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The Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience: A Case Study Exploring the Development of a Student Success and Retention Program

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THE HOLISTIC UNDERGRADUATE GROWTH EXPERIENCE:
A CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
STUDENT SUCCESS AND RETENTION PROGRAM

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

Educational Leadership and Research:
Higher Education

by

Bianca B. Teats

B.S., Louisiana State University, 2011

M.S., Louisiana State University, 2013

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my Grandfather, John A. Sims

and

To my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Teats

Without you, there is no me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Giving honor to my Lord and Savior for without Him, I never would have made it. He was and remains my light and my saving grace in my times of sorrow and celebration. Thank You for granting me the strength and wisdom to continue to push forward and especially for getting me to this point.

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ABSTRACT

This case study depicted the development and implementation of the Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience (HUGE) student success and retention program that spans the second year of undergraduate study to graduation. This study set out to expand student development theory and practice to include an international perspective, specifically one from the Middle East. An increased amount of attention was dedicated to examining the development of the aforementioned program than to its actual implementation in order to provide a more comprehensive framework. Based on the findings associated with this study, recommendations were made not only to the host institution for the study, but also to administrators, program directors, faculty, and potential employers on how they can assist in the successful facilitation of the HUGE program. The findings associated with this study included the development and strengthening of relationships with potential employers, along with community and international organizations, and other universities around the world. It is also recommended that communication and collaboration be enhanced while addressing the issue of balance between academics and co-curricular activities. Furthermore, more opportunities should be created to expose students to other cultures.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In the field of student affairs, professionals are often tasked with finding and developing solutions for myriad situations and problems that arise for their respective institutions and for the individual students they may encounter on a day-to-day basis. Some prominent concerns that have plagued the profession include retention and student success. An extensive list of theories and models have been developed to combat and ensure that students are retained and graduate (Carpenter, 2011; Chickering, 1969; Marcia, 1994; Patton et al., 2016; Rhatigan, 2000; Rodgers, 1990). However, even with the programming options that scholars in the field have proposed (University of South Carolina, 2016), gaps still remain in the research literature, as evidenced by the minimal increase in student retention and success.

Much emphasis has been placed on the transition from high school to college and the final year of study leading up to graduation (Tobolowsky, 2008). However, students in their second and third year of study are often overlooked, resulting in a higher rate of attrition for second-year students (Bisese & Fabian, 2006; Jordan, 2011). While it is extremely important to concentrate on and ensure the successful transition of students from high school to college, it is just as important to remain vigilant after the first year. Students' needs will inevitably change over the course of their time spent at institutions of higher education, although one should not assume that these students no longer need programming that will aid in their success.

First- and Freshman-Year Experience (FYE) programs found their start at the University of South Carolina in 1970 through the creation of its University 101 course. The course was created as a means to alter the way students were taught and to "bond" them to the institution (University of South Carolina). This course eventually became the foundation for the National

Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. The Center has led the charge for research on student success and learning in higher education since its inception in the early 1980s. The University of South Carolina now maintains University 101 Programs, which are dedicated to student learning, success, and engagement through four UNIV courses. The courses offered through the University 101 program are optional courses that are offered to students during each year, focusing on different aspects of university living including first-year transition in UNIV 101, research in UNIV 201, special topics in living-learning communities in UNIV 290, and senior capstone projects UNIV 401 (University of South Carolina, 2016).

By comparison, the FYE program at the Petroleum Institute (PI) in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is mandatory and built into each program of study through the Engineering 110 course (The Petroleum Institute, 2016). This course introduces students to the oil and gas industry and field of engineering. Fifteen percent of the course's grade is allocated to participation in FYE activities and seminars. Additionally, students must enroll in Engineering 150, which serves as a continuation of the previous course and emphasizes skills and habits necessary to be successful in college. FYE programming makes up 10% of this course grade.

One of the most noticeable differences between these two FYE programs is the idea of optional participation for students. Participation in this type of programming usually requires some type of incentive for students. Although one would like to think that most, if not all, students are intrinsically motivated and constantly in search of opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills, this simply is not the case—some students require tangible rewards for their involvement in programming. In the United States, most students can be easily prodded by food or other small stimuli. However, in the United Arab Emirates, this is not the case; students are not easily compelled by food or even money. With this in mind, the decision was made to

appeal to students by building participation into the curriculum as a graded component. Students who exceed the program requirements earn an end-of-year international educational excursion, which creates an incentive for successful completion and surpasses the requirements of the program.

The Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience (HUGE) program combines five modules including academics, leadership, service, wellness, and professional development. The aim of the program is to foster the growth of well-rounded students who are prepared for life after graduation and entrance into the workforce. Additionally, increased engagement and interactions between students and faculty, as well as peer-to-peer communication, are also major desired outcomes. Students are also given opportunities that will hopefully inspire an eagerness to build deeper connections with their communities. The program was developed with the intent of serving as a continuation and expansion of FYE programs, and ultimately closing the student engagement gaps between the first and final years of undergraduate study. Although a compulsory program is desirable, making the program optional will be more effective and possibly better received by students. Introducing the program as an option eliminates any possibility of course scheduling conflicts as well as increased stress on students' already intense course loads. The program encourages student participation and engagement on the University campus and in the surrounding community.

HUGE was initially patterned after student success and retention programs in the United States that focus on leadership, communication, and service learning. The structure, foci, and desired outcomes of these programs served as the foundation for the proposed HUGE program. The programs that were examined provided unique perspectives and approaches to student participation, whether through tracking, course implementation, or requirements. Optional

enrollment was observed as a common trend for many of these programs, which spurred additional research into student success and participation programs that require participation versus those with optional involvement. Not surprisingly, students were more successful when they chose to participate in co-curricular programming, compared with their peers who did not participate (Keup, 2005). However, with this knowledge and analysis that students are ultimately more successful when participating in structured programming outside of their academic curriculum, the question arises: Why is student success and engagement programming not compulsory on university and college campuses?

Beyond the focus on student success and retention, another major goal of the HUGE program is to encourage collaboration between campus units and departments. By enhancing the collaboration between units, more comprehensive and organized programming can be offered to students that covers a wider variety of topics.

Many of the concepts that are discussed were developed and used primarily in the United States. A few concepts and models have become popular in the international context, such as in the United Kingdom and Australia; however, none have been explored as a part of higher education in the Middle East. While this study is unique in its subject matter and will add to the overall literature, it also serves as a catalyst for future research on the topic and related issues in the Middle East and international higher education institutions.

Statement of Problem/Research Question

The focus on first-year and freshmen students' success and matriculation has been the primary concern for university and college campuses around the world for many years. However, once these students reach the second or sophomore year of study, they are often assumed to be more prepared and experienced individuals who are capable of seeking out opportunities and

programming to aid in the successful completion of their journeys on their own. During this time, many students struggle to remain successful and often opt to leave their campuses with little chance of return (Gahagan & Stuart Hunter, 2006; Gohn, Swartz, & Donnelly, 2001). It is of great importance that students continue to be given opportunities that adapt to meet their changing needs and ensure retention and graduation. Currently, very few programs prioritize a focus on the engagement and success of students past the first year (Loughlin, Gregory, Harrison, & Lodge, 2013). The University of South Carolina, McPherson College in Kansas, Spartanburg Methodist College in South Carolina, and Stanford University in California each offer courses dedicated to second-year students, known as sophomore seminar (Gahagan & Stuart Hunter, 2006). Although sophomore seminars have become more popular, such programming has still not gained traction, as seen by the limited number of colleges and universities that offer similar courses or programming dedicated to sophomore students. Furthermore, students in the third year of undergraduate study are completely ignored, as evidenced by the lack of literature surrounding these students and their experiences. For this reason, there is a great need for programming like HUGE that focuses not only on students' success during their undergraduate careers, but prepares them for the workforce and life after their undergraduate studies, while also encouraging engagement and academic success.

Programming that takes a holistic approach to student success is scarce. Research has shown that the number of students lost between the second year and graduation are comparable to the number lost between the first and second year (Gohn et al., 2001; Pullins, 2011; Viau, 2016). Therefore, it is imperative that this issue be addressed through the development of such an initiative. The dearth of information surrounding this issue has prompted the question, "How, if

at all, does the development of a holistic student success program impact students beyond the classroom?”

HUGE is a proposed student success and retention program that addresses key components of the undergraduate experience and beyond. This program is designed as a continuation to FYE programs, particularly at the Petroleum Institute in Abu Dhabi, UAE, the host institution for the piloting of this program. HUGE was formulated with the goal of eliminating the gap known as the “sophomore slump” that is often the result of deficiencies in and disengagement from academics, dissatisfaction with the collegiate environment, indecision in major and career choices, and developmental confusion for second-year students, all of which is revealed after completion of the first year of undergraduate study (Gahagan & Stuart Hunter, 2006; Gohn et al., 2001; Kennedy & Upcraft, 2009). Beyond eliminating sophomore slump and aiding in the successful completion of undergraduate studies, the HUGE program aims to prepare students for life post-graduation by equipping them with skills and tools that would not typically be addressed in a traditional college curriculum.

PI is a rather unconventional establishment by most North American standards and definitions. The University does employ the basic components of a traditional college or university, including the hierarchy of power, academic units such as the Admissions and Registrar’s offices, and campus housing. However, it is a professional science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) school that focuses solely on engineering and oil-related studies. Furthermore, students are guaranteed a job in engineering or a related field upon graduation at the University’s sponsoring organization or one of its partners (Mahani & Molki, 2011a). Students’ curricula, regardless of area of focus, are built around rigor and student success.

The HUGE program was designed around the specific needs identified by key stakeholders at the University, including the Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Campus Life, and the director of the University's FYE program. In order to document and analyze the development of a program such as HUGE, the case study method was used because of its ability to gain a more well-rounded perspective of the subject matter. It also provides insight into the complexity of developing such a program in a setting that is as distinct as the PI, as well as explores unique issues that may arise during the implementation of the program (Yin, 2014).

The transition from high school to college is one of the biggest concerns in higher education (Gohn et al., 2001). Much time and focus have been given to the development of programming to facilitate a successful journey between the two establishments. Students in their final year of study also receive much attention to ensure that graduation requirements are met (Gahagan & Stuart Hunter, 2006; Tobolowsky, 2008). However, the second year of study or "sophomore slump" has become a documented concern that plagues college and university campuses around the world (Loughlin et al., 2013; McBurnie, Campbell, & West, 2012). There is an undeniable dedication to first-year and graduating students, which ultimately leaves a gap in which second- and third-year undergraduates can become lost and potentially fall short of completing their university studies (Gump, 2007; Tobolowsky, 2008). For this reason, programming that focuses on the success of students throughout the entire undergraduate period is essential to higher education and student development, given the constant changes in needs and skills that students experience throughout the span of university study (McBurnie et al., 2012).

Sophomore slump was identified during early research on higher education institutions beginning with Freedman, who coined the term in 1956. Freedman's study focused on higher

education's effect on students while investigating issues related to the transition between high school and college (Loughlin et al., 2013; McBurnie et al., 2012). When the term was coined, Freedman argued that students' waning performance is more likely to take place during the second semester of the first year than in the sophomore or second year of study, as the term implied. The term *sophomore slump* has acquired a variation of definitions; however, Richmond and Lemons (1985) stated that the term is, in fact, difficult to define because it cannot be attributed to simply one problem and it would be unfair to "lump all of the problems of individual students together" (p. 176). Furthermore, the term has been described by Furr and Gannaway (1982) and Richmond and Lemons (1985) as a period in which students experience developmental confusion and uncertainty that occur during the sophomore year. This particular definition assumes that students have the ability to outgrow or overcome the effects of the phenomenon, although this must be done through concentrated effort, guidance, and prodding from student development professionals. Kennedy and Upcraft (2009) redefined the term to acknowledge that sophomore slump is a "multidimensional phenomenon, which could begin as early as the second semester of college" (p. 39) and could include a combination of several elements, specifically academic deficiencies, academic disengagement, dissatisfaction with the college experience, major and career indecision, and developmental confusion. The phenomenon has been widely studied in the North American context, while research in the international setting has yet to produce a significant number of studies on the topic (Loughlin et al., 2013). Even with the lag in research on the international level, correlations between the American and Australian higher education systems are beginning to emerge (Loughlin et al., 2013). Potential causes and consequences of sophomore slump have been linked to "decreasing interests, declining grades, increasing absences" (p. 111), boredom and apathy, and leaving the university

(Gump, 2007). Richmond (as cited in Gohn et al., 2001, p. 273) surmised that sophomore students reside in a sort of “no-man’s land” where the novelty of freshman year has diminished and they have not yet established a feeling of belonging in their major field. Gahagan and Hunter (2006) have identified initiatives to reverse sophomore slump, such as social and professional networking opportunities as well as leadership and seminar series for student development.

Several pieces of literature refer to sophomore students as the “forgotten” group (Gahagan & Stuart Hunter, 2006; Tobolowsky, 2008). However, this term would be best suited for students in their third year of study. Research surrounding this group of students is scarce at best. Nora, Barlow, and Crisp (2005) noted the difference in retention rates between first to second year and second to third year, with those rates for second to third year being noticeably lower than that for the prior year. Allen, Robbins, Casillas, and Oh (2008) also alluded to this in their article. However, overall, there is an obvious lack in the literature as it pertains to the junior or third-year experience.

Students in their senior year of study typically receive more attention than their sophomore and junior peers (Gardner & Van der Veer, 1998; Henscheid, 2008; Tobolowsky, 2008). However, these students are urged to visit their advisors more frequently to ensure that their degree requirements are being met and they are encouraged to participate in senior capstone projects. Additionally, the completion of undergraduate theses and research is emphasized. Senior projects and capstone projects, theses, and undergraduate research are just some examples of opportunities and initiatives that encourage engagement and participation during students’ final year of study. Henscheid (2008) identified five types of efforts that assist in the successful completion of the final year of study, including senior seminars and capstone courses, career

prep programs, networking opportunities, celebratory events, and teambuilding activities among senior students.

Senior-level courses that emphasize the development of capstone projects are commonplace in the field of engineering. These courses were developed out of the need to expose students to problems, assumptions, perspectives, and issues in their fields of study and the supposed inability of educational infrastructures to provide the training necessary for practice in the field (Griffin & Burns-Ardolino, 2013; Tickles, Yadong, & Walters, 2013). The PI has incorporated senior-level courses into each of their curricula that focus on capstone design. Students must receive permission from program chairs in order to enroll and draft projects as a requirement for graduation.

Ultimately, the HUGE program will be introduced into a postsecondary education curriculum that focuses solely on engineering education in the Middle East. It has been proposed as a continuation and expansion of its own FYE program. The goal of this study is to encourage the development of similar holistic student success programs on university and college campuses both in the United States and internationally.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to depict the development and implementation of the Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience (HUGE) program, a student success and retention program that spans the second year of undergraduate study to graduation. It is important to note that an increased amount of attention was dedicated to examining the development of the aforementioned program than to its actual implementation to provide a more comprehensive framework, should replication be attempted. Moreover, this study sought to expand student

development theory and practice to include an international perspective, specifically one from the Middle East.

Currently, there is an extreme lack of programming that focuses on student development and success for the duration of undergraduate study. Schreiner and Pattengale (as cited in Gump, 2007) reasoned that more focus should be put on sophomore students because the support and programming that is offered in the first year often relax or are completely withdrawn from students. However, not much research goes past the first year and a limited amount exists concerning students' time spent at the university after the second year through graduation. While some programs are similar in their desire to offer a series of courses and programming each year (University of South Carolina, 2016), not many require student commitment, instead making content and participation optional with very little incentive for involvement and completion. The vast majority of programming focuses solely on the first-year transition from high school to college. While this transition is of great importance, the changes in students' needs and circumstances that occur during their progression should also be addressed (Tobolowsky, 2008).

Freshman and first-year experience programs are concepts that originated in the United States and have become popular across the world in such countries as Australia, Canada, China, and the United Kingdom (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Gilbert, Chapman, Dietsche, Grayson, & Gardner, 1997; Pitkethly & Prosser, 2001; Yorke & Longden, 2008). However, such a program is in short supply in Middle Eastern countries, specifically the UAE where only two universities offer FYE programs: the Petroleum Institute (2016) and United Arab Emirates University (2014). Adapting FYE programming to fit the aforementioned countries is a less daunting task because most are centered in more western ideas and traditions of higher education, and students in these countries may encounter many of the same difficulties. However, those students in the

Middle East do not experience the same challenges due to their location and cultural distinctions, making the adaption of such a concept a bit more challenging. As Gahagan and Stuart Hunter (2006) noted, students in the United States are often faced with more adult responsibilities and challenges than their Middle Eastern counterparts, such as financial hardships, academic concerns, and anxiety about their future goals and aspirations, each of which has the potential to affect their resilience significantly. Students in the UAE do not face the same difficulties, particularly financial concerns, because article 23 of the UAE's constitution guarantees free education for Emirati students at all levels (Mahani & Molki, 2011b; Wilkins, 2010). Furthermore, students studying at the PI do not typically face the same anxiety about their future goals and aspirations due to the University's engineering focus and guarantee of employment upon graduation (Mahani & Molki, 2011a). As Barefoot (2000) observed, FYE programs across the United States vary drastically in both their execution and desired outcomes. Therefore, it is to be expected that cultural differences would also play a major role in the development and implementation of both FYE programming and especially student success programming that goes beyond the first year in a Middle Eastern country.

