagement score of respondents to the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire was 2.37. According to the interpretation scale designed by this researcher, the average student is only “mildly engaged.” The overall mean score is calculated from each item on the questionnaire. Five of the items on the questionnaire relate more to engagement with faculty, and eight relate more to engagement with peers. One item measured both types of interactions. Therefore, there are more peer-related items forming the mean engagement score. Furthermore, peer-related items typically had higher mean engagement scores than faculty-related items. In fact, the peer-related items were consistently classified as “moderately engaged” while the majority of the faculty-related items were classified as “mildly engaged.” Mean scores of faculty-related items ranged from 0.93-2.12 on a six-point scale while the mean scores of peer-related items ranged from 1.66 to 3.97. The faculty-related items were scored so low that even though the questionnaire has more items on it that are peer-related, the average student is still only “mildly engaged” when creating a mean score consisting of all of the items on the questionnaire. In other words, the respondents were engaged with their peers, but not with faculty members as measured by the Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire.

Comparable results are found in the literature. Pike (1999), Inkelas and Weisman (2003), and Inkelas et al. (2006) all reported lower mean scale scores for constructs measuring faculty interaction than they did for peer interaction. Furthermore, Wawrzynski and Jessup-
Anger (2010) found that out of nine scales, only two were statistically significant. One of the two was peer interactions, and the faculty-student interaction scale was one of the scales found not to be significant. Overall, students are not as engaged with faculty as they are with other students.

Conclusion Three

When it comes to housing arrangement, the current research showed that whether or not students live on-campus is the significant factor in their engagement level. Mean engagement scores for students living in discipline-based residential colleges were slightly higher than those for students living in theme-based residential colleges, and mean scores for students living in theme-based residential colleges were slightly higher than those of students living in traditional housing. However, significant differences were not found between the three groups of students living on-campus. The only significant difference found was between the groups who lived on-campus and the groups who lived-off-campus. One of the themes that emerged from student comments, off-campus living equates to less time to study and participate in activities, supports these findings as well. Specifically, one student said, “Living off of campus has made it hard to attend extra study sessions and activities on campus,” and another student noted “Living at home made it difficult for me to feel a part of campus life this year. I felt out of the loop and knew very little about the activities on campus.”

This finding is in contrast to the literature in which living-learning students were found to be more engaged than students in traditional housing (Pike et al., 1997; Pike, 1999; & Inkelas et al., 2006). This finding is comparable to the findings of Inkelas and Weisman (2003) who compared living-learning groups including curriculum-based (having an academic component), honors, and transition to students in traditional housing. They found that students
in the curriculum-based living-learning programs did differ from traditional housing students in their engagement. Although the classifications of the programs are somewhat different, this study showed no difference between the living-learning students and students in traditional housing.

In this study, significant differences were not found between men and women or being white or non-white with regards to engagement level. These results are in contrast with the results of other studies in which these comparisons were made. Inkelas et al. (2006) reported that women had more frequent interactions with peers and that African Americans and Asian Pacific Islanders had less faculty interactions. They also found that white students were most likely to engage in peer discussions and develop faculty mentors. In addition, Pike et al. (1997) found that being female had significant positive effects on academic and social integration and that ethnicity had significant negative effects on academic and social integration.

Current findings revealed that students who were considered first-generation college students were less likely to be engaged. This finding is consistent with that of Inkelas et al. (2006). Very few studies considered this variable, however. Perhaps this is due to the small number of students (n = 89, 8.2% in the current study) who currently meet this criteria.

**Conclusion Four**

The strongest predictor of engagement in the current research was students’ ACT scores. This shows that students’ academic ability upon entering college is related to their engagement in their freshman year. Because engagement was being measured by academic and social interactions with faculty and peers, this is not surprising. Perhaps engagement scores were higher for students with higher test scores because they are more likely to engage in academic activities in college. Prior research, including Pike et al. (1997), Pike (1999),
Inkelas and Weisman (2003), and Inkelas et al. (2006) used ACT or SAT scores as background variables. None of these studies tested a model using engagement as the dependent variable and test scores (ACT or SAT) as one of the independent variables.

Living off-campus was also significantly negatively correlated with engagement and a strong predictor in the model. Students are more likely to be engaged if they live on-campus. Previous studies found by this researcher did not utilize a regression model to determine which types of residential colleges or other housing choices are the best predictors of engagement. However, the finding in the current study is consistent with the determination made by Pascarella et al. (1994) in their synthesis of the literature that living on-campus is one of greatest determinants of impact for students in college.

**Recommendations**

Results in the current study showed that students in discipline-based residential colleges at this large, public, research-extensive university in the South are not more engaged than students in theme-based residential colleges or students living on-campus in traditional housing. Respondents’ overall mean engagement scores suggest that students are only “mildly engaged.” This level, which is relatively low, is only achieved because of their engagement with their peers as is evidenced by the low mean scores for items related to faculty engagement. Residential college programs that are interested in increasing the engagement level of their students really need to focus on providing quality, positive interactions with faculty. Promoting faculty contact has been recognized as an important factor in student success since Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education.” Finding specific interests of the students in the programs and having faculty interact with them in these areas would be helpful. Engagement
efforts should be focused on faculty-student interactions as students are already reporting
greater interactions with their peers.

It is evident from the results of this study that students living on-campus are more engaged
than students who live off-campus. Of course, commuters may not be as invested in the
university community as students who live on-campus, but efforts could be made to further
engage them. This would increase the engagement level of the class as a whole. Campus
administrators could look for ways to encourage these students to interact more with faculty
and other students. Programs targeted to increase interactions could be tied to classes in some
manner so that the largest number of students would be reached. For further goals,
administrators could utilize Kuh’s (2007) steps that institutions can use to engage their
students. Again, these six steps were to teach first-year students how to find and use available
resources, make the classroom a part of the community, develop a system to detect when
students needed help, provide students with a role model, make successful programs available
to larger audiences, and remove roadblocks that keep student from succeeding.

In the current study, and in the previous quantitative studies where engagement was
measured in living-learning communities, engagement is measured by the frequency of
students’ academic and social interactions with faculty and other students. Whether or not
these interactions are positive or negative is not a consideration. It is assumed that all
interactions with faculty and peers are positive. Furthermore, the extent to which a student
should be engaged is not mentioned. Is there a point at which students are so engaged that
they become enmeshed and the engagement becomes problematic? Qualitative measures
should be used in future research to address the quality of the interactions in addition to the
quantity. The frequency of interactions cannot give the total picture when it comes to the
engagement of students. Qualitative measures are needed to provide a more complete picture
of the interactions. For example, students can meet with faculty outside of class. In a quantitative study, this would contribute to the engagement score. A qualitative study will better explain the duration of the meeting, an explanation of the exchange between the student and the faculty member, and gauge the overall quality of the interaction. However, quantitative measures could be strengthened to incorporate more types of interactions with faculty and peers and how the students perceived these interactions. In addition to frequency, items could include a measure of the student’s satisfaction with the interactions and depth of involvement.

The regression model in the current study resulted in five predictors of engagement. These predictors accounted for only 6.6% of the variance in the engagement level of freshmen. The Student Academic/Social Interaction Questionnaire has some limitations. An empirically developed instrument containing multiple constructs (faculty, peer, administrator, resident hall advisor) that examines the quality of interactions as previously suggested could result in a more comprehensive measure of engagement.

Other factors are contributing to student engagement that could be included in the current model. Regrettfully, the role of personality and other characteristics specific to the individual were not considered. Every student has their own unique perspective on their academic life in college. It would be beneficial for further research to incorporate personality and other characteristics, particularly self-efficacy, into the current research and perhaps further explain the variance in engagement.

In the current study, students were surveyed upon completion of their freshman year. A longitudinal study following students throughout their college experience is recommended. Without such a study, it is impossible to measure the long-term impact of students’ housing arrangement on their engagement. Current results explain the freshman year, but it is possible
that the foundation built for the students in their freshman year could lead to increased engagement in the remainder of their college career. The freshman year is a time of adjustment and change. It may be too early to measure engagement at this time. Furthermore, for those students who made faculty and peer contacts, it is likely that they will call upon them in their future times of need.

Colleges and universities continue to create programs to increase the academic success of students. It is important to evaluate students’ actual engagement in the activities. Measuring the success of the program is beneficial, but a helpful first step is considering the level of engagement and looking for ways to increase it.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL LETTER

Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight

Unless qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, all LSU research projects involving living humans as subjects, or samples or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and it is used to record an exemption.

- Applicant, please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as parts A-E, listed below, when submitting to the IRB. Once the application is completed, please submit two copies of the completed application to the IRB Office or to a member of the Human Subjects Screening Committee. Members of this committee can be found at http://www.lsu.edu/irb/screeningmembers.shtml

- A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:
  (A) Two copies of this completed form and two copies of parts B thru E.
  (B) A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 1 & 2)
  (C) Copies of all instruments to be used.
  (D) If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
  (E) The consent form that you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information.)
  (F) Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing or handling data, unless already on file with the IRB.
  Training link: http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php

1) Principal Investigator: M.R. Betsy Garrison
   Rank: Professor

   Dept.: College of Ag       Ph: 578-2081      E-mail: bgarrison@lsu.edu

2) Co-Investigator(s): please include department, rank, phone and e-mail for each
   * If student, please identify and name supervising professor in this space

3) Project Title: Student Experiences in the CoA at LSU: A mixed-method design

4) LSU Proposal? (yes or no) No
   If Yes, LSU Proposal Number
   Also, if YES, either
   C This application completely matches the scope of work in the grant
   OR
   C More IRB Applications will be filed later

5) Subject pool (e.g., Psychology Students) Other
   *Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children <18, the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the aged, elderly). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.

6) PI Signature: [Signature]
   ** Date: [Date]
   I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changed I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU institutions in which the study is conducted. I also understand that it is my responsibility to maintain copies of all consent forms at LSU for three years after completion of the study. If I leave LSU before that time the consent forms should be preserved in the Departmental Office.

Screening Committee Action: Exempted  X  Not Exempted  Category/Paragraph

Reviewer: Kim MacGregor  Signature: [Signature]  Date: [Date]

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APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTORY E-MAIL AND SURVEY QUESTIONS

Introductory e-mail:

Dear student,

As a first year student at LSU, we would like you to share information on your experiences this past year. Please take 10-15 minutes to provide us some feedback.

There are no anticipated physical or psychological risks to participating in this confidential survey. The results of the study may be published, but no names or other identifying information will be supplied. Through your participation, we hope to improve the first year experience at LSU.

By participating in this survey you have the chance to win one of many gift certificates. Winners will be chosen randomly and awarded $25 gift certificates to places such as Serranos, Wal-Mart, Walk-ons, and more!

Thank you in advance for your participation,

Dr. Darrell Ray

Survey Questions:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. Please answer each question.

1. What best describes your housing arrangements this year?
   a. I live on-campus in a traditional residence hall
   b. I live on-campus in a theme-based residential college (Herget, Global Studies, or IT)
   c. I live on-campus in the Honors College residence hall
   d. I live on-campus in a disciplined-based residential college (Agriculture, Basic Sciences, Business or Engineering)
   e. I live off-campus, less than 5 miles
   f. I live off-campus, more than 5 miles away
   g. I commute from home or from another family member’s home.
   h. Other____________________

***If the answer to # 1 is a, b, c, or d, go to #2. If not, go to #3.

2. How often do you attend programs/events in your residence hall?
   1=never 2=less than once a month 3= at least once a month 4= more than once a month 5=weekly

3. In thinking of the past year as a student at LSU, please indicate the frequency with which you engaged in the following activities:
Questions a-e refer to your interactions with LSU faculty or staff.

0 = Never (or not answered)
1 = About once in the past academic year
2 = About twice in the past academic year (about once a semester)
3 = Three to six times in the past academic year (about once every other month during school)
4 = Six to 12 times in the past academic year (about once a month during school)
5 = Weekly during school
6 = More than once a week

a. Met with a faculty or staff member during office hours or an appointment
b. Attended a faculty or staff led discussion, lecture, or presentation outside of class
c. Met informally with a faculty or staff member outside of class or office hours
d. Discussed career plans and aspirations with a faculty or staff member
e. Discussed academic issues with a faculty or staff member outside of class or office hours

Questions f-j refer to your interactions with other LSU students.

0 = Never (or not answered)
1 = About once in the past academic year
2 = About twice in the past academic year (about once a semester)
3 = Three to six times in the past academic year (about once every other month during school)
4 = Six to 12 times in the past academic year (about once a month during school)
5 = Weekly during school
6 = More than once a week

f. Discussed career plans and aspirations with another student(s)
g. Met in an organized study group or informally with other students to prepare for an academic assignment
h. Discussed academic issues with another student(s) outside of class
i. Discussed a social concern, political issue, or world event with another student(s) outside of class
j. Developed a friendship with a student from a different background (culture, ethnicity, religion, etc.)

4. In thinking about your experience as a undergraduate student at LSU, how likely are you to (If you have already done it, please check 5):

1=Definitely no  2=Probably no   3=Probably yes  4=Definitely yes  5=Already done

a. Seek out Communication Across the Curriculum courses
b. Enroll in a service-learning course
c. Participate in community service, outside of a particular course
d. Study abroad
e. Study at another US university while attending LSU
f. Conduct research while attending LSU
g. Attend or make presentations at professional conferences in your field
h. Seek a fellowship while at LSU
i. Seek an internship in a field related to your major
j. Undertake a capstone project
k. Write an undergraduate thesis
5. Do you participate in LSU organizations? (Please check all that apply.)
   a. Student Government
   b. Fraternity/Sorority
   c. Student Media
   d. LSU Athletics
   e. Tiger Band
   f. College-sponsored clubs If yes, how many?
   g. University-sponsored clubs If yes, how many?
   h. Church-sponsored clubs If yes, how many?
   i. Other ________________________

6. In thinking about your participation in a variety of activities during the past year at LSU, indicate how involved you have been:
   0 = Never (or not answered)
   1 = About once in the past academic year
   2 = About once a semester
   3 = About once every other month during school
   4 = About once a month during school
   5 = Weekly during school
   6 = More than once a week

   a. In activities with an academic emphasis (outside of class)
   b. In activities with social emphasis
   c. In campus student organizations
   d. In an activity where you were fulfilling a leadership role

7. About how many hours do you spend in a typical week preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, preparing presentations, rehearsing and other academic activities?)
   a. None
   b. Between 1 and 5
   c. Between 6 and 10
   d. Between 11 and 15
   e. Between 16 and 20
   f. Between 21 and 25
   g. Between 26 and 30
   h. More than 30

8. Were you employed last semester?
   a. On campus, somewhat related to your intended major
   b. On campus, unrelated to your intended major
   c. Off campus, related to your intended major
   d. Off campus, somewhat related to your intended major
   e. I didn’t have a job for most/all of last semester.