In executing this study, it was important to answer questions that address not only the issue of the shortage of literature on holistic student success programming, but also the measures taken in the development of such a program. Additionally, because a U.S. concept was being adapted to fit a locale that does not adhere to the same customs or culture, it becomes vital to acknowledge how this affects program development and implementation. For these reasons, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How, if at all, does the development of a holistic student success and retention program impact students beyond the classroom?

2. How can a holistic student success and retention program that begins at the conclusion of the first year until graduation be developed and implemented at a 4-year university?
3. How does a university's location affect the development and implementation of a student success program that spans the second year until graduation?

Definition of Terms

Academic Bridge Program (ABP): This term refers to the program that provisionally admits students. This program focuses on enhancing students' English competency before entering the regular freshman-year curriculum.

First/Freshman Year Experience (FYE): This term refers to programming designed to foster student learning, success, and campus engagement for first-year undergraduate students (University of South Carolina, 2016).

Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience (HUGE): This term refers to a proposed student success and retention program that addresses key components of the undergraduate experience and beyond, including academics, leadership, community outreach, wellness, and professional development. The purpose of the program is to provide students with resources that will support their growth and maturation throughout the undergraduate collegiate experience. Additionally, the program seeks to encourage and increase collaboration among campus units to offer more comprehensive and organized programming to students.

Holistic Program: This term has been used to refer to the collaboration between campus units to strengthen the level of support students receive (Kift, Nelson, & Clarke, 2010; McBurnie et al., 2012; Nelson, Kift, Humphreys, & Harper, 2006). The term has also been used to refer to programming that focuses on the development of the student as a "whole" person by addressing

the student's needs both inside the classroom and out (Carpenter, 2011; Rhatigan, 2000).

However, for the purpose of this study, the term *holistic program* was redefined to reference a series of measures taken throughout the duration of university study that addresses a broader range of topics and information that will retain and produce successful students who are prepared for life after graduation. This programming will ultimately focus on the development of the student as a "whole" person, collaboration between campus units, and appeal to the changing needs of students as they mature during each year of study.

Junior/Third-Year Student: The term *junior* is used to classify students who have earned the required credits to be considered as such, as individually defined by their academic institution. However, due to the variance in the number of credit hours required to classify students across universities, the term was used here interchangeably with third-year student (Pullins, 2011). The terms *junior* and *third-year student* were used here to refer to traditional first-time university students who are completing their third year of study at an institution of higher education.

Middle East: This term, coined by a U.S. naval officer, is typically used to refer to the region to the east of India. The region references all land in Asia and North Africa (Bilgin, 2004). As evidenced by the literature, the term is the result of the chauvinism of the United States and its tradition of naming and redefining things and areas for its own convenience.

Senior-Year Experience: This term is used to describe the culmination of experiences that are intentionally designed to facilitate the promotion of learning, satisfaction, and successful transition past the university (Gardner & Van der Veer, 1998; Henscheid, 2008). Efforts that are employed to formulate the senior-year experience include, but are not limited to, senior seminars

and capstone courses, career preparedness workshops, and networking opportunities (Henscheid, 2008).

Senior Student: This term has been redefined by scholars in the field to no longer refer solely to students who are in the fourth year of undergraduate study, but also to include students who are in the final quarter of the baccalaureate degree due to the increase in degree programs and students requiring additional time to graduate (Gardner & Van der Veer, 1998; Henscheid, 2008). Therefore, this study included both students in their fourth year of study and beyond in pursuit of their diploma.

Sophomore/Second-Year Student: The terms *sophomore* and *second-year student* are used interchangeably to refer to traditional students who have completed their first year of higher education. Due to universities' use of varying numbers of credit hours to classify students as sophomores, credit hours were not considered (Pullins, 2011).

Second-/Sophomore-Year Experience (SYE): This term refers to programming initiated and carried out to promote the retention and successful matriculation of second-year students (Perlman, 2011). This programming typically utilizes sophomore seminars or course offerings specifically geared toward second-year students (Gahagan & Stuart Hunter, 2006)

Assumptions and Limitations

As with all forms of research, certain assumptions and limitations are associated with the chosen method and specific study. Concerning this study, it has often been assumed that FYE programs completely prepare students beyond the first year of study. Moreover, it is a frequent misconception that students no longer need or desire structured programming after the first year of study. Additionally, due to an impending merger between the Petroleum Institute (the setting of the study) and other local universities, the researcher was limited in if and how much of the

program could be implemented. Furthermore, with the impending merger of universities, stipends are being reduced and the guarantee of employment following graduation is being revoked. While these changes are a direct result of the impending merger, they are also caused by a change in the job and oil markets which have become more competitive. The change in the job and oil markets actually strengthens the need for the proposed HUGE program to ensure that students are more prepared to enter more competitive markets.

The importance and role of religion in education must also be acknowledged. In a culture and society where religion and tradition are at the forefront of every decision made, it is no surprise that higher education in the Middle East greatly resembles that of colonial education in the United States. The U.S. higher education system was built on a foundation of tradition and religion, where the education of men was considered to be primary, with women forcing their way into classrooms (Thelin, 2011). Higher education in the UAE greatly resembles this model as it is built around religion and the education of men, as evident in the fact that the PI began as an all-male institution. Although religion still remains as a dominant part of education, women have found their way into classrooms in droves at a much quicker pace than that of their U.S. counterparts. Even with these obvious assumptions and limitations, this study sought to debunk these myths and assumptions and overcome possible limitations.

Theoretical Framework

In order to create and assess programming fairly for its appeal to the whole student, student development theory offered a foundation that supported the structure and goals of the HUGE program. As Patton et al. (2016) pointed out, critics and philosophers such as Carpenter (2011) and Rhatigan (2000) noted the importance of appealing to the “multidimensional needs” of students rather than solely to their vocational preparation. Appealing to the needs of the whole

student has been a belief long held by professionals in the field (Patton et al., 2016). The HUGE program seeks to address the various dimensions and stages that students experience throughout their college careers. The theory, as described by Rodgers (1990), focuses on the ways that students change and advance as a result of being enrolled at a higher education institution. This definition insinuates that students are in a constant state of change, as evidenced by Erikson's (1968) identity development theory, Marcia's (1994) ego identity statuses, and Chickering's (1969) seven vectors.

In addition to honing in on the progression of identity development that is experienced by students and their maturation as "whole" individuals (Patton et al., 2016), it is important that student affairs professionals examine the progression of students beyond the first year. The topics proposed to serve as the foundation for the HUGE program cover many of the same areas and themes from first-year programming, such as academics, leadership, community outreach, wellness, and professional development. However, this program seeks to grow with students and better address changes in their needs and identity development.

Methodological Framework

In attempting to capture thoroughly the development and implementation of a student success and retention program, it was important to choose the method that proved most appropriate for both the setting and goals of the study. The case study was identified as such after an examination of the desired outcomes of this study. As with any method of research, this method comes with its fair share of concerns. Bias is the most common concern associated with the case study method (Yin, 2014). As Yin (2014) noted, this can occur more frequently within this method than in others because researchers are embedded in their research environments rather than in a laboratory. In conducting case study research, the most common limitation is

found in the generalizability of the data. However, this worked to the benefit of this study as it was not the goal of this study to provide findings that can be applied to an entire population. Additionally, because this study only focused on the development and initial implementation of the program, a complete analysis of the success of the program was not conducted. To construct a complete analysis of the success of this program, a control group of students would need to be identified and monitored through the entirety of the program for at least 3 years after the completion of the FYE program and essentially for the duration of the HUGE program.

Statement of Positionality

In deciding to address this topic, it was important for me as a researcher to determine and define where I was situated in this study and how it would affect me both as an individual and as a professional. As a young, Black American, Christian woman from the United States conducting a study centered around student development in a relatively young Middle Eastern and Muslim country where higher education is still in its infancy, I was in a unique position. My experience as a student affairs practitioner, a field in which the literature has been historically centered on and from the perspective of White males, has granted me the ability to apply and compare my knowledge in settings that are just as different as they are the same. In the 18 months that I have spent in the UAE, I was able to observe that even with the obvious cultural differences, the needs of students do not change drastically based on geographical location. I have had the privilege to share this experience with a cohort of other students with similar backgrounds, although my experience and interpretation have been and continues to be very different, based on my own unique upbringing and perception of my surroundings. It is my hope and desire that through this study I am able to continue to grow both as a professional and an individual, and can impact higher education on a global level.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This chapter provides a preliminary account of the literature reviewed in relation to the development of holistic programming that follows the culmination of First- and Freshman-Year Experience (FYE) programs. This review of literature served this study's purpose which was not only to depict the development and implementation of a student success and retention program that is available throughout the duration of students' time spent at a university to meet their ever-changing needs, but also to assist in expanding the literature as it relates to practice and theory building in higher education in an international context and, specifically, the Middle East. Essentially, this study served as a foundational approach to holistic programming not only as it pertains to students, but also as it relates to the collaboration of campus units in order to offer more comprehensive and organized programming.

The review begins by addressing student success programming chronologically, or how it is demonstrated at each level of study. The discussion of FYE programs leads the review. The focus then turns to the sophomore experience and, more specifically, the term *sophomore slump* and the shortage of attention given to students after completing the first year of university study, particularly during the sophomore and junior years of study. Finally, the senior experience concludes the analysis of student success programs.

The goals of the study are addressed in the remainder of the review of literature. Programming that appeals to the whole student following the first year are then explored. The next section of this review is dedicated to evaluating retention and student success programs and practices. The concept of collaboration among campus units is also discussed. Considering the setting of this study, it is important that the internationalization of higher education be

considered and investigated in order to frame primarily American concepts that are student development theories; this concludes the review of literature. This review should give the reader an expansive view of the overall topic and how each of these subtopics supports the purpose of the study as well as addresses the identified gaps in the literature.

Student Success Programming

The following sections of the literature review outline student success programs that are commonly used on university campuses for the purposes of increased retention and promoting post-graduation preparation among students. Programming varies across campuses in many ways, thus making it difficult to provide an in-depth description of each program. Therefore, a general overview for each is provided while highlighting programs with noteworthy aspects related to the research that has been collected on the different types of programming offered. This section progresses chronologically, detailing programming, or the lack thereof, that is offered during each year of student matriculation.

Freshman and First-Year Experience

Freshman and First-Year Experience (FYE) programs are concepts that originated in the United States and have become popular across the world in such countries as Australia, Canada, China, and the United Kingdom (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Gilbert et al., 1997; Pitkethly & Prosser, 2001; Yorke & Longden, 2008). However, such a program is in short supply in Middle Eastern countries, specifically the UAE where only two universities offer FYE programs: the Petroleum Institute (2016) and United Arab Emirates University (2014). Adapting FYE programming to fit the aforementioned countries is a less daunting task because most are centered in more western ideas and traditions of higher education, and students in these countries may encounter many of the same difficulties. However, those students in the Middle East do not

experience the same challenges because of their location and cultural distinctions, making the adaption of such a concept a little more challenging. As Gahagan and Stuart Hunter (2006) noted, students in the United States are often faced with greater adult responsibilities and challenges than their Middle Eastern counterparts—specifically financial hardships, academic concerns, and anxiety about their future goals and aspirations, each of which has the potential to affect their resilience greatly. Students in the UAE do not face the same difficulties, particularly financial concerns as article 23 of the UAE’s constitution guarantees free education for Emirati students at all levels (Mahani & Molki, 2011b; Wilkins, 2010). Furthermore, students studying at the PI do not typically face the same anxiety over their future goals and aspirations because of the University’s engineering focus and guarantee of employment upon graduation (Mahani & Molki, 2011a). As Barefoot (2000) observed, FYE programs across the United States vary drastically in both their execution and desired outcomes. Therefore, it is to be expected that cultural differences, such as the importance and role of religion in education, also play a major role in developing and implementing both FYE programming and especially student success programming that goes beyond the first year in a Middle Eastern country.

McInnis (2001) asserted that a vast majority of the research surrounding first-year experience is still centered around issues involving equity and the influence a university has on the lives of its students. However, the initial ideas of 1970s sociology and psychology have slowly dissipated and allowed for more emphasis to be placed on students’ problems and shortcomings during the first days and weeks of undergraduate study. The first year of undergraduate study is cited as the most vulnerable time for students, in which they are at a greater risk for failure because of social, emotional, financial, and health issues (McInnis, 2001). The increased involvement of parents in students’ university study has also contributed to the

increased demand and focus on the first year, particularly because of the high cost of attrition both at individual and institutional levels. Programs in the United States are more concerned with the cognitive, social, and moral growth of students (Astin, 1998). Students' adjustment and performance issues prompted one of the first studies on the first year in 1956 in Australia, which resulted in a freshman seminar program. A variety of factors have been identified as causes of students' performance issues during the first year. Williams and Pepe (1983) classified a number of these issues in their Australian study, including academic involvement, goal direction, classroom interaction, institutional belongingness, alienation, and social isolation, although these issues are not central or restricted to students located in Australia. Within his article, McInnis (2001) noted the staunch difference in research on the first year between Australia and the United States, with the latter choosing to focus on the development of students and the former on vocational and academic goals. With this in mind, the goal of this study was to develop a program that encompasses both of these goals and essentially connect the East and West.

Sophomore and Second-Year Experience

Gahagan and Stuart Hunter (2006) described the second year of undergraduate study as a “different . . . more challenging period than the initial transition to college” (p. 17). The authors noted that a general concern of students upon entering their second year of study was the drastic drop in contact and assistance available, compared with their first year of study. The second year of study also sees students dealing more directly and independently with finances, academics, and future plans, which can often have an impact on students' attrition (McInnis, 2001).

However, while this is the case in the United States, students in the UAE do not experience challenges associated with finances and future plans—if they are students at the PI (Mahani & Molki, 2011b; Wilkins, 2010). Students' experiences will obviously vary based on different

factors; however, the vast majority will require the same basic amenities and opportunities throughout their university experience.

During the second year of study, traditional students entering their second full year of university study are in need of assistance when selecting courses, seeking academic advising, and declaring a majors (Gahagan & Stuart Hunter, 2006). It has been noted that the literature, as it pertains to sophomore students, focuses primarily on the developmental changes that students are experiencing, as well as institutional policies and support that are offered to students during the second year of study (Gahagan & Stuart Hunter, 2006; McInnis, 2001). Many institutions have taken on the task of ensuring that second-year students are at least given an opportunity to engage by offering seminars and courses designed specifically for them (University of South Carolina, 2016). However, the vast majority of universities where the aforementioned opportunities are offered have made them optional for students, leading to a greater chance for students to experience sophomore slump and possible withdrawal from the university. Nora et al. (2005) noted that the retention rate for students from second to third year was noticeably lower than for students going from first to second year.

Sophomore slump. The term *sophomore slump* is one that scholars have been unable to define with much agreement since research on the topic began more than 50 years ago. Gahagan and Stuart Hunter (2006) used the term to describe students who “lack motivation, feel disconnected, and flounder academically” (p. 18), while Furr and Gannaway (as cited in Kennedy & Upcraft, 2009) have labeled the period as one where students are more likely to experience an increased amount of “confusion and uncertainty” (p. 36). However, when the term was first coined by Freedman in 1956, he asserted that what was viewed as a “lack of inertia or disorganization” (p. 22) on the part of the students was more likely to be noticed in the second

semester of the first year of study rather than during the sophomore year. Scholars have noted that the slump takes many different forms in students and is not always triggered by the same occurrences. Students are often faced with an onslaught of doubts, dissatisfaction, and concerns regarding finances, relationships with family and peers, and impending career decisions, although these factors do not accurately depict the reasons for every student who falls victim to sophomore slump (Richmond & Lemons, 1985). Another possible factor that could attribute to sophomore slump is students' experiences with the campus community and the lack of perceived support from the university (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969).

Gahagan and Stuart Hunter (2006) suggested an increased focus on services that are offered to second-year students to combat the occurrence of sophomore slump, although an exact rate at which the phenomenon arises does not exist because of lack of consensus on the definition (Richmond & Lemons, 1985). Scholars have suggested that more emphasis be placed on making sure students are aware of the services and opportunities offered through career services, undergraduate research, service learning, and study abroad (Gahagan & Stuart Hunter, 2006). Even though Freedman (1956) suggested that students tend to direct more attention toward their peers in the second year of study, Richmond and Lemons (1985) still contested that an increase in peer-to-peer interaction should occur.