9. On the average, how many hours per week did you work (for pay)?
   a. Less Than 5
   b. Between 5 and 10
   c. Between 11 and 15
10. Over the last year, I spend the majority of my time during the weekends….
   a. Going home to be with my family and/or friends
   b. Going home or away from LSU to work or volunteer.
   c. At LSU, enjoying social activities and events.
   d. At LSU, studying and working on class projects and assignments.
   e. At LSU, working or volunteering on or off campus
   f. Other, __________________________________________

11. How many miles from LSU is your permanent home?
   10 or less   11-50    51-100   101-500   Over 500

12. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
   1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Mixed feelings  4=Agree  5=Strongly Agree
   a. I enjoy my academic life at LSU.
   b. If I had a problem related to one of my classes, I would seek help from another student.
   c. My professors do not value my ideas.
   d. I feel connected to most of the students in my courses.
   e. Students in my courses are very competitive with one another.
   f. If I had a problem related to one of my classes, I would seek assistance from a University resource (Center for Academic Success, Dean’s office, etc.).
   g. I feel respected by my professors.
   h. Sometimes I feel as I don’t belong at LSU.

13. To what extent do you feel part of the University community?
   Not at All   Very Little   Somewhat   Very Much   Completely

14. How well can you?
   1=Not Well At All   2=A little well  3=Somewhat Well   4=Mostly Well   5=Very Well
   a. Finish assignments by deadlines?
   b. Study when there are other interesting things to do?
   c. Concentrate on school subjects?
   d. Take class notes of class instruction?
   e. Use the library to get information for class assignments?
   f. Plan you schoolwork?
   g. Organize your schoolwork?
   h. Remember information presented in class and textbooks?
   i. Arrange a place to study without distractions?
   j. Motivate yourself to do schoolwork?
   k. Participate in class discussions?
   l. Think critically in solving problems?
   m. Communicate your ideas verbally?
   n. Communicate ideas in formal public speaking?
   o. Communicate you ideas in written form?
15. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree to the following statements:

1=Strongly Disagree  2=Disagree  3=Mixed feelings  4=Agree  5=Strongly Agree

a. I always feel good about myself when I do well on an academic test.
b. Being good at academics is an important part of who I am.
c. Doing well on intellectual tasks is very important to me.
d. I care a great deal about performing well on tests of my intellectual ability.
e. It usually doesn’t matter to me one way or the other how I do in school.

16. Before last semester started, I expected to earn the following letter grades in the courses listed below. If not taken, please circle NT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<td>Other: ______________</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>F</td>
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</table>

17. Before last semester started, I would have been minimally satisfied with the following letter grades in the courses listed below. If not taken, please circle NT:

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<td>Other: ______________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

18. Did you earn the GPA that you needed in fall semester to keep all of your financial aid, including TOPS and scholarships?

a. Yes  b. No

19. What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?

a. Bachelor’s degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
b. Master’s degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
c. Ph.D. or Ed. D.
d. M.D., D.O., D.D.S., or D.V.M.
e. J.D. (Law)
f. B.D. or M.DIV. (Divinity)
g. Other

20. Do you have any concern about your ability to finance your college education?

a. None, I am confident that I will have sufficient funds
b. Some, but I probably will have enough funds
c. Major, not sure I will have enough funds to complete college
21. Are your parents: (Mark one)
   a. Both alive and living with each other?
   b. Both alive, divorced or living apart?
   c. One or both deceased?

22. What is the highest level of education obtained by your parents? (Circle one in each column)
   Drop down menu for mother and father-
   a. Grammar school or less
   b. Some high school
   c. High school graduate
   d. Postsecondary school other than college
   e. Some College
   f. College degree
   g. Some graduate school
   h. Graduate degree

23. Do you have siblings who lived at home at the same time you did? Yes No

24 What else would like to share with us about how your housing arrangements affected your academic experiences this year?
APPENDIX C

COMMENTS TO OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION

1.

2. -

3. ---

4. 

5. ...

6. Academically, it was a great place to live. I lived in Acadian Hall and loved it. Very dedicated and studious group of students lived there which encouraged me to do well in school as well. Being around it all the time influenced me to try harder and do better in school.

7. Always something going on so it's hard to focus.

8. Apartment one mile off campus.

9. At times, my roommate made me miserable and made it difficult for me to concentrate on my schoolwork.

10. BAD roommate.

11. Before coming to LSU I had never moved before, so moving to a completely new state and living on my own were difficult to adjust to.

12. Being around a bunch of girls can be irritating when trying to study but altogether I was usually able to find or go someplace where I was able to concentrate.

13. Being from Baton Rouge, I had the opportunity to live at home with my mom and stepdad. It was an easy transition for me.

14. Being in the BASRC really helped me meet new classmates and we have studied together.

15. Being on campus was convenient.

16. Being on campus was very convenient for those mornings that you wake up late and can still make it to class.

17. BRC has too strict of rules.

18. By living at home it is a little harder to study and it did cause a little more stress on my part to study as opposed to my on campus friends.

19. By living off campus, I felt I missed meeting new people and participating in some events.

20. Commuting 33 miles on I-12 to get to a class at 8:30 was exhausting. Besides waking up at 6:00 every day five days a week, working until 10 o'clock to pay for gas, food, books, and supplies while still trying to find time to complete homework and study was extremely difficult. Not having any social time greatly influenced my daily mood and made me think twice about college in general.
21. **commuting has been an issue from the beginning. Traffic has made me miss class more than once. I would advise incoming freshman to live on campus or at least close to it.**

22. **could NOT study well in dorm! always went home to study**

23. **Definitely liked it when my roommate moved out.**

24. **did not enjoy my roommates**

25. **didn't affect at all**

26. **Don't think it affected it too much besides not running late for class when there's traffic and not going for pointless classes.**

27. **Dorms hurt my sleep cycle and my grades. Making a peaceful study environment was hard and sometimes not possible.**

28. **dorms suck**

29. **dorms were a good place to start out college.**

30. **Driving 30 minutes to and from LSU gets old real fast.**

31. **Easier to make class.**

32. **East Laville has mold, asbestos, and mildew. It is not a substantial living environment, and the fact that LSU would allow students to live there is ridiculous. I have been sick and/or have had allergy outbreaks constantly since I have moved in. The only positive thing I can say is that I am glad that next semester West Laville will be open, like it was supposed to be this year, and that no other student will have to endure these conditions.**

33. **easy to get to class**

34. **First semester I was assigned a random roommate who could not respect my personal space and property. I would advise others in this situation to set clear rules from the start and to speak up for themselves. It will affect your grades. The roommate moved out at the beginning of the second semester and my grades have vastly improved.**

35. **Good environment, many people to ask for help if I needed it.**

36. **Hallmates and roommates made it hard to study.**

37. **hard to make new friends**

38. **Hard to study**

39. **Harder to make friends**

40. **Hated my roommate.**

41. **Having a house to myself helped me concentrate on studying when I needed to.**

42. **Herget was entirely too small. The parking was entirely too small. The air conditioning system is screwed up.**

43. **Homesick**

89
44. Horrible. Had issues with landlords and moved. They stold from me, taking everything that I owned.