Junior Year

Scholars have used terms such as *middle child* and *forgotten* to describe students in their second year of undergraduate study (Gahagan & Stuart Hunter, 2006; Tobolowsky, 2008). However, it seems that while the aforementioned group of students has rightfully earned that description, it is truly students in their third year of study who would more aptly fit these expressions. Students in their second year of study have managed to gain the attention of

educators in higher education that has resulted in the development of programming to fit their needs after the first year of study. However, once this same group of students matriculate to the third year of study, it seems that the aid which was once offered has completely diminished, as evidenced in the lack of research on the third-year student experience. Not a single scholarly article addresses students in their third year of undergraduate study. One could infer that this has occurred because students have successfully (presumably) completed the first two years of study and therefore are no longer in need of assistance. However, one might argue that while students may not be in need of the same type of assistance received during the first two years, they are simply in need of a different type of assistance, one that has adapted to their changing needs as students and adults hoping to enter the workforce or pursue graduate studies within the next 18 to 24 months. Granted, most students may be more than capable of surviving without the “hand-holding” of the first year, although they should not be completely forgotten.

Senior-Year Experience

Much like students in their first year of study, a great deal of attention has also been given to students during their final year of study. At this point, universities are focused on ensuring that students are prepared for graduate school or work post-graduation (Tobolowsky, 2008). Students progressing to this level are offered programming ranging from networking opportunities, career preparedness workshops, senior seminars and capstone courses, to celebratory events for their achievements and bonding with other senior-level students as a part of senior-year experience programming (Henscheid, 2008).

Students transitioning from high school to university and from university to the workforce receive the majority of assistance and leave second- and third-year students on their own during what could be considered the most critical points when the selection of degree

programs and career planning are most likely to take place. For this reason, it is important to engage students at all levels of study and appeal to their changing needs and development.

Goals

The previous section of this literature review examined programming that is available—or lacking—during each year of a student’s time spent at a university. In describing available programming, the need for more focus on students in their second and third year of study should still make available some sort of programming that is similar to what is offered in the first year but takes into consideration their more mature needs.

The following section assesses research surrounding the goals of this study, which include developing a framework for holistic programming and increasing literature related to retention and student success, as well as the internationalization of higher education and student development theories. Each of these goals plays a significant role in producing a comprehensive guide for the development of a holistic undergraduate student success program pertaining to a unique group of students in a specific location, the Middle East, that is both extremely dissimilar and still in its infancy, compared to the traditional standards of American higher education. It is important that a considerable amount of time be given to the topic of retention and student success because these are the principal goals of the proposed program. Due to the setting in which this research took place, the internationalization of higher education must be pondered to understand the parallels and disparities that occurred during the development of this framework. Additionally, student development theories must be examined especially as they pertain to the international setting.

Holistic Programming

Combing the literature for examples of holistic programming in higher education reveals an extreme dearth of relevant studies. The limited number of publications that are available point toward designing programs that focus on the development of the student as a whole person (Carpenter, 2011; Rhatigan, 2000). The term *holistic* is most frequently used to emphasize the establishment of collaboration efforts between campus units (Kift et al., 2010; McBurnie et al., 2012; Nelson et al., 2006). While these are both goals of the proposed HUGE program, the primary objective of the program is to provide students with dedicated programming that is similar to first-year experience programs throughout the duration of their time spent at the university, starting from the second year of study until graduation.

Additionally, the research that addresses holistic programs as collaboration efforts between units across the campus has been more concerned with the transition framework surrounding endeavors to build relationships that will support the development of the “whole person” in first-year students (Kift et al., 2010; McBurnie et al., 2012; Nelson et al., 2006). Nelson et al. (2006) focused their attention on a holistic approach to managing first-year students’ transition into the university setting. This team of researchers devoted a considerable amount of time discussing subjects related to the successful transition of first-year students, including student engagement and “holistic collaborative environment . . . across all traditional silos between faculties and divisions” (p. 3). In building relationships between campus divisions, Nelson et al. stated their desire to develop students’ “higher-order thinking and academic skills” (p. 3) to be used in their professional and personal lives after graduation.

All research that points to holistic programming has been more concerned with freshman students’ transition to university and providing them with elements through more collaborative

and streamlined efforts between campus units. Collaboration efforts between campus units seek to appeal to the many pieces that make up the whole student. Unfortunately, a thorough search of the literature did not produce evidence of existing programming that mirrored the proposed HUGE program, therefore making it the first of its kind.

Retention and Student Success

Retention and student success programming is delivered in wide variety of ways across campuses around the world. These types of programming began with the intent of easing the transition for students from high school to college and eventually evolved to address the high rate of student attrition between the first and second year of study (Keup, 2005). As efforts have expanded and theories developed to address student development (Astin, 1984; Bandura, 1977; Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1994; Tinto, 1993), student affairs professionals have made attempts to improve programming. The majority of programming is centered around ensuring first-year students' progress to the second year of study, although similar offerings are in limited supply for second-year students and virtually non-existent for third-year students.

In the UAE, retention is a fairly new concept. Retention is being approached primarily from admissions, curriculum design, and program completion aspects (Kalil, 2013). Approaching retention from an aspect of student programming is a fairly new concept that, for the most part, is not existent. The UAE has recognized that first-year students require more attention, although only two universities in the country offer FYE programs (The Petroleum Institute, 2016; United Arab Emirates University, 2014). However, these programs focus on the engagement of students rather than on retention efforts explicitly. As the country continues to mature, it is apparent that retention will eventually become a main concern along with how the topic is understood and approached.

Internationalization of Higher Education

Higher education is generally viewed from a western perspective with very little thought or consideration given to those outside of this general arena. However, in countries like the UAE, the study of higher education is a relatively new concept given that the country is in its infancy at a mere 45 years of establishment. The country has shown interest in adapting to western ideals of education by inviting several universities to establish campuses or partnerships being developed between the country's universities and campuses around the world (Mahani & Molki, 2011b; The Petroleum Institute, 2016). For the purpose of this study, it was important to explore how higher education began to be explored in an international context and what is the importance of continuing these efforts.

Higher education has traditionally been explored from the perspective of White males, with this group serving as the target population for the vast majority of studies on the improvement of student affairs programming. McInnis (2001) acknowledged the changing demographics for university enrollment and how these changes require programming to be adapted in order to fit the changing landscape of campuses. This is a clear indication that while western campuses are becoming more diverse, universities in the Middle East are serving a completely different population, one that has typically never included White males. Therefore, student development theories that were originally introduced should be reexamined and expanded to include an international perspective with a more diverse group as the target population.

Student Development Theories

As previously mentioned, student development theories (Astin, 1984; Bandura, 1977; Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1994; Tinto, 1993) have been explored with White

males in mind. The university landscape has progressively changed over time to include not only women, but those from other races and locations in the world. With this in mind, it is imperative that student development theories be reexamined from an international perspective in order to place a population of people who are not traditionally included in discussions of higher education at the forefront of research. In conducting this study, the aim was to expand student development theory, especially as it pertains to Chickering (1969), Bandura (1977), Astin (1984), and Marcia's (1994) work from an international perspective.

Conclusion

This section served as a preliminary review of the literature relating to the chosen topic of study. This topic was reintroduced along with the areas of study which more literature will need to address. These areas were broken into two major topics concerning student success programming and the goals of this study, which were then reduced to subtopics to ensure that a comprehensive review of the literature was conducted. Within this preliminary review of literature, gaps and areas for expansion were acknowledged and served as guides to carry out the study.

As evidenced by the lack of relevant literature, it is important that many of those gaps be addressed. However, this researcher's main priority was to reveal and expand the literature as it pertains to student success and retention programming in an international setting. These are not necessarily new concepts, although they have never been addressed in this particular context, thus making this research important on both the traditional level of western education and an international level.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter describes the methods that were used to conduct this study. To begin, the purpose of the study is reintroduced along with the research questions and design used to guide the study. This is followed by a detailed description of how the study was administered, including the setting and participants who were involved. Additionally, the data analysis plan is discussed.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this case study was to depict the development and implementation of the Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience (HUGE) program, a student success and retention program that spans the second year of undergraduate study to graduation. It is important to note that an increased amount of attention was dedicated to examining the development of the aforementioned program than to its actual implementation in order to provide a more comprehensive framework, should replication be attempted. Moreover, this study sought to expand student development theory and practice to include an international perspective, specifically one from the Middle East. Currently, very little programming focuses on student development and success for the duration of undergraduate study. Schreiner and Pattengale (as cited in Gump, 2007) reasoned that more focus should be put on sophomore students as the support and programming that are offered in the first year often relax or are completely withdrawn from students. However, not much research goes past the first year and a limited amount exists on students' time spent at the university after the second year through graduation. While some programs are similar in their goal to offer a series of courses and programming each year (University of South Carolina, 2016), not many require student commitment, thus making

content optional instead. The vast majority of programming focuses solely on the first-year transition from high school to college. While this transition is of great importance, the changes in students' needs and circumstances that occur during their progression must also be addressed (Tobolowsky, 2008).

Freshman and first-year experience (FYE) programs are concepts that originated in the United States and have become popular across the world in many countries, including Australia, Canada, China, and the United Kingdom (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Gilbert et al., 1997; Pitkethly & Prosser, 2001; Yorke & Longden, 2008). However, such a program is in short supply in Middle Eastern countries, specifically the UAE where only two universities offer FYE programs: the Petroleum Institute (2016) and United Arab Emirates University (2014). Adapting FYE programming to fit the aforementioned countries is a less daunting task because most are centered in more western ideas and traditions of higher education, and students in these countries may encounter many similar difficulties. However, students in the Middle East do not experience the same challenges because of their location and cultural distinctions, making the adaption of such a concept more challenging. As Gahagan and Stuart Hunter (2006) noted, students in the United States are often faced with more adult responsibilities and challenges than their Middle Eastern counterparts, such as financial hardships, academic concerns, and anxiety about their future goals and aspirations, and each of these has the potential to affect their resilience greatly. Students in the UAE do not face the same difficulties, particularly financial concerns, because article 23 of the UAE's constitution guarantees free education for Emirati students at all levels (Mahani & Molki, 2011b; Wilkins, 2010). Furthermore, students studying at the PI do not typically face the same anxiety over their future goals and aspirations thanks to the University's engineering focus and guarantee of employment upon graduation (Mahani & Molki, 2011a). As

Barefoot (2000) observed, FYE programs across the United States vary drastically in both their execution and desired outcomes. Therefore, it is to be expected that cultural differences also play a major role in the development and implementation of both FYE programming and especially student success programming that goes beyond the first year in a Middle Eastern country.

In executing this study, it was important to ask and answer questions that addressed not only the issue of the shortage of literature on holistic student success programming, but also the measures taken in the development of such a program. Additionally, because a U.S. concept was being adapted to fit a locale that typically does not adhere to the same customs or culture, it becomes vital to acknowledge how this affects program development and implementation. For these reasons, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How, if at all, does the development of a holistic student success and retention program impact students beyond the classroom?
2. How can a holistic student success and retention program that begins at the conclusion of the first year until graduation be developed and implemented at a 4-year university?
3. How does a university's location affect the development and implementation of a student success program that spans the second year until graduation?

Research Design

This study invoked the case study method in order to document the progression and development of the proposed Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience (HUGE) program. The study took a descriptive approach as a part of a qualitative design because it sought to describe the development and implementation of an intervention. Because this study examined the development of a holistic student success program that spans the duration between the second

year of university study and graduation, it was important that a method such as the case study focusing on the “how” and “why” of the issue be chosen to address the overarching research questions. The use of a descriptive study also provided parameters for which the information collected was based on a specific group (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). Yin (2014) stated that the case study method is best used to address social phenomena and produces a comprehensive description of said phenomena. Moreover, as Hancock and Algozzine (2011) noted, case study research is also used to carry out the “empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence” (p. 15). It is also important to acknowledge that while this study addressed an issue that plagues universities worldwide, it possessed its own unique perspective and intended to produce equally distinct solutions. These solutions will, in turn, be able to provide a framework for the development of similar programming at universities around the world. However, it is of extreme importance that the context, setting, prospective participants, and infrastructure of the institution be examined critically and considered before implementation is commenced as this study does not seek to produce a “one-size-fits-all” model for replication. As described by Yin (2014), case study research allows a researcher to “understand a real-world case and assume that such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual conditions pertinent to [the] case” (p. 16). This definition accurately describes the aim of this study along with its main purpose to utilize the case study research method.

In considering the case study as the preferred research method, Yin (2014) noted the importance of theory in the design of case studies. Yin explained that the theory chosen greatly affects the way that the participants’ perspectives are captured. A similar thought was dictated earlier during the discussion of the theoretical frameworks that were employed during this study;

it was mentioned how each framework used concepts developed in the United States and needs to be adapted to fit the setting of this study (Astin, 1984; Bandura, 1977; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1994; Patton et al., 2016; Quaye & Harper, 2014; Rodgers, 1990).

Every method of research presents its own unique challenges, some of which are study-specific. In approaching this study, it is important to identify the method that would be most appropriate. The case study was deemed to be the most appropriate for conducting this study because its goals, strengths, and even limitations directly aligned with the desired outcome of the topic. The case study has the unique ability to document transformations that occur over the course of the study, which is very important in a descriptive study such as this one (Yin, 2014). Further adding to the appropriateness of this study is the argument of generalizability. This argument has been deemed a concern for this method of research; however, it works more to the benefit of this particular study. As Yin (2014) stated, “case studies . . . are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (p. 21). In other words, this method should not be assumed to be generalizable or one that describes an entire group because it is not intended for such a purpose. Furthermore, the argument of generalizability as a concern is fallacious as it pertains to this study because it is not the researcher’s desire to present findings that generalize to an area of scholarship or take a “one size fits all” approach to research. The ultimate goal of this study was to depict the development of the HUGE student success program and produce a framework or road map that can be used to promote and guide the development and implementation of similar programming across the globe without building a model that will fit every institution.

Additionally, much like the data collection method of ethnography, case studies require a considerable amount of time and effort to be considered thorough, although more modern

practices have allowed for alternate ways to complete and possibly avoid narratives that tend to be lengthy by tradition (O'Reilly, 2005; Yin, 2014). Unlike its counterpart ethnography, case study research does not rely heavily on participant-observation, but utilizes a wider variety of data collection practices. This further supports the use of the case study as the most appropriate method for this study.

Setting

This study was conducted at the Petroleum Institute (PI), a 4-year teaching and research university located in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan founded the University in 2000 by Emiri decree with the intent of focusing on engineering education and energy industry research. The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and other major oil companies including BP, Shell, Japan Oil Development, and Total are among the Institute's corporate sponsors and affiliates, while educational affiliations are maintained with the Colorado School of Mines and other prominent universities around the world (Embassy of the United Arab Emirates Cultural Division, 2011). The PI is cited as being the leading educational and research center for oil and gas in the Middle East and received its full accreditation from the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) in 2009 (The Petroleum Institute, 2016).

The PI admitted its first class of students, an all-male cohort, in 2001. The first class of female students was not admitted until 2006. Even with the delayed admission of female students, the University's total enrollment currently sees women outnumber men, which is both unique and uncommon in the field of engineering (Farrell, 2002; The Petroleum Institute, 2016). The development and evolution of the PI are reminiscent of American higher education, which in its own infancy was built around the education of men and eventually grew to include women

(Thelin, 2011). American higher education is considered geriatric in comparison with the UAE's mere 45 years of establishment, yet many strides have already been made due to its access to a variety of educational frameworks. The country has managed to adopt many Western traditions while still keeping its own culture and traditions mainly intact. Religion is still a major aspect of the culture as prayer rooms are staples in every public building, even in educational settings. While prayer rooms may not have ever been a part of American or western education, American education was centered around religion during its infancy in colonial times (Thelin, 2011). The maintenance of the Arabic culture is highly important at the individual and government levels, as evidenced by the rules and regulations that are imposed both in and outside of the educational setting.

Due to the institution's location in the Middle East and the application of U.S. concepts to this setting, a variety of circumstances and nuances needed to be considered during the construction of this program. PI is a rather unconventional establishment by most North American standards and definitions. The University does employ the basic components of a traditional college or university, including the hierarchy of power, academic units such as the admissions and Registrar's offices, and on-campus housing. However, it is a professional science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) school that focuses solely on engineering and oil-related studies. Furthermore, students are guaranteed a job in engineering or a related field upon graduation at the University's sponsoring organization or one of its partners (Mahani & Molki, 2011a). Students' curricula, regardless of area of focus, are built around rigor and student success.

Typically, students entering the PI must take the International English Language Systems (IELTS) test to determine whether they will be provisionally admitted into the University

through the Academic Bridge Program (ABP), which focuses solely on English proficiency, or directly into freshman year. Those students bypassing the ABP programming are exempt from English studies, instead studying chemistry, physics, and calculus before choosing their degree program and advancing to their chosen curriculum of study. The fields of study that students can choose to pursue include Chemical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, and Petroleum Geosciences (The Petroleum Institute, 2016). Students' course loads become progressively more rigorous as they matriculate through the University. As students approach the final year of study, they must complete an internship and complete a senior design project under the direction of faculty member before meeting all the requirements for graduation. All students at the PI graduate in February following the completion of the previous academic year. During the February commencement, students meeting the requirements for graduation at the end of May, July, and December of the previous year are invited to participate in the ceremony.