45. Housing funds always worry me and it affects my academics.

46. I am an only child, so it was hard to adjust to living with a roommate and sharing my space with multiple girls, such as community bathrooms.

47. I am living with my sister who is an LSU student as well, so she has greatly helped me adjust and given me guidance regarding my academic courses.

48. I am much less likely to attend out of class functions. Also, parking is a complete cluster***in the mornings. I plan to arrive 20 minutes before my class lets in just to insure that I have sufficient time to walk from my truck to class. It also affects my willingness to do anything because of having to park far away. Basically, I’m saying this study is flawed being that it left the parking issue alone.

49. I commute so knowing all the parking lots and when special events are going to be occurring that would take away part of our commuter parking lot would be nice.

50. I could sleep later and have quiet to study.

51. I could study better that is or sure.

52. I did not have the luxury of having a compatible roommate which affected my learning. I was too busy stressing out over the incompatibility and the issues that were in the room, that could not be resolved.

53. I didn't live too far from school so I was able to drive to the library if I wanted to, or study at home if I preferred.

54. I do think that living off campus makes it a little more difficult to go to the library and study. Sometimes, it seems easier to just stay home and try to study with all the distractions.

55. I encourage everyone to live on campus. It was so convenient and influential. By living on campus, I was able to meet tons of new people, learn about on campus programs and events as well as roll out of bed ten minutes before a class! I am moving to an off-campus apartment next semester, but it is still very close. I know I will miss my residence hall!

56. I enjoyed living in the FIG and living with students in my same classes and major.

57. I enjoyed living off campus and would recommend it to others.

58. I enjoyed living off campus, but felt like I missed out on a once in a lifetime experience.

59. I enjoyed living on campus for the convenience factors. But I will say that I felt entirely disconnected from my residential hall and rarely did anything in my residential hall, instead going to others.

60. I feel as though living at home was definitely a benefit to my school work even though I commute to school daily. I enjoy living at home and knowing that both of my parents are willing to help me with whatever I need, including my school work. It doesn't bother me that I have to drive back and forth to school, and in a way I think it helps me stay on task. I go to school, do what I need to do, and come home to finish what I need to get done. It helps that I have my own room and somewhere that I always know will be quiet when I need to do work or study.

61. I feel that I didn't get to study as well because of the distractions a roommate can cause.

62. I felt living on campus was much more convenient than I think living off campus would have been.

63. I felt most out of place in my own dorm - I am a Mass Comm major living in the ERC because Res Life and ODS did not
comply with their promised accommodations. The social and academic events were geared toward engineers and we were on completely different academic schedules so I felt very out of place this year.

64. I felt that living off campus (Tiger Plaza Apts) was the better decision. However, I have missed on some key social experiences.

65. I felt the small space caused me to turn in assignments late and become more stressed because in such a small room, there is always something going on and it’s hard to tell your roommate you have to study and have them not make any noise.

66. I find that living on campus is a great experience for students in their first year. It provides many opportunities to succeed in courses and interact with the students whom you live with. There are times when I have to get out of the dorm in order to study due to the distractions.

67. I found that living in the BASC Res College helped a great amount. It was easier to connect to the people in it, as well as to get together for study sessions.

68. I generally could study in my dorm room and get tasks accomplished. A few times, friends would come visit and it would be hard to study; but that can happen anywhere.

69. I had a great roommate and that did not effect my studies but the dorm in general was so loud that it made it difficult for me.

70. I had a terrible experience living in the residence hall during my first semester. I sent a letter explaining my issues with ResLife to FYE, ResLife, and the Dean. I appreciate that FYE took the time to respond to my letter, even though the gist of it stated “I’m sure someone else will take care of this matter” because neither ResLife nor the Dean’s office ever responded. At least once a month, I receive an e-mail from LSU asking me to complete a survey for one department or another. I am under the impression that surveys help you determine what areas you need to improve. Personally, I think the letter I sent will tell you more than this survey because I pinpoint specific issues I had to deal with in the residence halls, and I’m sure that I am not the only one who has had these experiences.

71. I had awesome RAs! :)

72. I had fun

73. I had major problems with my current roommate smoking illegal substances in my hall.

74. I had my own apartment in the fall but tuition was too expensive for me to continue to live there so I had to move out and in my father’s home, who transferred to LSU when I got accepted.

75. I HATE HERGET

76. I HATE LIVING IN MILLER. Girls are too loud and inconsiderate. Very hard to concentrate and SLEEP.

77. I have a twin. She moved home after the first semester so it was hard being away from home.

78. I have grown so much by living off campus. It was my first year on my own and I made every single mistake possible throughout my first semester at LSU. I came back from winter break with a brand new attitude and a lot of experience up my sleeve. I haven’t asked my parent’s for money once, I’ve stopped drinking so much, met an insane amount of amazing people, learned how to budget my money etc. I basically learned a lot from all of the horrible mistakes I made my first year. I continue to love being at LSU more and more.

79. I heart LSU
I highly disliked my roommate. Did not try to keep the noise level low while I tried to study, do homework, and sleep.

I honestly felt that living off campus made my life easier than living on campus (First year dorm). LSU’s lack of parking for all passes (1’s and 3’s) significantly deters me from wanting to live on campus. The limited time ranges for the 459 and, the now open, 5 also is a huge determent. At my house, at many of my friend’s houses as well, dinner is eaten around 7pm or 8 pm. 459 and the 5 pick up all their food around 6:45 and close at 7pm. This is ridiculous. I am able to make food adequately at my apartment at 9pm if I need. This brings me to my next point that the fire alarms in campus dorms go off consistently when someone ‘attempts’ to cook/bake in the dorm kitchens. These are problems LSU needs to address if they want to: 1. Require 1st year students to live on campus. 2. Encourage students such as myself to live in their equally expensive dorms compared to my apartment right off campus.

I joined the Health Science FIG thinking that it would offer a lot of great experiences to those of us involved, but everyone I have spoken to about the matter is extremely disappointed with the FIG program.

I like living with my parents. It has helped me to not worry as much about how I’m going to pay for food and things like that.

I like my space.

I like studying at my house better than at school!

I liked living at home.

I liked living in the residence hall with a lot of people I had class with.

I liked living on campus. It was nice to have my classes so close.

I liked staying at home. I didn’t have as much distraction and didn’t have to worry about bills or cleaning.

I live 45 minutes away.

I live at home. Home is 25 miles from LSU. In post-Katrina Baton Rouge traffic it takes an hour going and coming which cuts into study time.

I live in Sherwood Forest, which is a 30 minute drive to and from LSU. I’m making A’s and B’s in all my classes and it has not impeded on my ability to do well in college.

I live in the ERC and I really wish they had a few public computers for those who just need to check something on the internet really quick. I love the big screen TV in the social room & the white board is very, VERY useful. The kitchen can be quite cold but it’s not that big of a deal. However, in the social room, I do wish there was an extra table with chairs for more study room. Other than that, the ERC is an amazing place. I am associated with Phi Sigma Pi, and honors coeducational fraternity and I think it’s the best thing I’ve done for myself in college. For incoming freshman, I recommend them to join a group, an organization, fraternity/sorority, or just a club in order to feel involved and important.

I live in Tiger Manor apartments and I like it because it’s close to campus and provides a quiet place to study. I lived in the dorms during the summer of 2009 and found it hard to concentrate when preparing for tests.

I live off campus and the construction made the bus system hard to get their route complete on time which would make me late for class.

I live right by campus off of Burbank. I had no problems getting to school by the bus or riding with my roommates. I live with my two best friends from high school. We help each other with material that we don’t understand. If we get distracted by one another, we find another place to study.
97. I lived about 30 minutes away from LSU and had 7:30 classes every morning, other than wanting classes a little bit later I had no problem with my housing arrangements.

98. I lived at home with my parents; we have a great relationship.

99. I lived in an apartment off campus with a roommate who attends BRCC. It was a good experience.

100. I lived in McVoy, and it was not a very good place to study. My room was located across the hall from the air conditioning unit, and it was very loud and made it hard to concentrate while studying. Also, my room had very extreme temperature changes: it was either extremely cold or extremely hot.

101. I lived in the co-ed floor in Blake Hall, and I think it greatly helped my academic experiences this year. I enjoyed having both males and females to socialize and work with. Hopefully the university will continue this housing arrangement.

102. I lived in the dorm first semester and it was harder for me to concentrate on studying. However, it was easier for me to be motivated to go to class. Now that I live in an apartment off campus I find it much easier to study but harder to want to get up and go to class.

103. I lived in the dorms with roommates who had similar majors, and occasionally, we would help each other with our mutual classes.

104. I lived off campus, and enjoyed it

105. I lived off campus, but still close to school and I still maintain that it's important that I don't live too far from school because it is incredibly convenient.

106. I lived on river rd but no buses to pick up students from there to school and I did not have a car so I faced a lot of difficulties coming to school on time. Please am having a lot of difficulties with school because I have to work out of school and don't have enough time to study and do my homework. Most of the times I fail to do my homework because I have to go to school. Please if someone could help me have a job on campus I will be very grateful since I will be able to study while at work and work just for 20 hours a week. Thanks

107. I lived with someone I didn't get along with. It was awful.

108. I love living at home. All the students at LSU party everyday so it's great to be far away from that! Plus, LSU's dorms are ridiculously expensive, tiny, dirty, noisy, require you to share bathroom facilities with others which is totally not hygienic, have very minimal security, force you into a meal plan, and do not conduct proper checks for drug and alcohol use.

109. I love LSU, I didn't work very hard this spring semester and it might affect my financial aid situation.

110. I love the Basic Science Res College, living in it was a great experience that I definitely recommend.

111. I loved living in East Laville because I found the dorm to be very quiet, so I could easily study in my room.

112. I loved living in Herget - I thought it was a great environment to live in

113. I loved living on campus. I thought it was very convenient. Meal plans are entirely overpriced, though. We should be allowed to rent books, instead of buying them. It is very costly, and I was unable to afford many of the books that were required. SLU is allowed to rent books. I think LSU should set up a system similar to this as well.

114. I loved Miller

115. I loved my dorm, but the other roommates were very loud. And because I lived on the first floor the corridor slammed
all the time, making it loud.

116. I partied a lot.

117. I really believe that freshman should stay on campus because it will make the transition easier.

118. I really enjoyed living off campus because I had more privacy and more freedom, but I feel as if I missed out on activities that students living in the dorms experienced.

119. I really enjoyed living off campus, having my own space to get away and enjoy the little time off I have from school work to spend time with the people I love.

120. I really was not nearly as satisfied living on campus as I thought I would be.

121. I rent a house off campus, going to class when there were large breaks in between was difficult to sit on campus.

122. I think having an off campus apartment gave me the space I needed to be alone when I wanted to be. If I wanted to study by myself, or if I got peeved at my roommate, I could just go to my room. I wouldn't have been able to do that with a dorm room, and my personal space matters to me a great deal.

123. I think I would have done a lot better in school if I would have lived in an apartment. There was always too much going on in my room to focus when I needed too, whether it was good or bad.

124. I think if I would have lived on-campus I would have met more people.

125. I think living in a dorm your first year of college is a great, unforgettable experience. I have so many new friendships and great memories from living in the dorm.

126. I think living in a residential college really helped me this past year because a lot of the students in my classes lived in my residential college.

127. I think living in an apartment away from campus has bettered my education and study time because I have an area to myself when I need to focus and study.

128. I think living off campus is better because I have my own private room to be able to study and focus in.

129. I think that having a room-mate may affect my academic success. My room-mate often stays up later than I do and wakes up earlier, and it affects my ability to sleep. I think that I would be able to get more sleep if I did not have a room-mate. When I am sleep-deprived it makes it harder to concentrate in class.

130. I think that living off-campus had it's ups and downs. Getting to class would have been easier if I lived on-campus, but I enjoyed life in my apartment as well.

131. I think the desks should be bigger in the dorms.

132. I used to take the bus and sometimes it would break down and make me late for class and test.

133. I very much enjoyed this year and plan to stay for all 4 years.

134. I was accidentally placed in the honors dorm, and the kids on my floor, and my next door neighbors were constantly LOUD and obnoxious, affecting my studies during the day/night.

135. I was not able to afford living on campus and the commute I feel made things harder on me.
I was not able to study in my dorm.

I was unable to focus in the dorms, very much did not enjoy living in them, and was relieved to move home after the first semester was over.

I was very happy with my living arrangements. I was comfortable, I met new people, and I was close enough to walk to my classes and enjoy campus activities.

I was waitlisted for a dorm, and thus, was forced to live off campus.

I wish I could have lived within walking distance.

I wish I lived closer to school than 10 minutes away.

I wish it wasn’t so expensive to live on campus. I feel like I could be more involved if I didn’t live 25 minutes away.

I wish that I would have lived in the dorms for my first year at LSU.

I would like to pursue a scholarship for a living arrangement for next semester.

I would study between classes and after classes in the library. My house was always too noisy. I still made a 3.0.

If I had chosen to live with friends, I probably would have done better in school.

I’m naturally more stressed than the average human and after taking 18 hours this spring semester and not being able to keep up with it and make the grades I intended added more stress and the confinement of the dorm makes it even worse. Almost to an unbearable degree. It’s nice for freshman to be this close to their classes, but it does add stress to whatever else is bothering you.

It affected my sleeping with having a roommate with opposite goals for school and their social life.

It has been very noisy outside my dorm and that has affected my sleep very frequently. There are usually people out there partying until 2 and 3AM making lots of noise. Also, we have had fire alarms on average once a month, all late at night.

It has helped very much living very close to campus.

It has made it a bit hard to get to classes on time, but it’s a lot cheaper.