Each student admitted into the PI signs a scholarship contract that guarantees a stipend for study as long as a minimum GPA requirement is maintained, along with a contract for employment after graduation (Mahani & Molki, 2011a). However, in light of the current oil crisis and the impending merger of the PI with other local universities, Khalifa University and Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, many of these benefits will no longer be offered to students.

The distinctions of the PI are broadened by the fact that while the Institute became co-ed in 2006, women continue to occupy a separate physical location, which creates a two-campus-in-one atmosphere or a "separate but equal" environment. The "separate but equal" environment of the campus is truly contrary to the western definition of the term, where the facilities are

nearly mirror images of one another, despite the fact that women occupy a single building outside of the men's campus.

The women's campus is referred to as "Women in Science and Engineering" or WiSE. The majority of the classrooms and labs are replicated on each campus. However, a select few laboratories are not replicated on the WiSE campus, requiring women to visit the men's campus although genders are not mixed even under these circumstances. The labs that were not replicated on the WiSE campus were either too large, too expensive, or used less frequently, thus eliminating the need for duplication. The PI is a research and teaching university, with an average enrollment each year of about 1,500 undergraduate students and graduating a total of about 300 each year (The Petroleum Institute, 2016). Most students graduate in 5 years and either continue on to pursue graduate studies or enter the workforce, usually in engineering or oil in varying capacities.

Using the PI as the primary setting for this study allowed the researcher to view the North American concept of student affairs, and more specifically, student success and FYE programming, from an international perspective. Experiences with program development vary from campus to campus, whether it be in a domestic or international setting; therefore, it was imperative that the infrastructure of the institution be examined thoroughly prior to and during the composition of programming to ensure that values and goals of the institution were considered and incorporated.

Participants

In conducting this study, the researcher selected participants from a pool of key stakeholders with direct knowledge and experience with the PI's FYE program and interest in the development of the HUGE program. Potential participants included both male and female

students, along with faculty and staff who facilitate the ABP and FYE programs. Students who were asked to participate in the study were either currently participating in the program or had graduated from the program. Many of the students who were contacted to participate were suggested to the researcher by staff members or through past interactions that the researcher had with students. Other students who were asked to participate were identified through the process of snowball sampling, which is the creation of a sample through referrals through people who know one another (Berg, 1988). Since every student enrolling as a freshman at the PI is required to participate in the FYE program, the selection pool of participants was rather large, allowing for minimal use of the snowball sampling method. Student records obtained from the Registrar's office also provided a listing of students who might be possible participants and offered information that identified students who excelled in the FYE program as well as those who may not have performed at comparable levels. Identifying students who did not excel in the program was essential to examining aspects of programming that were missing or did not appeal to that group. Moreover, these students' individual situations helped to provide insight into the changing needs of students and how these changes can be addressed over the course of the HUGE program. Demographics of the student body were requested from the PI's Registrar's Office to offer a more detailed description of the participants.

Data Collection

Several types of data were collected to gather information that provides a broad yet detailed interpretation in order to guide and influence the development and implementation of the proposed HUGE student success and retention program. These data sources included: interviews with students and program coordinators who had direct knowledge or experience with the FYE and other student success programs currently active on the PI campus; direct

observations of events, seminars, campus activities, and standard procedures of program coordinators taking place on campus over the spring semester; and such documents as websites, marketing materials, and student records. In order to develop and implement a program that aids in the retention and success of students beginning at the culmination of the FYE program and concludes at graduation from the University, it was imperative that a variety of information sources be utilized.

For this case study, it was important that the perspectives of students and other key stakeholders, including program designers, coordinators, and facilitators from a variety of campus units as well as the FYE program and Student Success services, be collected and analyzed to provide a broad spectrum of opinions and identify the strengths and areas in need of improvement associated with current FYE programming at the PI. Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the FYE program, the campus's flagship student success program, allowed for building a strong foundation and bridge between current programming and the proposed program.

The opinions of students currently participating in the FYE program, as well as those who had graduated from the program and those who did not participate, were employed to expand the narrative of student experiences in FYE programs that have existed in North America and other western regions of higher education for several decades. The resulting narrative thus depicted students' experiences in a FYE program in the Middle East, which is territory that will expand the boundaries of current literature. These perspectives were collected through individual interviews and focus groups with members from the aforementioned groups. However, most notably, the pool of students who did not participate in the program was limited to students who transferred to the PI after the first year and received transfer credit for the courses associated

with the University's FYE program, because the program is a requirement for all first-year students enrolled.

Employing the perspectives of program designers, coordinators, and facilitators from across the campus who have a direct knowledge and contact with the University's FYE program allowed for exploration of the inner workings of the program. This also helped build a strong foundation for the proposed HUGE program, based on the experiences of those who have had direct involvement with the original FYE program prior to and since its inception. Since a vast majority of the Institute's faculty and staff are expatriates and possess skills from other universities and regions of the world, unique challenges and comparisons to previous experiences from similar programs were valuable for developing the proposed HUGE program.

To illustrate an expansive and thorough portrait of the University's current FYE program, 22 participants from both the male and female student populations, and eight selected faculty and staff members were solicited for hour-long, individual interviews, for a total of 24 interviews. The interviews took place on 2 days each week over the course of 4 weeks, with two to three interviews conducted on each designated day.

A total of four focus groups were held, two on the men's campus and two on the women's campus, each group consisting of five participants. Of the two male and two female groups, one group for each gender was comprised of students who were currently participating in the program and the other of students who had graduated from the program. Each focus group consisted of five male students and five female students.

Interviews and focus groups took place on the PI's campus, with individual interviews scheduled for 1 hour and focus groups for 1.5 hours. Female interviews and focus groups were conducted in a designated closed space in the Arzanah building on the WiSE campus and in the

Umm Lulu Housing Complex, the University's on-campus female residence hall. Interviews and focus groups with male students were conducted in a designated room on the men's campus. Student interviews and focus groups were held during the campus lunch period between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Interviews with faculty and staff were held in each participant's campus office at a time determined by the participant. Additional time was scheduled for those individual interviews requiring a follow-up.

In utilizing individual interviews and focus groups as sources of data, the National Research Council (2003) advised researchers that the protection of participants' privacy is of the highest concern in conducting any type of research that involves human participants. In order to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, the researcher obtained the informed consent from all parties prior to the interview and focus group proceedings (Yin, 2014). Interviews and focus groups were recorded with the knowledge and consent of the participants; afterward, the researcher stored and locked them on a password-protected drive and transcribed them in preparation for analysis and coding.

Direct observations took place during events scheduled for the FYE program and other campus activities geared toward the success of students as they were announced. The researcher observed scheduled programming such as field trips and excursions on which the FYE program routinely takes its students to expose them to professionals in various sectors of engineering. Additionally, events such as the job fair and student organization fair were also observed. These events were used as an opportunity to recruit participants for the individual interviews and focus groups. Observations of program coordinators as well were conducted to gain insight into the infrastructure and planning procedures for campus programming that pertains to all students, not excluding or limited to the FYE program. The observations of program coordinators generally

took place during the planning and preparation for campus events and activities. These observations ranged from 30 minutes to an hour, 2 weeks prior to an event or a scheduled activity. The researcher sought out coordinators and a list of scheduled events and activities at the start of the spring semester to begin the process of scheduling observations.

The researcher also examined documents that the Institute possessed on its organizational structure, student programming, and records that may indicate individual student success and FYE program accomplishments. Specifically, these documents included websites, written materials, marketing materials, and survey data that had been previously collected on the FYE program and student records. The review of such documents provided an understanding of various aspects of the University and the impact of current programming, and assisted in the development and implementation of the proposed HUGE student success and retention program.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected, the researcher used triangulation to further the development of the HUGE student success program. Triangulation is the method that best suits the case study method of research, and more specifically this topic of study. This method, while not unique to case study research, plays upon the case study's goal to provide various sources of evidence that support a single phenomenon (Yin, 2014).

When analyzing data, Yin (2014) noted that several measures should be taken in order to complete the task of data analysis thoroughly and appropriately. The measures that should be taken include showing that all evidence has been addressed to avoid alternative interpretation, and ensuring that all rival interpretations have been attended to either by responding directly or being included as an area for future reference (Yin, 2014). Additionally, the most important aspect of the study should be the focus of the analysis, to avoid diversion to smaller, less

important findings (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, Yin stated that in order to strengthen the analysis, researchers should rely heavily on their own prior and expert knowledge that indicates their understanding and awareness of the topic.

Triangulation was chosen as a method of analysis for its history of strengthening the validity of studies (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013; Yin, 2014). Moreover, this method is favored among case study researchers for its ability to verify and confirm findings through the use of multiple sources (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Ritchie et al., 2013). Moran-Ellis et al. (2006) described triangulation as “increased confidence in the implied measurement outcomes of the research where there are convergent findings” (p. 47). When utilizing this method, the goal is to have multiple sources of data support the study’s findings, which will occur when triangulation has been carried out correctly (Yin, 2014). The variety of data sources that were applied to guide this study (e.g., documents, individual interviews, focus groups, and observations) provided information that supported the findings of the study and, in turn, the development of the HUGE program. Using such a variety of data sources allowed the researcher to make a more convincing argument on behalf of the findings, as stated by Hancock and Algozzine (2011). However, by using a method of this caliber, the researcher assumes a larger burden because of the collection of multiple sources of data. Interviews and focus groups, in particular, require a much larger time commitment to conduct interviews, transcribe recordings, and analyze and code the data with accuracy. Detractors of the method have argued that multiple uses of data are unlikely to produce evidence that perfectly aligns (Ritchie et al., 2013). Even though this is a concern, this is nevertheless the most appropriate and most preferred data analysis method for case study researchers.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the purpose and research questions of the study and introduced the design used to conduct this study. The setting and participants were also discussed, along with the plan for data collection and analysis. When considering the development of a holistic student success program, student development theories such as Astin's (1984) student involvement theory and Tinto's updated theory surrounding social and academic integration (1993) were employed to observe, explain, and expand the original student development theory to the international context. Additionally, Chickering (1969) and Bandura's (1977) frameworks referencing identity and self-efficacy were used to support even further the development of the proposed programming.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Data

This chapter presents the data collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, with the purpose of exploring student success and retention programming that was already being offered at the Petroleum Institute (PI) and determining the best approach to implementing the proposed Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience (HUGE) program. The researcher now describes the procedures that were used to analyze the data, introduces the participants of the study, and discusses the themes that were revealed as a result of data collection efforts.

The research questions formed around this study addressed not only the issue of the shortage of literature on holistic student success and retention programming, but also the measures taken in the development of such a program. Additionally, because a concept that is more prominently used in western regions of the world, such as the United States, is being adapted to fit a locale that does not adhere to the same customs or culture, it became vital to acknowledge how this affects program development and implementation. For these reasons, the following questions were used to guide the study:

1. How, if at all, can the development of a holistic student success and retention program impact students beyond the classroom?
2. How can a holistic student success and retention program that begins at the conclusion of the first year until graduation be developed and implemented at a 4-year university?
3. How does a university's location affect the development and implementation of a student success and retention program that spans the second year until graduation?

Immediately after receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board to conduct the study, the researcher began identifying participants for the study. There were no set criteria that participants were expected to meet outside of being student or employee at the PI who was at least 18 years of age. Given that the majority of participants for the study were approached in person and agreed to participate on sight, the purpose of the study was also explained on sight. Those participants who were contacted prior to participating in an interview were sent an email that explained the purpose of the study. Initially, given the researcher's knowledge of the culture of the UAE, she assumed it would be difficult to find willing participants. However, that assumption proved untrue; a number of eager and willing participants eventually had to be turned away.

Procedures for Data Analysis

The analysis of data occurred steadily through the collection and review of field notes, interview audio, and resulting transcripts of the audio. As previously mentioned, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted. Two separate interview protocols were developed for the students and the professionals. The questions included in the protocols were developed using the research questions and student development theory as the theoretical lens for this study (Astin, 1984; Bandura, 1977; Carpenter, 2011; Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1994; Rhatigan, 2000; Tinto, 1993). Using a semi-structured approach to interviews allowed the researcher to ask emerging questions that were tailored to the participants' unique experiences. The researcher composed thorough field notes after each interview and used these notes to identify emerging themes. Theme development continued while transcribing the audio for each interview, after which transcripts were reviewed constantly.

Participants

To conduct this study, the researcher determined early on that it would be necessary to gain the perspectives of both students and professional staff in order to develop a holistic student success and retention program—one which would not only focus on the success of students, but also encourage a more collaborative university campus. The perspectives of these groups would be the most beneficial for capturing a snapshot of the efforts that were currently in place at the PI and assisting in the development of the proposed program. Furthermore, acquiring the perspectives of these two groups produced insight into their needs and experiences from different aspects of the University's community.

The study yielded a total of 30 participants, which included eight professional staff members and 22 students. Professional staff were identified based on their involvement with current student programming through suggestions from the Dean of Student Life and Director of the FYE program. Most female students were recruited through day-to-day interactions on the women's campus and residence hall, although snowball sampling (Berg, 1988) did prove to be advantageous in recruiting additional female student participants. Male student participants were recruited through the assistance of the FYE coordinator on the men's campus due to the researcher's lack of access to male students. By comparison to female students, male students on campus were less likely to interact with an outsider such as the researcher, presumably because of the culture and customs of the country. There was some initial hesitancy in using professional staff recommendations for recruiting students; however, no evident skew in the demographics or responses of students could be identified based on this decision.

The 14 female participants consisted of six freshmen, three juniors, and five seniors. The eight male participants consisted of four freshmen, three sophomores, and one junior. The

participants varied across four of five of the Institute's engineering majors. Participants' grade point average was not requested, although many did voluntarily offer the information.

Professional staff who served as participants included the Health and Fitness Coordinator, Nutritionist, Student Events Coordinator, Student Success Manager, an Academic Bridge Coordinator, Dean of Student Life, FYE Director, and Director of the Women's Campus, who also serves as Director of Residential Life. Of the professional staff, at least five served as instructors for academic courses.

A total of 24 interviews—four focus groups and 20 one-to-one interviews—provided a wealth of invaluable information. Through these discussions and review of transcripts and researcher's field notes, several themes emerged, which the researcher was subsequently able to use in answering questions to guide the study. The themes that appeared were categorized by how they related to the impact beyond the classroom, the development and implementation of the program, and the institution's location. The themes that eventually materialized included deficiency in student success programming after the first year of study, post-graduation preparedness, and balance between co-curricular activities and academics. Additionally, faculty interactions with students and professional staff also surfaced as a theme for the study. Furthermore, the challenges of collaboration, communication, and buy-in were considered subthemes. The University's involvement in an imminent merger was also pinpointed as a subtheme of challenges that would be faced during the development and implementation of the proposed program. The final themes to be identified were the differences in universities and culture.

Impact Beyond the Classroom

When deciding to embark on the development of a holistic student success and retention program that focused on students from the beginning of the second year of undergraduate study until graduation, the researcher felt it was important to focus on elements of programming that would transcend and impact students beyond the classroom. The goal in developing a program of this nature was to produce more well-rounded students and to encourage a more collaborative atmosphere among campus units.

Student Success Programming After the First Year

The modules of the HUGE program—academics, leadership, community outreach, professional development, and wellness—were believed to assist in producing more well-rounded students upon graduation. The program was designed as a continuation and enhancement to the current Freshman/First-Year Experience (FYE) program that was currently in place. The researcher realized early on that after the conclusion of the first year of study and graduation from the FYE program, students no longer had programming that was dedicated to them. Many upperclassmen mentioned the lack of programming offered to them after the first year, with many citing that freshmen were given priority for those events. In some cases, when students in their second year and beyond did reference events after the first year, they were department-specific, thus leaving a large population of students unaware of or exempt from participation.

As one student who spoke about the programs offered to promote skills directly associated with modules of HUGE, Salma, a senior chemical engineering student, addressed the lack of programming currently offered and expressed her desire to see more opportunities made available to older students, particularly in leadership development:

There are some workshops but they offer it mostly for the freshmen. The thing is sophomore, junior, seniors they don't have much chances as the freshmen students. So, I think if we have more options and like things offered in those years, it would be nice.

This same sentiment was echoed by the majority of upperclassmen interviewed for the study. In the rare cases where this group of students were targeted for programming, it was usually dependent upon their program of study. Therefore, students in certain programs were afforded more opportunities than others.

Post-graduation Preparedness

Instances in which professional staff currently offered or desired to offer programming in one of the proposed modules were plentiful. Leadership, in particular, was a common area of interest for both professional staff and students. Reda, the Health and Fitness Coordinator, had hopes of offering leadership training and other skill building workshops to students:

My objective is to have leadership program for the students related to our broad objective. We have a leadership program, the student ambassadors. Then those student ambassadors, what we are going to do is, we are going to choose from each team two captains, what are they going to do? They are going to be talking to other students for example.

Reda's goal was to incorporate a student ambassador program that would put student leaders at the forefront of recruitment efforts for sports tournaments. His desire was to equip students with skills and knowledge to address their peers in the hope that other students would be more enticed to get involved based on their peers' suggestions. This was the same structure the proposed HUGE program would enforce, especially given students' vocalized accounts of feeling more comfortable and trusting the opinions of their peers, at times, more than those of the administrators and professors:

We must take our help from our friends because they know better—what's the easiest part to do this thing. . . . So, that's why we reach out to our friends because they are everywhere. They're with us. So, they took this part this course before so we take the advisement from them.

As evidenced by the above statement, students typically feel more comfortable approaching their peers about issues they are experiencing and taking their advice on a variety of topics including, but not limited to professors and courses they should take and student clubs and organizations they should consider joining.

Co-curricular and Academic Balance

A common theme that emerged from both professional staff and students was the desire to find a balance between academics and co-curricular activities. Students like Omar, a mechanical engineering sophomore, noted the difficulty of studying at an institution solely focused on engineering and his desire to have “fun”:

So, the study here, of course, engineering, is very difficult. It needs focus at all times, there's no rest. That's the main problem, you cannot have fun and study at the same time, so you should sacrifice something to gain. . . . So, to get that you need to balance between work and hobbies. So, they need to enjoy their time, so they will get better education. . . .

Sara, a junior in mechanical engineering, echoed the same sentiments:

They should definitely join events and like they should balance between their studies and doing other things. It will help them a lot. I don't know how joining events and participating in a lot of things can boost your self-confidence and I don't know how, but it does. So, I guess they should balance between studying.

The researcher had not expected students to be so adamant about their need for balance. Granted, it was understood that an engineering-focused university would be much more curriculum-focused than what had been experienced by the researcher as an undergraduate at a large public institution with a diverse catalogue of degree programs. As a student, the researcher had the opportunity to participate in an abundance of assorted co-curricular activity options at every level of study, so encountering students who did not have as many options readily available to them was very shocking.

While older students address the dearth of programming offered to them coupled with the need to find balance between academics and co-curricular activities, Muna, Dean of Student Life, mentioned efforts her department makes to bridge the gap between academics and co-curricular activities for students through their support of academic programs:

. . . the third one is directly support the academic programs. So, sometimes you might have trips organized by the academic program, but we facilitate these trips. . . . Trying to we understand again whether it's an engineering school or not, it's always, our students are, they're learning. There's a lot going on. The school time is extended in comparison to the high school time for example. Projects and things to do, so it's also, it's healthier really, to diversify the kind of events they're experiencing to make them also concentrate on their hobbies, what they like to do, or learning new hobbies maybe.

Finding balance between academics and co-curricular activities proved to be a dominant point of concern for students, who reported being often inundated with assignments from professors, successfully requiring them to make a decision between their studies and enriching activities. Omar discussed how his spring break plans were upended by his professors' desire that their courses take precedence:

For example, this spring break I was like planning on going to the whole Emirates enjoying my time, but when I came this week I knew that I had two tests after the spring break, projects, homework everything like that. So, my vacation has been ruined. That's the problem. The instructors [don't] appreciate that we have a vacation. They see that vacation as opportunity to give them homework and more work to do.

Accounts like Omar's are not unheard of and could be corroborated by staff members like David, the Student Success Manager, who drove home the point that faculty can often become so engrossed in their courses that other areas of student development run the risk of being neglected:

We're working together to fill in that gap where it's hard to pull in those faculty, you know because, we understand they get caught up in their own little world and it's all about our classes, but we have to think at, look at the big picture of making sure that our students are served at all levels.

In addition to the risk of neglecting student development, other courses can be ignored because faculty are not communicating with one another. Omar and other students often referred to their professors' distribution of assignments as not taking into account the other work that other instructors had assigned. Students often stated that professors often believed their own class was the only one that students took. Therefore, students' need for balance not only referred to co-curricular activities and academics, but also to the work issued by professors that resulted in heavy workloads. As one student recalled, her GPA suffered because she was unable to find a feasible balance between her technical and non-technical courses.

Faculty Interactions

Even though students and staff agreed that faculty members' dedication to their courses often interfered with their quests to find and provide balance, instances like this provoked conversations about the types of interactions students had with faculty and staff on campus. Most students noted positive exchanges with faculty and staff, citing their ease in contacting professors and the professors' willingness to help students at any given moment. Rozan, an undecided freshman, recounted a particular encounter with one of her professors:

The instructor was very helpful. Whenever I need to ask a question, I just go to the office. If he has a class, he just stop for five minutes and let me answer my question and then he says, "I have a class, I gotta go." So, I really appreciate it, "thank you."

Students' appreciation for the unique relationships they were able to develop with professors and instructors that went above and beyond the call of duty to provide assistance was evidenced by anecdotes like Omar's, a petroleum engineering junior:

. . . [my] communication teacher I had my second semester, we actually end up inviting him to dinner, him and his wife actually, 'cause he was a good teacher to us and during the semester he provided a lot of help to us. [inaudible] So, we felt it was only right to repay him for what he does.

Given Omar's reaction to his professor's efforts, it was apparent that most students expected instructors to take a more hands-off approach to instruction. Many students expressed that interactions with faculty were limited to the classroom, with anything outside of that, such as opportunities for mentorship, being extremely rare.

While the vast majority of the interactions students had with faculty were positive, others expressed some professors' unwillingness to make themselves available to students:

. . . not all instructors, because some of them when you go to them after the class, they said, "You can't come to my office right now, you should sent me an e-mail, then I will reply to your on e-mail, then come to my office." But some other instructors are like "No problem, if you want my help just come to my office and I'm open for you, because I'm here to teach you, you are here to learn so that's why I'm here." And some others like, "This is not my problem, this is my time, my office hours send me an e-mail, you will get your appointment ready."

As evidenced by the student above, encountering faculty who were seen as intimidating and uninviting was a rare occurrence; most in fact honored their scheduled office hours and answered their students' questions promptly, whether in person or via email. It was obvious that most professors were committed to student excellence in terms of academic achievement; however, they were perceived as hesitant to allow students to participate in other educationally enriching programs, especially if they interfered with their course time. However, the message that the researcher is attempting to convey is that being academically strong is not enough—students must possess knowledge and experience in other areas including leadership, community outreach, soft skills, and professional development, as well as be healthy individuals.

Summary

As evidenced by the above excerpts, students displayed the desire to be more well-rounded students and acknowledged its importance. In some cases, students mentioned the appeal of programming that was similar to what was currently offered by the Institute's FYE

program after the first year of study, but with modifications that took their maturity into consideration. Professional staff also portrayed similar desires by acknowledging the need to provide opportunities for student enrichment beyond academics. The desire to offer and receive programming that reached beyond academics or provided a direct link to students' studies was apparent in the discussions with both students and staff. However, as the passages from interviews suggested, collaborating with professors can be difficult.

Development and Implementation: Challenges

Efforts to collaborate in order to offer students opportunities that directly link classroom knowledge to co-curricular activities was far more wide-reaching than with only professors; it was evident also throughout other campus units. The researcher realized early on that failed efforts to collaborate were often the result not just of an unwillingness to participate in collaborative efforts, but also of poor communication.

Collaboration

In addition to the HUGE program seeking to offer programming that will assist in the development of more well-rounded students, it also looks to encourage a more collaborative university campus that works together to offer holistic programming to students. In order to develop and implement a program of this nature with those two main goals in mind, it was important to identify the challenges associated with the task. Long before the research commenced, the researcher had observed that communication between units was lacking. However, upon speaking with both students and professionals, it became evident that this issue was far more widespread. Moreover, while collaboration and communication were clear contenders as challenges to the development and implementation of the program, another difficulty that had to be confronted was the issue of obtaining buy-in from both students and

professors. The researcher had anticipated that these themes would arise throughout conversations with both students and professionals, although at times she was surprised by how prominently these themes appeared during conversations. Another concern that arose during this study, though less prominent during conversations but still worth mentioning, was the PI's merger with two other universities in the city.

In terms of collaborative efforts made to provide student programming, the units that appeared to work most cohesively were the FYE program, the FYE Academic Bridge Program, and the Student Success Department. FYE and FYE Bridge often use workspaces in the Independent Learning Center, which is a part of the Student Success Department, to host workshops for students in their programs. This has created a collaborative atmosphere between these departments that facilitates students' growth and success. Another example of collaboration that took place was between FYE and the Health and Fitness Department and Nutritionist. These entities work together to encourage first-year students to adapt healthy lifestyles. These two examples of collaboration were the two positive endeavors that have been overwhelmingly successful. Interestingly, however, the common entity in both of these examples was FYE.

In the quest to better understand the structure of the University, the researcher attempted to locate an organizational chart, but unfortunately was unsuccessful in her attempts. Instead, she was compelled to rely on verbal accounts to understand the organizational structure of certain units, particularly that of Student Life. This could be viewed as problematic for an institution because it is necessary to have the structure of the university easily accessible to employees who need to know and understand the chain of command; it can also foster a culture of collaboration and communication throughout the campus. However, the PI is in a unique position because it is

in the midst of a merger, which has resulted in numerous and frequent changes. Consequently, the Institute is making the decision to not post the organizational structure.

Muna described the structure of her department, noting that Business Operations, Student Support, Campus Life, and Resident Life are all housed under Student Life. Additionally, Campus Life houses events, athletics, and the dietician. Figure 1 below illustrates this structure at the time of data collection, as changes could have occurred.

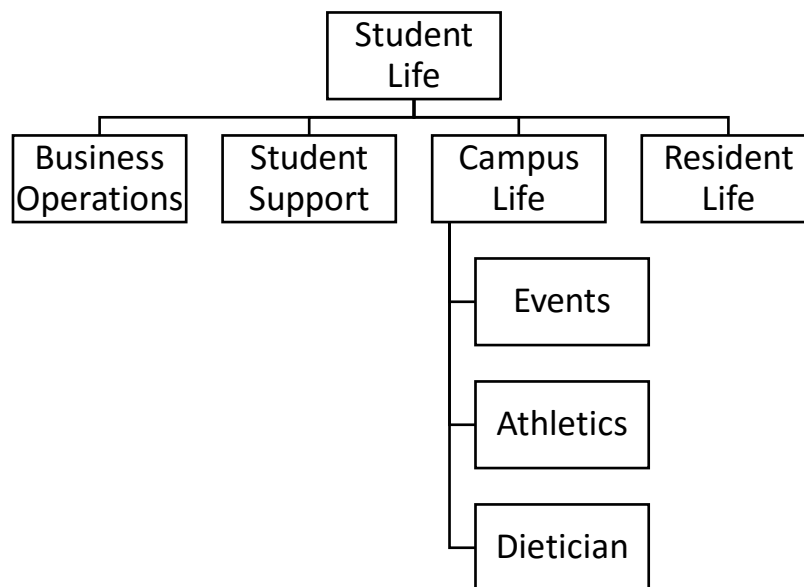


Figure 1. Student life organizational chart

Coincidentally, the FYE Program is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences, and while this was very surprising to initially discover, the reasoning was sound. The FYE program at the PI was designed as a compulsory program for all of its students and is directly linked to one course each semester of the first year of study. Students' participation in the FYE program accounts for 20% of their grade for each course. Therefore, since all students in their first year of study essentially take the same courses, including FYE 1 and FYE 2, this was the most logical place to house the program. This works extremely well for the FYE program and obviously

results in an extraordinary level of participation in the program. However, this would not be an option for HUGE since its focus is students in their second year of study until graduation—the point when students have chosen their majors—and so it is not as easy to require their participation.

This fact shed a brighter light on the three biggest challenges associated with the development and implementation of the HUGE program: collaboration, communication, and buy-in. David described the positive relationship that his department, Student Success, has been able to maintain with the FYE program:

We support FYE a lot. We support arts and sciences to a lesser degree, but we're trying to push a more conventional network of its own. So, we and I have no authority over anyone in those three departments, but we do a lot of service and help from time to time. . . . Most of the FYE workshops take place in the Independent Learning Center work room.

Collaboration between departmental units like the one mentioned above seemed to be rare occurrences. The inability to collaborate effectively could be attributed to what one staff member described as the proverbial “blame game” in academia:

And we have this, the weirdest thing ever in academia, we have this blame game. So, each program blames the other. So, if the students cannot do this, how are they not learning these skills while they are freshmen. Freshmen [instructors] say, “But this isn't part of what I teach and part of the syllabus. The ABP should teach it.” And the ABP would say, “But I'm assuming that students are coming from high school and they know how to do these things.”

However, campus collaborative efforts go far beyond interdepartmental work, and stretch to professors and their hesitancy to share small portions of their course time to introduce students to or involve them in academically enriching activities that are being offered on campus:

Like I have to speak with the student inside the lecture with my friend Professor blah, blah, blah. And after that he have to recommend about this activity. . . . This, it's not happen here. . . . I'm also previous faculty in my university. I understand when I was . . . part of the faculty. I will not accept any student to . . . do absent from my class. Even I don't like to give my time to anybody to announce for something, it's a, it's a very complicated.

Professionals empathized with faculty members' hesitation to collaborate as they too were once in the same position, although these same professionals now recognize the importance of communing in spaces with their academic colleagues to serve students better. The Institute's strategic plan does call for these spaces to exist, although it is unclear whether these are active efforts. As one professional mentioned, a space did once exist for faculty, staff, and select administrators associated with the FYE program. However, the fruits of this effort did not go beyond the FYE program to foster a more collaborative campus community between both faculty and professional staff.

These explanations detailing the positive working relationships with the FYE program served as evidence that collaboration can be achieved on this campus. However, most surprising was that even though FYE is housed in an academic department, Arts and Sciences, there were no reports of efforts that included faculty. David was the only staff member who mentioned a somewhat positive attempt to work with faculty members. He explained that a part of his retention efforts included adding an "at-risk" button to the CAMS student information system and asking department heads to inform their staff to use the button to identify students who may be struggling. While he has seen some positive results through the use of the "at-risk" button, he reminded the researcher that he cannot force faculty to use this measure. Instead, he relied on department heads, who may or may not be successful in their efforts to get professors to comply.

Communication

While dealing with faculty can present its own unique challenges, an unexpected problem that emerged was the number of approvals required to plan any type of event or activity—this was a great source for the frustration of both staff and students. Hadeel, a junior in mechanical engineering, revealed the desire to see more student-led programs, although she was often

deterred to submit a proposal because of the number of approvals that would have to be obtained and the length of time required to receive an approval:

But here, we're not that open to do more things. We have to get more approvals, like every single event even if it's so simple, or a program whatever, we have to go through a lot to make it happen.

The same sentiment was conveyed by an Academic Bridge Coordinator who noted that the number of approvals and length of time needed to acquire them was extremely discouraging and one of the biggest challenges of her job. The process of gaining an approval for a program was described as varying in length according to whether the activity or event would take place on campus and which departments needed to be notified. Some activities and events could be approved within a day's time while others could take weeks, although no reasoning for this disparity could be found.

Given that securing approvals may play a substantial role in the number of programs that could be offered to students after the first year of study, it was not too surprising to discover that a vast majority of professionals were unaware of programming that was being offered or planned by other departments. Upon asking professionals about their knowledge of opportunities for students, very few were aware of any that were not FYE or a part of a national initiative set forth by the country, as this sample excerpt indicates:

Some of them are led by like a national effort to do like something specific, like for example the reading the year of reading I think last year. So, every year, and the last few years, we have been having a specific theme for the year. This year is the year of giving. So, we do have, and whatever theme will be raised nationally, then you will find the whole educational sector, will try and put a huge effort to try and support and try to support that theme.

Students also agreed that opportunities for involvement were not being clearly communicated to them, prompting the formation of a student-led initiative to disperse

information to their peers. Joud, who was Director of the Women's Campus and Resident Life, described an encounter she had with a student whom she encouraged to take on the task:

Back in November, I had a student come in to me and say, "Did you know about this event" . . . and I said, "No, I didn't know," and she said, "See, Miss, none of us know; why weren't we told about this event?" And I said, "Well, maybe there is no department in the PI that will connect you to this event." She said, "Why isn't there? You know, all these universities across the country know about this event except us." And I said, "Okay, there is a gap, so go and fill it."

The lack of a unit or entity whose main function was to provide students with information about events and opportunities, both on campus and beyond, created chances for students to display their leadership skills and fill the gap they discovered. This also served as a prime example of how communication efforts were lax or lacking on the campus, as many students reported that if they had been made aware of programs or events, it was usually at the last minute when no more space was available because most were geared to their freshmen peers. Students also noted that when advertisement for events were posted, they lacked key information such as the objective of the program.