It helped me focus on my studies as I had no excuses to not go to class being so close to campus.

It helped me make connections that I hope will last a long time

It helped me learn the campus and meet new people. It was very convenient since all of my classes are on campus.

It helps a lot living with my parents. I have less to worry about money wise and I have a support group that will help me reach my goals and potential.

It is easy living on campus because everything I need is only 5 minutes away.

It is expensive and uses up most of my money.

It is inconvenient, but cheap to live at home. Parking for commuters is TERRIBLE. And traffic sucks.
159. It is not possible to study on the fifth floor of Miller, the girls are way too loud and no one does ANYTHING about it!!!!!

160. It made it easier to keep in touch with friends and get to class faster.

161. It made me consider transferring back to my home state

162. It really allowed me to meet people who I like and are in the same classes as me.

163. it sucked

164. it was awesome because i met many people and really enhanced my college experience. I would recommend any incoming students to live on campus first

165. it was easier to get to classes on time.

166. it was easy to learn the buildings around campus, and to walk to them. Everything I needed was near by.

167. It was fun

168. It was good for freshman year.

169. It was good. My AC unit never got cleaned so I had to get all the mold out myself. I asked three separate times for a light to get fixed but saw no one so fixed that myself.

170. it was great to be really close to campus but overall I think it was a waste of money. More than likely I will move back home for the fall.

171. It was great.

172. It was hard to study because I like to study late and my roommate goes to bed incredibly early.

173. It was hard to study in my building with all the "night owls." It was also hard to get a good amount of sleep any day of the week.

174. it was nice

175. It was nice

176. It was nice to be so close to everything and getting to walk around campus to get to class. I think I focused more on school because I was constantly on campus.

177. It was very convenient and enjoyable experience to live on campus.

178. It was very helpful to live in the science residential college because I was always around people who were studying the same things as me and could help me if I had questions. Also, the dorm functions such as supper with the scientists were cool because I got to talk to my professors outside of class which made them seem more personable.

179. its been ok

180. It’s extremely convenient to jump out of bed at 7:25 and make it to my 7:30 Physics class. :) Working on campus is pretty great too.

181. it’s hard to study with a loud roomate. Develop more single person dorm rooms

182. It’s harder to focus in an apartment because of the many distractions. I would suggest that first year students study in a
place where there no distractions, such as the library, and one can solely focus on the task at hand.

183. Its very close to school

184. Less stress from living at home helped out with school.

185. lived off campus

186. Lived on campus; kept me close to my classes and activities; was convenient; living on campus again next year

187. Living off of campus has made it hard to attend extra study sessions, and activities on campus. I would love to stay on campus but financially i would not be able to.

188. Living as far from LSU as I do is a bit stressful. I lose at least an hour of my time just commuting to and from school every day which tends to have an effect on my grades and stress level.

189. Living at home allowed me to focus on my studying more often.

190. Living at home is nice, but I don't feel like I'm a part of LSU at all, other than going to class.

191. Living at home made it difficult for me to feel apart of Campus Life this year. I felt out of the loop and knew very little about the activities on campus.

192. Living at home was fine but I was involved in 2 non-fault accidents commuting to class in the morning and afternoon. The parking for commuters is at times unacceptable.

193. Living away from home and away from the majority of my friends helped me to be able to focus on the tasks at hand. If I would have been closer to my friends, I would have been susceptible to doing activities with them rather than school work.

194. Living away from my parents didn't affect me academically

195. Living away from them has made me far more responsible and made learning and organizing much easier because I am able to things my way on my time.

196. Living close to campus is a huge distraction because there is too much going on, such as going out and whatnot

197. Living far from campus makes it difficult to study as much as needed

198. Living in house off-campus with my best friend has been an amazing experience. I don't think that living in dorms should be mandatory for freshman. I understand the benefit of meeting people, and being part of the LSU community however, I have many friends at LSU and I live off campus. I also find it easier to study in my home than it is for my friend in their dorms because in the dorms there are always people going out and some kind of activity going on to distract you.

199. Living in a little dorm with a roommate was hard getting used to. Two people in one room is hard and crowded.

200. Living in a residence hall, I had some trouble studying/finishing assignments due to noise.

201. Living in the biological sciences dorm gave me the opportunity of being able to study with a lot people who share the same interests and classes as me.

202. Living in the dorm is not ideal and is hard most of the time. It's weird not having much privacy, going to bed at different times, trying to study while your roommate is talking on the phone/playing music, etc. Dorm life is very cost effective for the university but isn't practical for normal living in my opinion. However, it has broken down some barriers and has
taught me to sacrifice and be selfless and to be accommodating and courteous when I don't feel like it at times. I've learned a lot about how to care about others more which is good. Overall the dorms have taught me a lot, but having the privacy my own room in an apartment would be more ideal in my opinion.

203. Living in the dorms was really hard to focus on schoolwork with all of the distractions of other students, and living in such close proximity with another caused me to procrastinate more especially if the other was not doing schoolwork, etc.

204. Living in the Pentagon was a frustrating situation that affected my academic experience. Although cleaning ladies would come, the dorm always smelt badly. The R.A. was not sensitive to the needs of the students in the stack, and let people play very loud music at all times of the night and morning. Outstandingly trashy events such as people setting off the fire alarm as a result of smoking marijuana, would occur in my stack and out in the open. The worst event was when drunk residents of the pentagon kicked dents and made footprints all over my car which was parked right outside of the pentagon, signalling poor patrol of security personnel.

205. Living in the residence hall really helped me to keep on top of my homework. Being surrounded by other students who were doing school work motivated me to work on my school work also. I think if I had lived elsewhere or at home I would not have gotten as much done.

206. Living off campus greatly affected my academics in a very negative way. I was less motivated to do school work because for me to do class assignments with others I had to commute.

207. Living off campus was a good experience, especially to get away from the nonsense that some people have to deal with while living in a dorm. However, I would have liked to live in a dorm to get to know more people and be more exposed to the community. I do appreciate my own room/kitchen/den etc...

208. Living off campus was probably better for me in terms of concentrating on school work.

209. Living off campus, I was able to concentrate more on my studies and homework, because there were very little distractions. It did separate me from the LSU student community, but I was able to focus more and obtain a 4.0 GPA. Living off campus also helped me learn how to manage my homework and study time in a more efficient manner. Being farther away from campus than other students, I spent more of my time driving to and from school. This meant that I had to learn to manage my time and not wait until the last minute to study and complete my assignments.

210. Living off-campus, I missed out on a lot of things, and it was hard to drive back and forth 2-3 times a day to LSU.

211. Living on Campus kept me involved. My only complaint is living in such close quarters kept me from getting close to the girls who live on my floor.

212. Living on campus made it easier for me to get places to study or attend classes. It is definitely convenient.

213. Living on campus made it easier to take advantage of the resources and study/review sessions the majority of my teachers help. Living off campus, I would have not been motivated to attend these.

214. Living on campus my first semester made it easier to meet people on campus and learn my way away.

215. Living on campus was a definite plus in getting involved, and helped my first year immensely.

216. Living on campus was convienient.

217. Living on campus was very convenient, however, living in a fraternity house presented many distractions that required a conscious effort to avoid.