Buy-in

Students exhibited a clear desire and need to be involved on campus and in the local community, with staff echoing similar thoughts. Yet, gaining buy-in from students and faculty was one of the biggest concerns associated with the development and implementation of this program. Some students were anxious to see a program similar to the current FYE program being offered at the PI. But, of course, others were skeptical about participating in such a program, although after being told that a similar program would be voluntary, students' interests were piqued:

I don't recommend to continue with the FYE program sophomore year 'cause, yeah . . . because we have different schedules, so it is hard to make seminars or workshops according to our schedules. While in FYE the first year they did the schedules, so they had the same break time, same schedule, so they know where to add the seminars and the

workshops. . . . I think it will be better. . . . If you want to attend, you can attend—there's no partial marks. There is no consequence because in the FYE it is mandatory to have the FYE year experience because it is counted as their marks.

It was agreed that while convincing students may be easier because of the benefits they would receive by participating in HGUE, convincing faculty would be a more daunting task:

But faculty, they are very reluctant. . . . We're trying to draw everyone in and get that buy in because outside of the students, it's really important for us to build that bridge between units so that we're working together to fill in that gap where it's hard to pull in those faculty. You know, because we understand they get caught up in their own little world and it's all about our classes, but we have to think at, look at the big picture of making sure that our students are served at all levels. . . . [It's a] challenge getting the engineering faculty on board, it's tough. . . . Especially those guys who are very research-oriented. . . . arts and sciences have been good, ABP have been good . . . but it's taken several meetings and several reiterations. . . .

Statements like the above are reminiscent of the fact that while getting faculty on board promises to be a difficult task, some students will still also have to be thoroughly convinced to participate, even though many who were approached were either anxious for more opportunities or at least interested.

Summary

Several challenges were identified as potential hindrances to the successful development and implementation of the HUGE program, including collaboration, communication, and buy-in. However, after further investigation and speaking with both staff and students, these do not seem to be issues that could not be overcome, albeit with time. Building a collaborative network of campus units can be successfully achieved through constant communication among the units.

The challenges associated with the development and implementation of the HUGE program at the PI are not at all unique to this university and would presumably be faced at any institution of higher education. However, one issue that was not discussed at length by staff or students, but could ultimately impact the development and implementation of the program at this particular university, was the impending merger. As it stands, many programs, including the

award-winning FYE program, are unlikely to continue, therefore making it unlikely that new programs will be adopted immediately once the merger is complete.

Although the PI's structure is extremely similar to many structures at other western universities that have endured many of the same challenges with collaboration, communication, and buy-in, the PI structure is not without its unique nuances because of its location in the United Arab Emirates and, more broadly, in the Middle East.

Institutional Location

The PI shares more similarities with western institutions of higher education than differences in terms of structure and attempts being made to facilitate student success and retention on the campus. Initially, the researcher assumed that she would be overwhelmed by the differences, especially in terms of its location in the UAE. However, the structure of the PI and many of the universities in the region were built around western models and often seek accreditation from American educational review boards, such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology. It must be noted, however, that the PI does differ from other universities in the region in being very forward-thinking about what they were able to offer students in terms of student success programming, namely the FYE Program.

Differences in Universities

Even with the many similarities in structure and program offerings to universities in the United States, a number of differences had the potential to affect the development and implementation of the proposed HUGE program. To begin, the PI is a university with a professional focus of study in which all of its students study a field of engineering or a closely related field, including four areas of engineering: Chemical, Electrical, Mechanical, and Petroleum and Petroleum Geosciences. Despite this professional focus at the Institute, students

do possess interest in areas that are not directly associated with the hard sciences, including calligraphy, sports, and arts, as the following excerpt indicates:

Sometimes when they do the activities in the lobby, some girls volunteered to do some activities. Those things [don't] have to be the educational, like half education and half fun. And when the girls come up with the ideas, we can relate to them, it becomes more interesting. So, I would like them to give more opportunities for the girls to arrange like an activity in the campus. We find it more fun and interesting. . . . Things that are fun and educational at the same time. It may be related to sports, related to . . . whatever girls like.

Mohammed, a chemical engineering sophomore, reiterated similar feelings about making activities and events that ventured outside of students' typical science-focused areas:

What would improve my experience? Give us different things, learn us new things other than the subjects that we have to do for. . . . For example, a workshop for car painting, doing wood and stuff . . . and gaining experience other than studying.

As exhibited by the students' responses, while they were interested in being exposed to activities and experiences that also aligned with their other interests, they still recognized the value of including an educational component. As Eyler (2009) suggested, introducing students to experiences that support their academic endeavors comes with many benefits, including a better understanding of the subject matter, increased critical thinking, and the opportunity to engage in lifelong learning. This notion supports student success programs like FYE and the proposed HUGE program.

Universities that have a professional focus are not at all unique to higher education, yet what makes the PI stand out from similar professionally focused institutions is its guarantee of employment to students upon graduating. This fact had two profound consequences, the first being how career preparedness was approached. The PI's nutritionist, Asma, described a program that was instituted to prepare students for successful entry into the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), the University's former sponsor prior to the impending merger. The

“Step Up” program concentrated on senior students by giving them a nutrition and fitness plan to follow:

When we first started the University, the senior students had to graduate and work in the ADNOC workforce. And they get employed by ADNOC so because most of the engineers when they graduate, they go to the field, they have to have a certain, let’s say, measurements, and one of the measurements is the BMI, has to be in a certain range. . . . So yeah and then of course when they go to the ADNOC, what they do is they do another test, a physical test, and then they see if they have reached within the range of the BMI or not.

ADNOC’s fitness requirements for their future employees is in place as it expects its engineers and laborers to work within oil fields and other locations, which would require a great deal of physical labor. Working in such environments requires a certain level of physical fitness; therefore, the PI saw the need to offer services that would assist in ensuring that students would meet the requirements of their job contracts. The importance of physical fitness in the field for ADNOC has gone as far as to become a factor in courses that students are required to take:

I was teaching health and fitness courses for the students, it’s like one credit hour and this course, it’s like once per week for during all the semester. The aim of the course is to see, to keep the students fit because ADNOC, what they are doing is like, they were like when the students graduate, if his BMI is very high, then he cannot work. Or if he’s obese, he cannot work. And this health and fitness course, we try to do, we try to teach them how to train by themselves or how to eat healthy food, then before reaching senior level, he has four years. And what the FYE did is like, they say it’s mandatory if you’re FYE to take the course, then you have three years until you graduate.

A second result of the PI being a professionally focused institution is the motivation of its students. Through the discussions with students, the researcher discovered that the main reasons for their decision to attend PI were the scholarships and salaries provided for each student, in addition to the guarantee of employment:

I did some research on what this university offers, and I found that Petroleum is the one that I liked being a lot, and second of all it’s well-known; has education standards similar to other universities in the U.S.; and it’s basically, you are promised a job after you graduate. After you study, you are promised a job for what you have studied, and whether you want to continue after that, it’s up to you, but it’s a part of the contract. So, it’s everything about it that’s interesting to me. I could support myself in the future.

Students' reasons for choosing to pursue an engineering degree at the PI were almost always centered around the promise of employment after graduation or the salary provided as part of their contract while studying. Yet, the University has gained a reputation as being one of the best and most academically rigorous institutions in the UAE:

It's good. Actually, it's perfect, but there is more stress. A little bit more when I compare me, my friends in Dubai, Zayed University in Ras Al Kamiah, we are the most stressful students as a freshman year.

The rigor of the PI has shown no signs of being a deterrent for students as retention rates remain at extremely high levels, though caveats for this achievement were recognized by the Student

Success Manager:

Our retention for freshmen . . . is about ninety-three percent. Now, obviously, you've got the caveat that they're getting paid, they've got guarantees, well, a guaranteed job. So, there's a lot reasons for them to stay, but even still I mean when Dr. Ahmed took over as Dean, one of the things that the board said to him is "You need to sort out retention 'cause it's, we're, we're paying these guys we're investing in them, we can't afford to have these guys dropping out." So, it's gone up a lot in the last two years. Our two-year retention target was eighty-two percent and we actually hit ninety. So, like it's really good—for a two-year retention, it's very good. And again, if you can compare it to a few of America's, 'cause we're at least ten percentage points. Now, listen if you look at Duke or Harvard or Yale, where they're ninety-eight, ninety-seven, but we're not Harvard.

The high retention rates and the caveats associated with students' reasoning to continue on at the University were obvious, with those same caveats serving as the reasoning for students like Noura, a petroleum engineering junior, who decided to pursue engineering and attend the PI. As she explained, she initially worried about her father allowing her to go away for school:

. . . I never thought of engineering in high school. I was so into medicine, bio. I wanted to study bio technology and I wanted to go to this university in Sharjah but I had to be on a scholarship and it was really risky to be on that type of scholarship because if your GPA goes down, you have to pay tuition. And I wasn't up for that risk. I didn't want to put my parents under that stress of tuition. And PI popped out of nowhere saying "We have salaries and secure jobs." I didn't think my dad would like it because it's really far away and I'm from Ras Al Kamiah and it's about a two and half hour drive. But he went for it and he said, "No, that's even better than bio technology because it's even more secure... it's even better for you. You know what? Forget bio, go into engineering."

Students' decision to pursue engineering at the Petroleum Institute, particularly female students, often times relied on the University's proximity to their home, in addition to the above caveats.

Culture

Just as Noura was concerned about her father's willingness to allow her to attend an institution that was so far from her home, other female students also grappled with the same issue in choosing a university, as this excerpt indicates:

I was thinking of architecture. And then because I did not have much choices here in the UAE—not in the UAE—here, in Abu Dhabi, especially because I was looking for a university that offered architecture. I found UAEU in Sharjah, but it is difficult for me to live in dorms because my parents won't let me go away for a week. So, that's why I found the Petroleum Institute the most suitable place for me among all the universities here in Abu Dhabi. . . .

Female students generally are subject to more restrictions, whether living at home or on campus, and often required permission to participate in after-hours activities if living at home or explicit permission from parents about with whom they could leave campus if living in residential housing:

If someone offers things like this where I have the opportunity to go there and I have permission from my family, I would be the first one to participate. Sometimes I don't have time and it's hard to take permission from family for transportation to things.

Cultural practices like the ones mentioned above are commonplace for females, who are likely to experience more restrictions in terms of leaving their homes, particularly their hometowns and the country, than their male counterparts. Male students were more likely to be encouraged to stay in the country, but venture outside of their hometowns:

I came to the PI like at the last chance or something. Because first of all, I applied New Jersey . . . I wanted to study there. And I told my father, he was like everything was okay, and told me "This is your choice," but then every day we hearing some problems that are happening there. . . . So, he told me, "No, don't go to the U.S." and "You should find a university here." I told him, "Okay." Living in Al-Ain, I told him there's UAEU university which is really good in the country. It was number one in UAE, but he told me "Do you want to study in Al-Ain?" That "You living in Al-Ain, you cannot do something like you have some free time, what will you do? You will not do anything in Al-Ain

because it's really boring here." He told me, "Why don't you go to Abu Dhabi or Dubai?"

In some rare cases, female students were afforded the opportunity to study abroad through the PI's exchange program, in which they visited a partnering university in the United States for one semester. However, it must be stated that the fall of 2016 was the inaugural semester for female students to be allowed to participate in the program; two students were sent to the Colorado School of Mines for one semester.

While the motivation for students choosing to attend and remain at the PI seemed to be very apparent, in some instances adherence to the cultural practice of keeping genders separated by the University was also appealing to female students:

. . . I want to study Petroleum . . . because of my father. . . . Also, I can go to Masdar or Khalifa but I don't like, merged things, like, to be next with boys. I don't feel comfortable. It's okay for my family, but for me I don't feel comfortable! It's not like I have a problem to me. I know like if I would work, I would work with boys, guys and men, so it's okay for me, but I mean like for now. So, I can take all my confidence and be comfortable.

The above student's family did not have an issue with her studying with members of the opposite sex; however, her decision to attend the PI over any other university was determined by her access to a segregated classroom setting. Another female student was encouraged to enroll at the PI by her older brother who was already enrolled. She recalled him telling her how the women had nicer facilities than the men—a single building with all of their classrooms and many of the same labs, as well as nicer campus housing. The University employs a truly "separate but equal" system for its facilities. A majority of the labs and dining options are duplicated on both the men's and women's campuses, and all students have the option to live in on-campus housing. However, even though facilities are replicated, female students do not enjoy the same freedom as their male counterparts as a result of the Institute holding tightly to cultural standards.

Traditionally, the culture of the country has called for the separation of genders in certain spaces, particularly classrooms. The practice of separating genders in public spaces, especially those in higher education institutions, is one that universities in the region are slowly moving away from as more western universities establish satellite locations; thus, PI is one of the few that still follows such a model. However, as the country matures and more western ideas are introduced, the situation has begun to change and entering a segregated space is still somewhat of a shock to students who have attended international schools in the region:

. . . I was in a culture where there were boys and girls and suddenly I came into culture only boys and also I was not like . . . I was with different nationalities. I was in a mixed international school. So, when I came here, most of them are local. I didn't like it at all till now, 'cause like when the culture's like only boys first think they are closed-minded. Like sometimes if I go out with my friends and I see my school girlfriends outside, like we greet each other . . . they look at me in a strange way that [says] "What are you doing?"

Mohammed dealt with adjusting to a segregated campus while, below, Hadeel could be described as more indifferent in terms of the campus as whole. However, she did express her frustration at the withdrawal of one of the rare opportunities for male and female students to interact and improve their speaking skills:

Okay, well, we tried to open, actually we opened "Toastmasters" . . . "P.I. Toastmasters" . . . Toastmasters helps you in being more confident in public speaking, so, it's really, really, helped a lot of students in the PI, and we're still receiving emails thanking us for Toastmasters, because it makes you go in front of an audience and speak about different topics, different, like, it was something that helped us improve our English and our . . . the way we talk in front of people, and yeah, it was like amazing. But, it was for both female and male students, and it was last year, so they weren't very okay with the female/male thing, and they stopped it. Hopefully we will continue with it one day.

Gender in relation to culture was addressed at several junctures. A staff member recalled an encounter she had with a male student who was unable to understand her position of authority, further acknowledging the difficulties women often face. During this encounter, she remembered how the student questioned whether the male figures in her family were opposed to

her working, particularly in her position of authority, and how the UAE has evolved in terms of women being encouraged to go into fields like engineering and leadership within organizations:

I had one of my students in the workshops asking me, “So, men in your family, they don’t mind you doing what you are doing, is it okay?” And I can see really that he is trying to absorb. I think his age, they are too young, and their heads they keep spinning. “How come? How did she travel? How did she graduate from this ‘X’ university? Traditionally how was it done? Is it okay or it’s not okay?” . . . So, I think cultural for me specifically I think, being an Emirati and working in academia and I think the biggest thing, girls immediately they can relate and you can see in their eyes, they aspire one day to achieve things even beyond what I have done. . . . But for boys I think it’s the cultural aspect of it. . . . I think it’s an opportunity for this kid to grow . . . maybe he doesn’t, maybe he never had any similar character within his family household. But it’s definitely something common in the UAE. I don’t think it’s as weird, or as uncommon as it used to be twenty years ago.

The way culture manifests at the PI does not end at the segregated campuses. In probing to uncover students’ rationale for pursuing a degree in engineering and attending the PI, the students often mentioned their family’s expectations or suggestions, coupled with their own interest in science and mathematics:

It was not my choice, I really wanted to go to an easier University, which is HCT—Higher College of Technology—but my family said, “No, you can’t because you’re good student, you have a good GPA, so you need to go to a good university and take your degree with bachelor.”

Beyond parents directly influencing students’ decisions about which university to attend, students were also expected to pursue degrees in the areas of medicine and engineering. Moreover, while women attending university was once unheard of, it was now not only accepted but even expected that their education would lead to an advanced degree.

Culture also has affected the level of involvement parents are allowed to have in their students’ educational affairs. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws do not exist at PI and most universities in the UAE, compared with the United States where such laws are enforced. FERPA laws prohibit parents from gaining access to their children’s records without explicit permission from the student once he or she has entered a postsecondary

institution (N.a., 2015). Staff members mentioned this a number of times when recalling having frequent interactions with parents. It was also noted that the parents of students who lived at home tended to be more involved than the parents of students who lived in the dorms:

. . . many of our students live in the dorm, many live in Abu Dhabi. Funny enough, the ones who lives in Abu Dhabi, who struggle, their parents are more on top of them, whatever. Whereas, the ones who are struggling in the dorm, they have nobody they answer to. So, they can be as relaxed or as sort of committed as they decide.

The UAE is a progressive country that still values the richness of its culture and does its best to respect traditions in many ways. It is actually very admirable how traditions have been maintained or matured in way that is still respectful to the original objectives.

Summary

In considering the institutional location of the PI when this study commenced, the researcher assumed there would be a plethora of differences, ranging from the structure of the university to the culture of the country. While key differences were observed that need to be addressed throughout the remainder of this study, the culture of the country posed the greatest differences, particularly in the field of higher education, as evidenced by the lack of FERPA laws. The segregation of the genders on campus as well as the restrictions enforced for female students were the two variables that required the researcher to make the most adaptation.

For the researcher, the matter of a segregated campus in this country was twofold: as a female researcher, it was more difficult to locate and contact male students for interviews as she wished to keep boundaries intact and remain respectful of the culture. Instead, she decided to ask for assistance in identifying willing male participants from the FYE Coordinator, although this choice was reconsidered for fear of being unable to obtain a diverse representation of student experiences.

By contrast, the researcher worked on the women's campus and lived in residential housing where direct access to female participants in communal spaces was available. The researcher had also become familiar to them, making potential participants more approachable and eager to engage with someone about whom they were curious. As one student put it, she had hopes of interacting more often with international graduate students to learn more about their cultures:

Yeah, like, here I don't feel the students are, like, we don't know about you guys: you're international students, and I think PI doesn't provide [sic] type of events where we can know more about each other—we can know more about different cultures. It's just only the Global Day and just us representing other countries. So, I think we need to know more about other cultures and different perspectives.

This statement could explain some students' eagerness to speak with the researcher and, in some cases, ask about her experiences and opinions on various topics during their time together. Even after initial meetings, the students were still extremely friendly, often inquiring about the progress of the research and offering to refer more friends for interviews. The researcher observed that this was an extremely welcoming cadre of people who were generous and kind, especially to those who showed respect for their culture—a much different picture than what is frequently painted by the American media.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings associated with the analysis of data collected via several in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to identify and explore measures that were currently in place to facilitate student success and retention efforts at the Petroleum Institute. By identifying efforts already in place, the researcher was able to determine the best course of action for the development and implementation of the proposed Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience program.

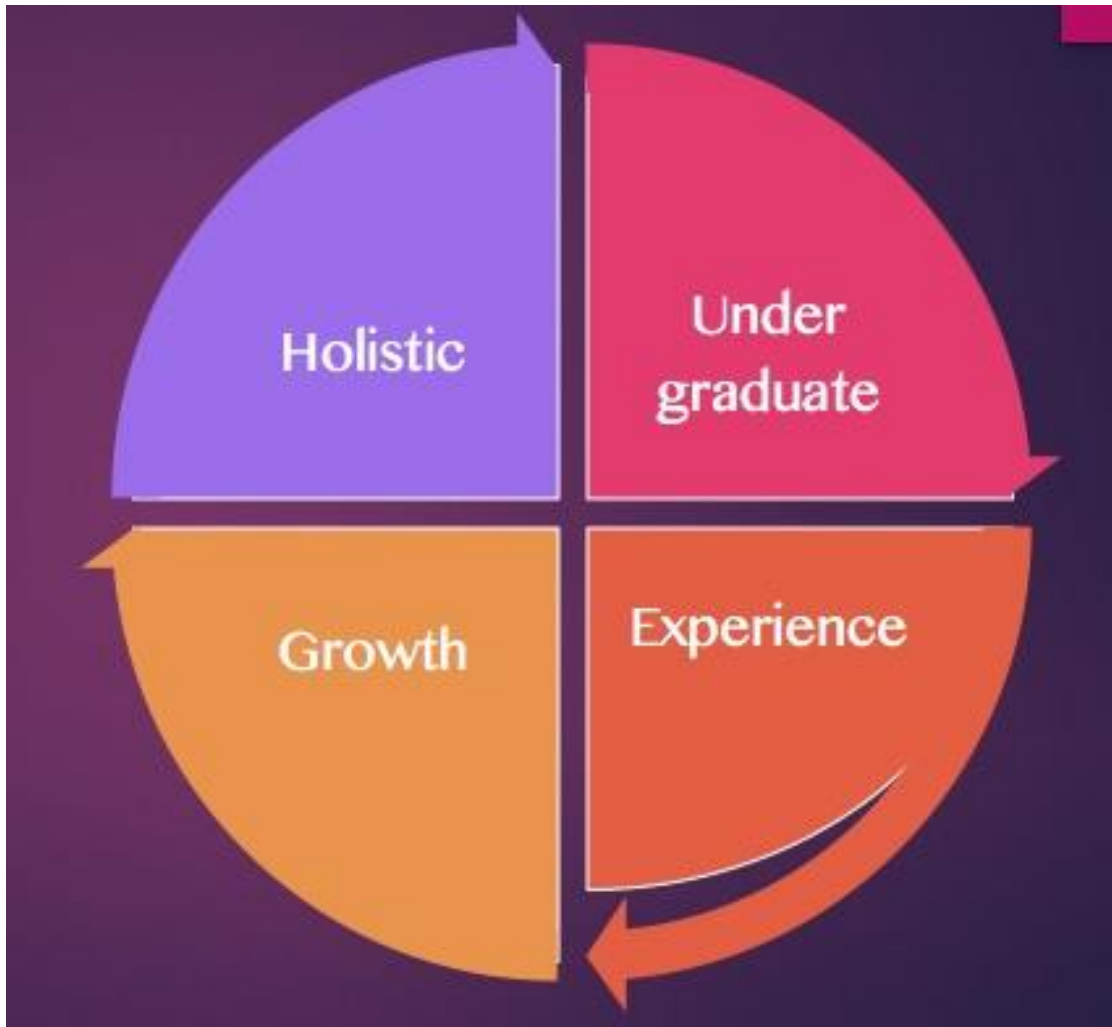
The interviews produced an abundance of information that was used to answer the research questions set forth as this study commenced. In doing so, several themes emerged that were subsequently categorized by their relation to the research questions.

The findings presented discussed the impact beyond the classroom, specifically student success programming after the first year and career preparedness. Also, the challenges associated with the development and implementation of the proposed program were also brought forth including communication, collaboration, and buy-in. Lastly, the findings associated with institutional location were addressed as they related to differences in universities and culture.

Chapter 5

Results

The study resulted in the development of a framework that lays out a plan of action to implement the proposed HUGE program. The collection and review of interviews with staff and students at the Petroleum Institute and field notes allowed for the following document to reflect the findings and offers suggestions for the best methods of practice. The framework contains three phases of implementation, along with suggested staff positions and job descriptions. As this particular framework depicted below has been designed specifically for the PI, certain aspects will not be applicable to all institutions. Therefore, those institutions seeking to implement similar programming should treat the following as a framework with the understanding that a complete institutional assessment and evaluation should be conducted before the implementation of the proposed program.



HUGE

Student Success and Retention
Program
Developed By: Bianca Teats

Proposal

Overview

The Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience (HUGE) is a student success and retention program that addresses key components of the undergraduate experience and beyond. The program is designed as a continuation of the Freshman Year Experience (FYE) and FYE Bridge programs at the Petroleum Institute. Five modules including **academics, leadership, community outreach, professional development** and **wellness** will serve as the foundation for the program. The aim of the program is to foster the growth of well-rounded students who are prepared for life after graduation and entrance into the workforce.

The purpose of the proposed programming is to initiate stronger relationships between students and faculty and encourage participation both inside and out of classrooms, while also improving soft skills, critical thinking, and higher order thinking skills that may not have been emphasized previously.

Goal

The goal of the HUGE program is to provide a continuation of services from the FYE and FYE Bridge programs by providing access to activities and events to students beginning in the second year of study until graduation. These programs will foster and facilitate development in the areas of academics, leadership, community outreach, professional development, and wellness of students. Furthermore, increased interactions between students, faculty, and peers is desired to promote collaboration and communication between individuals at various levels.

Additionally, the HUGE program seeks to encourage a more collaborative campus atmosphere that communicates and works together to develop programming that supports the success and growth of the university's students.

Background

HUGE will maintain a layout similar to that of the FYE and FYE Bridge programs, which currently offer a variety of activities and events that assist students in their transition from high school to college. The focus of these programs are **success, skills, and social** aspects of students' first year in the university environment. Students are enrolled in ENGR 101 and ENGR 102 courses that are designed to introduce students to the field of engineering as well as familiarize them with methods that will help them be productive and transfer their acquired knowledge and skills to other courses. A percentage of each course is dedicated to FYE 1 and FYE 2 participation. FYE programming utilizes a passport system that requires students to collect stamps for their participation in activities, events, and seminars that cover a broad scope of topics.

Structure

It is proposed that the HUGE program be housed under the Student Life department. Given that the program targets students in their second year of study through

graduation, a point where they have varying schedules, tying the program to a course to make student participation mandatory was not a feasible option. Making the program voluntary was the best fit, as opposed to the compulsory layout of the FYE program, which had direct access to students' schedules.

A steering committee should be established to guide the direction of the program. This committee should be made up of the Dean of Student Life, Dean of Academic Affairs, Director of the FYE program, and Director of Campus and Resident Life.

The Director of Campus and Resident Life is suggested to serve as Director of HUGE. As the Director, this person will lead a team of coordinators from both academic and auxiliary units on campus to make up a diverse team with varying backgrounds. This team of coordinators will work together to coordinate and deliver programming to best meet the needs of students. This team of coordinators would be responsible for leading a module, coordinating events, and providing approvals for proposed activities from students.

As a part of its collaborative efforts, partnerships with other academic units such as the Student Success Department, which houses the Independent Learning Centers and the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) should be established.

Additionally, relationships with the College of Arts and Sciences, Office of Alumni Relations and External relations should also be cultivated. Furthermore, units within Academic Affairs, such as Career Services and the Registrar's Office should be explored. Relationships with other departments within Student Life including Activities and Events, Student Office Support Center, Nutrition Counseling Services, and Residential Life should be maintained.

Eventually, HUGE will serve as an umbrella program that houses both the FYE Bridge and FYE programs and will ultimately function as a continuation of these two programs that addresses the ever-changing needs of students as they progress through their academic programs. Sophomore, junior, and senior level students are the target audience and focus of the HUGE program. Once students in the FYE program graduate, they are encouraged to continue their participation in the HUGE program.

Initially, it was suggested that student participation in the program be made mandatory and part of the requirements for graduation. However, under the current time constraints and other institutional guidelines, it is proposed that the program be introduced as voluntary to gauge student interest and measure the success of programming. While the Petroleum Institute has produced great success by making FYE a compulsory program for students, the same circumstances are unavailable after the first year due to differences in course requirements for each curriculum. During the first year of study students must take ENGR 101 and 102, which are a part of every curriculum.

The HUGE program is being proposed as a credit-based program, similar to the passport system currently being used for FYE programming in order to use a system that students are already familiar. The passport system currently in place requires students to obtain stamps for attending approved programming. Students are required to obtain a certain number of stamps in each focus (success, skills, and social) in order to receive full credit for participation at the conclusion of the semester. Similarly, credits will be earned through participation in seminars, workshops, and other advertised and approved activities, as well as select student jobs and elected positions, though these credits will be recorded in a digital student portfolio. Students will be encouraged to seek out opportunities on their own that may be off campus at other universities or within the surrounding community, though approval must be obtained, preferably in advance. A mid-semester check-in will allow students to review their portfolios with HUGE staff. During meetings, the number of credits earned and the number remaining credits to be earned will be discussed along with professional documents that are being created. Meetings should take no more than 30 minutes.

Unlike its predecessor, the HUGE program will take more of a student-led approach to programming, giving students the opportunity to design and facilitate programming under the supervision of faculty. Junior and Senior level students will be encouraged to submit proposals for peer workshops and seminars; students serving as facilitators will receive credit in one or more modules for approved submissions. Additionally, campus faculty and staff will be asked and encouraged to submit proposals for programs that fit within one of the five modules. As an applicant for facilitator of a program, faculty, staff, and students will be given the flexibility to design programming with full authority. Seminars and workshops that are 45 minutes to an hour in length are the standard for co-curricular programming and while this is acceptable, applicants are encouraged to design a series of workshops or seminars to encourage student participation and engagement over longer periods of time.

In order to obtain approval for proposed programming, faculty, staff, and students must submit the *HUGE Program Proposal Application* (see *Appendix*). Approvals for programming will be granted by module coordinators via email. Module coordinators may request to meet with applicants to review and discuss the details of the programming application or make suggestions.

Academic rigor and commitment is highly encouraged. No additional coursework will be required on behalf of students, instead program specific activities and assignments will be a requisite for all proposed programming. Program assessments will include, but are not limited to reflection papers, portfolio assignment submissions, and interactive activities.

Though course enrollment will not be a requirement of the program, a one-credit Special Topics in Human and Social Sciences (H&SS 293/393/493) course should be offered as an elective alternative. This course should meet once per week and focus on

portfolio preparation. Additionally, special workshops and seminars will be offered as a part of the course. The portfolio development portion of the course will consist of students producing documents including but not limited to curriculum vitae, cover letters, business proposals, and professional correspondence. While portfolio development is specific to this course, students that are not enrolled will be offered access to workshops with similar foci and results.

Module Description

Academics

The academic module of the program will focus on ensuring that students' cognitive and critical thinking skills are further developed and stimulated in addition to increasing interaction with faculty outside of the traditional classroom setting. The academic module of the program will set out to make students stronger, more critical thinkers and problem solvers. Students will also be encouraged to improve their communication skills through interactive workshops and meetings with academic advisors.

Proposed Events and Activities			
Type	Description	Credit	Notes
Peer-led Study Group	Study groups organized by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 credit for attendance at 4/6 meetings by mid semester check-in • 2 credits for student facilitators (1 for academics, 1 for leadership) – must attend 5/6 meetings by mid semester check-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student facilitators must submit an application to organize groups. • Facilitators will submit a weekly attendance roster to the Academic Module Coordinator.
Advisor Meeting	Mid-semester and end of semester meetings with academic advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 credit offered and earned for meeting with academic advisor at mid semester and end of semester • Total of 2 credits to be earned per semester • Advisor must sign check-in sheet documenting meetings with students to be included in individual portfolios 	
Student and Faculty-led seminars and workshops	Seminars and workshops proposed and led by faculty and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 credit for attendance at seminar or workshop • Multi-session workshops are worth up to 3 credits – all sessions must be attended to receive credit; partial credit unavailable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students attending seminars and workshops must sign attendance roster and complete the corresponding assessment or journal entry to be included in the student portfolio • HUGE staff member will be in attendance for supervision

Leadership

The leadership module of the program will focus on making students stronger, more responsible leaders through various opportunities and activities. Students will be able to earn credit in this module by way of approved student job assignments, leadership positions in clubs, and participation in approved workshops and seminars. Students may also propose events and activities, as well as submit an application to facilitate a workshop or seminar for credit in the leadership module.

Proposed Events and Activities			
Type	Description	Credit	Notes
Student Jobs	Select student jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 2 credits to be earned, 1 per semester half Credit awarded based upon supervisor's evaluation suggestion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be required to meet with their supervisors for mid-semester and end-of-semester to complete and discuss evaluations that will be included in the student's portfolio.
Club Leadership	Leadership positions in clubs held by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One credit per semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will complete a journal entry detailing their semester in the leadership position, which should include challenges faced and programs and initiatives introduced.
Faculty-led seminars and workshops	Seminars and workshops proposed and led by faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 credit for attendance at seminar or workshop Multi-session workshops are worth up to 3 credits – all sessions must be attended to receive credit; partial credit unavailable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students attending seminars and workshops must sign attendance roster and complete the corresponding assessment or journal entry to be included in the student portfolio

Community Outreach

The service module is developed with the intent of instilling in students a sense of responsibility to their country and community both within and outside of the Petroleum Institute. Students are implored to offer assistance and relief to those that are less fortunate, in need, or require aid for various circumstances. Activities, events, and seminars will be used to apply the objectives of this module. A proposed feature component of this module is a peer mentorship program in which senior students are paired with sophomore students. Students are encouraged to seek out and participate in opportunities outside of the Petroleum Institute or submit proposals for service projects that they intend to enact to obtain credit in this module.

Proposed Events and Activities			
Type	Description	Credit	Notes
Peer-led Service Project	Service projects organized by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 credit for attending project • 2 credits for student facilitators (1 for service, 1 for leadership) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student facilitators must submit an application to organize project. • HUGE staff member must supervise project and assist with coordinating transportation, if necessary
Student and Faculty-led seminars and workshops	Seminars and workshops proposed and led by faculty and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 credit for attendance at seminar or workshop • Multi-session workshops are worth up to 3 credits – all sessions must be attended to receive credit; partial credit unavailable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students attending seminars and workshops must sign attendance roster and complete the corresponding assessment or journal entry to be included in the student portfolio • HUGE staff member will be in attendance for supervision

Wellness

The objective of the wellness module is to encourage students to commit to and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Credit can be earned for this module through participation in approved activities, events, workshops, and seminars. Students are encouraged to seek events and opportunities outside of campus for credit.