218. Living outside of 5 miles from campus makes it hard to participate in as many extracurricular activities as you would like. But I still managed to do so. I think getting involved in the Baptist Collegiate Ministry allowed me to do so. Making
friends and connections with people on campus makes your freshman year more enjoyable as well as more fulfilling as far as how much you can do. Go Tigers.

219. Living with a friend as a roommate caused unwanted tension at home and created a constant distraction.

220. Living with another person in the same room somewhat made it harder to do well in my academics but did help me with social life because of the fact that we both have the same friends. I am glad I lived in the dorms first because I definitely met a lot of people because of it.

221. Living with another person makes it hard to study in peace at times, especially if they have different academic aspirations than yourself.

222. Living with people in similar majors to mine was a big help (Engineering Res College).

223. Living with people that are in the same classes as me helped a lot to keep me focused.

224. Lots of fun and Tiger Land.

225. LSU needs to care more about students who are from another state who get stuck on campus. LSU does the rock bottom minimal to help these students get injected into Campus Life. Most students are already there with their cliques, kids not from Louisiana are outsiders. LSU is a commuter school with cliques. Not recommended for out of state students.

226. LSU needs to do more to promote diversity and attract more academically-motivated students.

227. Miller is horrible.

228. Miller needs renovations. The bathrooms especially are out of date.

229. My brother made excellent grades, and that pushed me to make optimal grades.

230. My dorm arrangements affected my academic experience because my old roommate was mentally unstable and insane-making it rather difficult to concentrate and focus. She was manipulative, manic-depresssant, and just completely unstable. Had I had a different roommate it would've highly bettered my grades.

231. My experience was awful. I got placed with a roommate who was loud and drunk all the time, and my grades suffered terribly.

232. My family is amazing. They encourage me to do well in school, but they do not put a lot of pressure on me.

233. My house allows for a quiet and calm place to study although distractions are plenty. Although I am "off-campus" I still feel involved with the LSU community.

234. My house was not very far away from the school and there's bus service from the school so it has not affected my academics yet. But I felt it was such a waste of time when it took me about an hour to go to school and come back home everyday...

235. My housing arrangements affected my academic experiences this year very positively. My roommate and I were randomly matched, but we happen to share many of the same values.

236. My housing arrangements had no affect on my academic experiences this year.

237. My housing arrangements in no way affected my academic experiences this year.

238. My housing arrangements put a strain on my academic experience this year. It made it difficult for me to find a study
place and I was encountered with many distractions.

239. My housing arrangements with exroommate made me get so far behind in school that i have to take summer school. I dropped from 18 hours to 10 hours because my roommate partied too often.

240. My living arrangements have not affected my grades or how I value school.

241. my mom works two jobs

242. My mother is extremely sick. Hospital visits and weekend commutes kept me away from academics.

243. My neighbors were very loud the first semester but I didn't really complain about it to the RA. This semester I was fed up and they received several warnings and I have not lost any sleep because of them since.

244. My off campus experience was not a total disaster but life would have been much simpler if I had lived on campus. The university pushes for the freshmen to live on campus but I think it should be a requirement.

245. My parents, brothers and sisters are proud of me and my dad is especially supportive. This helps me to do well in school.

246. My room flooded twice which caused me to take some of my own time to help clean up and get everything fixed.

247. My roommate and I are cordial, but have not become friends over the course of the year. This has put a strain on my academic and social experience because I never want to be in my room.

248. My roommate in the fall semester did not come back in the spring semester, so I had a 2 person room to myself. I was more able to plan my time in my dorm without having to worry about bothering my roommate.

249. My roommate is a jack*** and he never leaves the room. My RA's constantly suggest we just try to get along but when the guy continuously eats my food, goes through my personal things, and refuses to allow me to have any alone personal time (I live over 700 miles away from here, there is no going home for me; where as he live five minutes down the road) I feel as if my personal needs are being ignored and pushed off by my RAs. I understand that he has just as much a right to the use of our room as I do but the guy doesn't exercise any personal hygiene methods. His dirty clothes pile spills over to my side of the room, he doesn't shower, and the room has a constant stench that is caused by him which is made worse when he turns off the air conditioning IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY!!!!!!! I am no neat freak myself, but i do keep my clothes clean, I shower, and keep my side to a minimum build up of clutter. I'd like to have people over to study, invite my girlfriend over to watch a movie, or just relax in my room but due to his complete lack of manners and disregard for any self improvement I cannot. The smell is enough to drive any one of god's creatures away. These conditions have drastically effected my study habits, my grades, and my social interactions. I cannot concentrate in a messy space that smells like a full portapotty and looks like one too.

250. my roommate never stayed in our dorm so it was really easy for me to find a quiet place to study.

251. My roommate was never in the room, while it was quiet, it was very boring and I didn't feel happy all the time, it didn't really affect my grades but i think that it definitively affected my happiness.

252. My roommates were a large distraction for me.

253. My step-father committed suicide at the end of December and this greatly affected generally everything involving college.

254. n/a

255. N/A
256. NA

257. need maids.

258. Neighbors are sometimes to loud at night to sleep well/study

259. Nicholson is the worst campus apartment I have ever lived. Too dirty, and the rent fee keeps on increasing!!!

260. noise

261. Noise in the hall distracted me while I was studying.

262. Noises from pipes in East Lavelle got very distracting at some points and disrupted studying.

263. none

264. None

265. none, although I do appreciate the lsu bus system coming to my apartment!

266. None.

267. Not a lot of quiet places to study.

268. Not enough privacy

269. nothing

270. Nothing

271. Nothing about my living arrangements affected my academic experiences. I just need to study and work harder.

272. Nothing much

273. Nothing other than that it would be nice if we didn't have window units in our dorms.

274. Nothing, it was pretty much great!

275. nothing.

276. Nothing.

277. Nothing. good experience

278. Nothing; that is all.

279. off campus- made me feel more independent and responsible

280. On campus housing is the best thing that could have happened to me my freshman year. Convenience is the best luxury. Also, when it is the middle of the night and you are STILL studying and you feel like no one else is sharing your pain, all you have to do is walk in the lobby, and someone will ALWAYS be there.

281. Overall, good experience but the showers always had cold water, and my roommate had terrible hygiene.

282. People coming back in the hall ***faced at 2:00AM every Thursday night tended to keep me from sleeping very well. It
could have been better if my RA had done anything about it, but I'm assuming either he sleeps like a rock or he's scared of conflict. If I had to make an educated guess though, I would side with the latter.

283. People in the dorm are not respectful of other people most of the time

284. People on our hall were usually loud and obnoxious. If I tried to study in my room I could usually hear the people next door.

285. People running down the hall screaming can be distracting.

286. People were disrespectful of quiet hours, disrupting my sleep for a lot of last semester and making it hard to concentrate on my studies.

287. Perfectly fine

288. Price was difficult to afford, but offered greater privacy and independence.

289. Quiet Hours were not enforced.

290. RA needs to do a better job of enforcing rules to allow better environment to study and sleep

291. Rent off campus can get very pricey. I think that price gouging should be watched by the government/University.

292. Requiring a meal plan, on which the average student loses 500 dollars, is absurd, especially given the fact that many are already struggling to pay for school.

293. Room mate is a distraction. I want to live by myself.

294. Roommate was loud and distractive.

295. Roommate issues and apartment management issues at my apartment have affected my grades, and I believe that if the dorms were as nice as, say the BRC or ERC, then more people, including myself might live on campus. I also think that you should have more one-bedroom options available on campus, even if you charge more for them. I was considering moving to an on-campus apartment, but I found out how few one-bedrooms were available and changed my mind.

296. Roommate issues.

297. Roommate matching would have been better than just sticking you with someone. I had a lot of trouble with roommate problems in the beginning which reflect on my school work.

298. Roommate moved out. Doing more work now that he's gone.

299. Roommate was horrible to the point where I couldn't relax in my own room.

300. Roommate was not very good.

301. Roommate was terrible. Disruacted my sleep and study time. Very rude and inconsiderate.

302. Roommates caused a major distraction to my academic success.

303. ROOMMATES! This has a VERY big impact, especially on a students mental health.

304. Since I didn't live on campus, I didn't have the time and resources available on campus. I believe I would have performed
better living on campus

305. since i have moved into my own apartment, i feel it a little easier to study

306. since i lived close to campus, i felt like a part of LSU without being too overwhelmed by the atmosphere.

307. Staying at home freshman year enabled me to keep on track and out of the way of unnecessary occurrences.

308. Study Rooms in the BRC where very good for studying time, or group discussions about homework. Was able to get the help I needed in some of my classes by living with other people who could help.

309. The 30 - 45 minute drive to and from school, while expensive, gives me time to clear my head and get my mind into the right setting for school or home. Also, living at home with my parents, it is harder to just skip class, or oversleep.

310. The air conditioning system should be able to be changed in each dorm.

311. the bus system is not that reliable

312. The convenience of on-campus housing is great, but something about the set up is just not for me. I can't wait to get off campus next semester.

313. The courtyard in the pentagon is very distracting; whenever I am bored I end up going outside. I am looking forward to living in ECA where i can focus more on my studies.

314. The desks provided in my dorm (I stayed in Jackson) were very small and made it difficult to spread out my study materials (laptop, text book etc), because of this I found it difficult to study in my dorm room and often went to a relative's house to study before a test.

315. The dorm (McVoy) walls were too thin, it was noisy 24/7.

316. The dorm was too loud for me to study or do homework, and I rarely get to go to sleep when I want or have a full night's sleep, because people are always screaming and being loud, so it negatively affected my grades.

317. the dorms were too small! And the living arrangements were not satisfying at all. I tried to leave the dorm as much as possible, partially due to poor living arrangements.

318. The dorms are cramped and filthy, but the community more than compensates for those shortcomings.

319. The dorms are so dirty that cleaning them doesn't even look like it's clean. It's disgusting.

320. The dorms, especially res colleges are awful, and I would NEVER ever recommend them to anyone.

321. The elevators always broke, the card machines don't work, parking is horrible, the vending machines are never full past tuesday, and a fire drill should never take an hour and a half. never. that was completely unacceptable.

322. The ERC has hardly any water pressure.

323. The fact that I lived off campus provided me with a place where I could get away from school when I needed to.

324. The housing arrangements are ok. Wireless internet is horrible in the rooms.

325. The housing has helped me adjust from high school to college life.

326. The janitors were too loud in the morning and disrupted me while I was trying to sleep. The yell across the halls and
wake everyone up.

327. The lsu busses were a big help but I wish they were more stable

328. The nice study rooms provided a more enticing environment to study.

329. The noise made my fellow residents in Herget was a bit distracting, but other than that I had a great experience.

330. The RA hardly enforced noise restrictions after the time that was agreed on. I repeatedly lost sleep throughout the year because of neighbors in the dorm blaring music.

331. The random unnecessary fire alarms were very distracting

332. The rule to stay on campus for the first year should continue to be keep in place.

333. The rules and consequences of breaking them do not reflect each other. There is too little freedom living on campus. Amy Cabness, Residential Life Coordinator of the Horse Shoe, is unprofessional when dealing with residents and does not handle discipline issues correctly. Having to swipe your tiger card to enter the hall bathroom is unnecessary and unacceptable. Fellow residents do not treat the study areas in the residential halls respectfully.

334. The showers on first floor Herget never worked. It was a pain. Plus it's always too hot or too cold in my dorm. And during winter when it was 45 degrees outside, it would be 25 degrees in my dorm. Literally; this is not stated in exaggeration. But the 459 is amazing and I love the food they provide. And the UREC is really good even though it needs to get another heavy bag to box on.

335. There needed to be less noise so that everyone could find places to study, especially during midterms and finals.

336. There were too many fire alarms. RHA should have installed some sort of security system to catch the people that caused the alarms. There were around ten false fire alarms this year.

337. They haven't

338. they helped me focus since i was so near to campus

339. They were excellent.

340. Thinking about paying bills takes a toll.

341. This first year at LSU, i lived by myself in an apartment. I feel like i missed out on several things by not living in the dorms, but i also was able to focus on my school work by living by myself.

342. too many noises are disturbances happening on each floor made it very difficult to study

343. Traffic is bad at times!

344. Traffic sucks!

345. Trash pickup in the middle of the night severely impacted my sleeping.

346. tryng to study in peace and quite

348. very noisy, hard to concentrate in small space. felt cluttered.

349. wasn't a very good environment to study always found myself distracted in my dorm

350. wasting as much time in transit as spent in class.

351. Well last semester I lived in the Pentagon, and all the crazy people live there. Something has to be done about how to run that place. What I really dislike even though it has nothing to do with housing is the dining hours given by LSU. Dinner ends too early; there is still sun light at 7 PM.

352. Well, even though it makes getting to social events much harder, in all I am fairly satisfied with it. I would probably be a lot more distracted by all the possibilities of living on campus and let my grades slip if I didn't have to drive to and from home for an hour and 30 minutes total each day.

353. Well, I had a junkie dormmate and a roommate whose sexuality nobody was able to figure out. Given the conditions, I feel lucky to be doing as good as I am.

354. when i did not live in the dorm (august-february), even though i had a dorm room, i did not study. it is easier to study in the dorm

355. When I moved in I did not have a clear idea what it was going to be like. Here things change so much that it's interesting to reflect where I began and look at where I am now.

356. When my roommate plays loud music, I find it hard to study, so rather than ask him to turn it down, I usually go to the library. It's usually silent there.
VITA

Jody Allen Hammett graduated from Louisiana State University with a bachelor’s degree in psychology in May, 1999. Shortly after graduation, he accepted a position as an Admissions Officer in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at LSU. While working in Admissions, he also attended graduate school at LSU. He completed his master’s degree in the School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development in May 2002. He continued working in Admissions as the Assistant Director, overseeing the evaluation of credentials and counseling areas, until April 2006 when he joined the College of Agriculture.

Jody is currently the Director of Student Services in the College of Agriculture. His responsibilities include overseeing academic services for students in the college from recruitment to graduation. He also serves as the Associate Rector for the Agriculture Residential College. In this role, he works with the Rector and other faculty members to provide linked courses and academic activities to the students living in the hall. In addition, he teaches an introduction course to students in the residential college.

At the December 2010 commencement, he will receive the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in human resource education.