Proposed Events and Activities			
Type	Description	Credit	Notes
Wellness Activity Participation	Participation in campus-sponsored physical activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 credit for participation; Must record attendance in portfolio and have supervising staff member sign. 	
Student and Faculty-led seminars and workshops	Seminars and workshops proposed and led by faculty and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 credit for attendance at seminar or workshop • Multi-session workshops are worth up to 3 credits – all sessions must be attended to receive credit; partial credit unavailable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students attending seminars and workshops must sign attendance roster and complete the corresponding assessment or journal entry to be included in the student portfolio • HUGE staff member will be in attendance for supervision

Professional Development

The professional development module of the program requires students to build and maintain a professional portfolio that showcases their development as students and future employees. Students will have the opportunity to attend workshops, seminars, and interactive activity sessions that will assist in the assembly of the portfolio.

Proposed Events and Activities			
Type	Description	Credit	Notes
Student and Faculty-led seminars and workshops	Seminars and workshops proposed and led by faculty and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 credit for attendance at seminar or workshop• Multi-session workshops are worth up to 3 credits – all sessions must be attended to receive credit; partial credit unavailable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students attending seminars and workshops must sign attendance roster and complete the corresponding assessment or journal entry to be included in the student portfolio• HUGE staff member will be in attendance for supervision• Professional portfolio documents will be the main form of assessment for this module

Module Assessment

Module activities will be assessed in multiple ways including, but not limited to reflection journal submissions, portfolio assembly, and activity specific evaluations. Each assessment will be included in the professional portfolio as detailed below. Assessment submissions will be reviewed by module coordinators twice per academic year, at midterms and at the end of semester. For those sessions that require a concluding evaluation, session facilitators will be responsible for the distribution and collection of evaluations to be evaluated for credit. It is preferred that session facilitators complete the evaluations and submit results to module coordinators for recording.

Professional Portfolio

The professional portfolio will serve as the main assessment vehicle for the HUGE program. Similar to the passport from the FYE program, the portfolio will both document students' attendance at programming and professional documents to be compiled in a single location. Portfolios will be assessed twice per semester at midterms and finals by Module Coordinators to evaluate students' progress in each module.

Student Rewards

Students are encouraged to participate in as many activities with the HUGE program as possible to gain the *HOLISTIC* experience. However, in the case that students excel or take a distinct interest in a particular module, special recognition for their efforts should be recognized through end of semester programs, extra credit, or an end of year academic excursion. Those students successfully completing the program will be recognized and awarded medals, cords, or stoles at graduation for their outstanding participation in the program.

Professional Positions and Job Descriptions

HUGE Director of Programs – The HUGE Director of Programs acts as the liaison and facilitator of the program. This person develops and guides the vision for the program. It is also the responsibility of the Director to lead the program and ensure that a calendar of events is maintained for all activities and events that are coordinated through the program. As Director, this person's main responsibility is to develop and maintain relationships with every auxiliary unit and academic department for the sake of collaboration across the University's campus. This person is also responsible for the final approval of events and activities that are submitted by faculty, staff, and students.

Module Coordinators – Module coordinators report directly to the HUGE Director and are responsible for carrying out the vision set forth by the Director while leading their designated module by coordinating events among contributors to their programming. These coordinators are also responsible for developing and maintaining a standard curriculum with at least two (2) signature programs that may include but are not limited to events, activities, seminars, or workshops. Coordinators are also expected to work closely with students to support and carry out the administrative tasks associated with proposed student programs. These coordinators work together, with faculty, staff, and students to identify programming that appeals to and benefits students both on and off campus. Coordinators should also work to identify faculty and staff, especially those who do not usually have contact with students, across the campus who are interested in offering special workshops to students. Coordinators are also responsible for developing and reviewing assessments of programs. It is the duty of the coordinators to ensure that the objectives of their respective modules are met and adjusted accordingly.

Academic Module Coordinator – The Academic Module Coordinator is responsible for creating and managing academic programming. This person should work closely with faculty to coordinate scheduling and develop activities and events that align and supplement coursework.

Leadership Module Coordinator – The Leadership Module Coordinator develops and maintains programming within the module. This person is responsible for identifying all

leadership programming efforts that are currently being offered to students. The Coordinator is also responsible for advising the Student Ambassador program.

Student Ambassador Advisor – The Student Ambassador Advisor is responsible for selecting Student Ambassadors through the application process. This person is also responsible for coordinating events for students involved in the program. The Leadership Module Coordinator can serve in this capacity or another staff member can be appointed by the Director. Should this position become separate or independent of the Leadership Module Coordinator, this person will work closely with the LMC to coordinate programming for the module.

Peer Mentorship Advisor(s) – The number of advisors for this program will depend upon the number of students enrolled in the program. The recommended ratio of students to each advisor is 10 to 1. The advisor(s) will work to develop programming to facilitate the program and serve as point people for student mentors. This person will also lead the training for student mentors. Module Coordinators are suggested to fill the roles of Peer Mentorship Advisors; however, this can also be an independent position as determined by the Director.

Community Outreach Module Coordinator – The Community Outreach Module Coordinator is responsible for identifying, and in some cases, developing community outreach activities and events. The Coordinator should look especially for off campus activities for students to get involved.

Alumni Mentorship Advisor – The Alumni Mentorship Advisor works to identify and engage alumni of the University. This person will develop programming that encourages and facilitates relationships between current students and alumni. The Advisor will work closely with the External Relations Office to identify participants in the program. The Community Outreach Module Coordinator can serve in this position or another staff member can be appointed by the Director. Should this position become separate or independent of the Community Outreach Module Coordinator, this person will work directly with the COMC to coordinate programming.

Workforce Development Module Coordinator – The Workforce Development Module Coordinator is responsible for creating and maintaining programming that is relevant to career preparation. This person should work closely with the Career Services Office to both develop programming and identify opportunities and events beneficial to students.

Wellness Module Coordinator – The Wellness Module Coordinator is responsible for identifying, developing, and sustaining programming as it relates to all aspects of health and wellness. Suggested programming to be led by the WMC could include physical activities both on and off campus, seminars and workshops that address but are not limited to mental and physical health, and health fairs.

Steering Committee – The committee should be made up of faculty, staff, and upper administration. Suggested members of the committee should include the Dean of Student Life, Dean of Academic Affairs, Director of First Year Experience, and at least one Department Head from an academic unit. Members of the Steering Committee are responsible for guiding the direction of the program and garnering interest and involvement in the program in their respective departments. Members of the Committee should have a strong interest in the development and success of the program and be forward thinking individuals who possess a collaborative mindset.

Student Advisory Board – The Student Advisory Board is made up of 5-7 co-ed student members. Students are expected to be highly engaged, motivated, forward thinking, and show an interest in leadership opportunities. Typically, students should be juniors and seniors, however, highly recommended sophomores should be considered. These students will serve as the face of the program and encourage their peers to participate, essentially serving as a liaison between students and program facilitators. Additionally, students are expected to suggest and assist in the development of programming.

Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience Implementation Plan

Introduction

The Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience (HUGE) student success and retention program should be implemented in three phases. The program has been designed to be student-led with support from faculty and staff in order to offer students more autonomy and control over the types of programs they would like to see offered as they continue to mature and matriculate through their academic curriculums. It is estimated that each phase of the program should be completed in the span of at least one month to ensure thorough research and investigation of the environment and resources.

The first phase of implementation deals solely with the investigation and understanding of the infrastructure of the institution. This includes identifying key stakeholders, appointing members of the steering committee and staff that will work with the program. Additionally, during this period resources such as departments, auxiliary units, programs and individuals that should be included in the program should be identified.

During the second phase of implementation will focus on the development of modules and the signature programs associated with each. The assessment and tracking method of student participation should be developed during this period. This phase should also include identifying students to serve on the Student Advisory Board of the program. A preliminary budget for the program should also be created during this phase.

The final phase of the implementation plan should focus on preparing for the launch of the program. This includes finalizing the calendar of signature events that occur regularly. Informational sessions for the program should also be conducted during this phase to garner interests from students and enroll potential participants.

The phases of implementation are detailed on the following pages. It should be noted that these are suggestions for implementation and each institution should use this as a guide toward the successful implementation of the HUGE program.

Phase 1

The first phase of implementation for the HUGE program focuses on the research and development of the structure of the program as it pertains specifically to the host institution. As each institution holds its own mission, values, and goals, it is important that these things be examined thoroughly so that the proposed program can be tailored toward the specific needs of the institution and its students. During this phase, the infrastructure of the program will be investigated, key stakeholders will be identified and a steering committee will be appointed.

Institutional Infrastructure

When implementing the HUGE program, the first step toward successfully employing the program is to fully examine and understand the infrastructure of the respective institution. It is important that upper administration be supportive of the efforts through their involvement and willingness to provide information about the way the institution operates as well the funding necessary to adequately operate the program.

In examining the infrastructure of the institution, the organizational structure should be surveyed, and in some cases restructured to provide a more seamless line of communication and delegation of tasks. The protocol for receiving approvals should also be reviewed and analyzed at every level. The refining of processes should also be considered, as a revision of the approvals process could have the potential to increase engagement and morale of faculty, staff and students. In some cases, departmental manuals may need to be developed in order to document and review processes that are in place.

Key Stakeholders

After completing the survey of the institutional infrastructure, the next step toward successful implementation of the HUGE program is identifying key stakeholders. Key stakeholders will consist of upper administration, department heads, faculty, staff, and students. In identifying these investors and participants, it becomes essential to gauge their interests in the program and gain their buy-in through creating a sense of inclusion.

In order to gauge the interest and gain the buy-in from involved parties, a presentation that gives an overview of the program should be presented. This presentation should provide the framework for the program to reflect the findings that were collected through the examination of the infrastructure, as well as the requirements and time commitment associated with the program. This presentation will also objectives and goals of the program, how they will be carried out, and how the program will be assessed. It may be more advantageous to carry out separate introductory presentations that appeal to the interests of the different groups of stakeholders.

Steering Committee

Appointment of members of the Steering Committee for the program should be the next step in implementing the program. The committee should be made up of faculty, staff, and upper administration. Suggested members of the committee should include the Dean of Student Life, Dean of Academic Affairs, Director of First Year Experience, and at least one Department Head from an academic unit. Members of the Steering Committee are responsible for guiding the direction of the program and garnering interest and involvement in the program in their respective departments. Members of the Committee should have a strong interest in the development and success of the program and be forward thinking individuals who possess a collaborative mindset.

Collaborating Departments and Units

The final step of Phase One of the implementation of HUGE is to identify the departments, academic and auxiliary units, programs, and individuals that should be included in the delivery of the program. Identification of collaborating departments and units can be done through one-to-one interviews with department heads regarding the programming and efforts that are currently being offered as well as programs they would like to offer to students. In making these connections between departments and units, it is important to understand that communication and collaboration are key to successfully facilitate and sustain the HUGE program. Honing in on unique interests and skills sets among faculty, staff, and students is essential to providing students with a holistic experience and approach to student success and retention.

As it stands, HUGE is designed as a student-led program that allows students to have more control over the programming that they are offered through means of requests and through leadership and facilitation efforts. Students should be encouraged and empowered to create programming that appeals to their needs and interests with the assistance of faculty and staff who have both regular and irregular contact with students.

To create a culture of collaboration, it is imperative that a campus calendar of events be developed and utilized to include all of the activities that are happening across campus in one location. This serves two major purposes: First, a schedule of all activities can be found in one location and second, the likelihood of signature events coinciding is lessened. While it is a great practice to give students a multitude of broad opportunities to engage and get involved and at times offer a several programs which may overlap during a certain time, it is imperative that signature programs receive priority scheduling.

Phase 2

The second phase of implementation for the HUGE program will involve the development of each module including signature programs and activities. This phase should also include the establishment of a plan for assessment and tracking of student participation. Members of the Student Advisory Board should also be selected during this phase as they will assist in the planning of programming that will be offered. A preliminary budget should also be prepared at this phase.

Module Development

Module development should be the first step in the second phase of implementation. At this point, objectives as provided below should be reviewed and modified to the needs and aim of the institution. The number of programs and activities to be offered for each module each month should be determined at this time, as well as an outline of topics that are deemed necessary and appropriate. The only programs that should be designed and developed during this period should be signature programs. Listing topics as opposed to planning workshops and seminars will provide students with guidelines during the submission of suggestions for programming. However, Module Coordinators should be prepared to create and lead workshops and seminars for topics that do not attract leadership from students. Module Coordinators should make attempts to identify and encourage students to lead programs for topics that they possess related skills or have shown interest.

The aforementioned objectives of each module are listed below. These should be modified to fit the mission, vision, and goals of the institution.

Module Objectives

Academics

The Academic Module will provide students with workshops and seminars to strengthen their performance in the classroom including critical thinking, problem solving, and higher order thinking skills.

The Academic Module will grant students access to programming that is tailored to their academic needs at each level of study, acknowledging that their needs will inevitably evolve as they mature.

Leadership

The Leadership Module will provide students with a variety of opportunities to expand and improve their leadership skills through hands on programming that encourages students to act as facilitators and participants.

Community Outreach

The Leadership Module will provide students with a variety of opportunities to expand and improve their leadership skills through hands on programming that encourages students to act as facilitators and participants.

Professional Development

The Leadership Module will provide students with a variety of opportunities to expand and improve their leadership skills through hands on programming that encourages students to act as facilitators and participants.

Wellness

The Professional Development Module will prepare students for the workforce by providing workshops, seminars, and activities that will assist in the development of professional documents, skills, and opportunities for the attainment of industry-related certifications.

Signature Programs and Activities

One to two signature programs and activities should be designed and developed for each module to be offered annually or each semester, as appropriate. Typically, these programs already occur on campus and will only need to be inserted to the HUGE program by finding the appropriate module. Objectives for signature programming should be developed and maintain a direct link to the overall HUGE program and specifically to the module in which it will be housed. Suggestions for signature programs and activities can be located in the tables below.

Academics		
Session	Content Overview	Learning Objectives
What's Next?!?: Navigating PI after Freshman Year	Students will lead discussions on what incoming sophomore students can expect during the next years of study and what to expect from their courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will lend their knowledge and skills to help younger students prepare for the next year of study
Study Skills and Time Management	Junior and senior student-led workshops discussing and sharing methods for studying and effectively managing time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will build leadership skills while demonstrating their knowledge of study and time management skills

Leadership		
Session/Activity	Content Overview	Learning Objectives
Peer Mentorship	Series of activities and workshops as a part of the peer mentorship program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be guided through the program to develop their leadership skills as peer mentors
Student Ambassador Program	Students will serve as the “face” of the Institution through the Ambassador Program where they will host guests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will build leadership skills while demonstrating responsibility to the Institution
Workshops and Seminars	Student organized and led workshops and seminars showcasing their knowledge and skills on special topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will build upon their leadership skills by leading approved workshops they have designed with their peers in mind. Students will also demonstrate and build upon presentation and public speaking skills

Community Outreach		
Session	Content Overview	Learning Objectives
Skill Building in the Community	Students will lead sessions to help improve English and other life skills of building facilities and maintenance staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will lend their knowledge and skills to help improve the lives of those who are less fortunate • Students will also practice and improve their English skills while gaining confidence and presentation skills
Scientist for a Day	Student-led and organized program to introduce youth to science and engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will build leadership skills while demonstrating their knowledge of science and engineering
Abu Dhabi Science Festival	Students will participate by volunteering and setting up booths at the festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will demonstrate their knowledge of science and engineering
Student-organized activities	Students will develop organize community outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will build leadership skills while demonstrating their commitment to helping others

Professional Development		
Session	Content Overview	Learning Objectives
Professional Document Building	Basic professional documents will be discussed including CVs, cover letters, and portfolios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain a basic understanding of professional documents that are required for entry into the workforce
Building Confidence: Public Speaking and Presentations	Skills for public speaking and presentations will be discussed in a hands-on format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will build confidence through activities to help enhance public speaking and presentation skills
Interview Skills	Tips for successful interviews along with mock interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will learn and practice interviewing to enhance skills and confidence in this area
Professional Certifications	A rolling list of certification programs offered to students over the course of the semester (see list)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will obtain certifications that are both engineering specific, as well as other desirable professional certifications
Financial Literacy	Discussions on budgeting, saving, money management, and long term financial planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the importance of topics covered in the seminar

Wellness		
Session/Activity	Content Overview	Learning Objectives
Intro to Health and Wellness Services on Campus	Students will be introduced to the activities, health and wellness professionals on campus along with the services available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An introductory session that showcases the services and professionals on campus
Wellness Wednesday	Student-led activities and workshops in collaboration with staff to promote healthy lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will build confidence through activities to help enhance public speaking and presentation skills
The Stages of Grief Seminar	Seminar outlining the stages of grief and coping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will learn about the stages of grief and how to manage emotions
Eating Disorders Workshop	Seminar will discuss eating disorders, how they develop and how they can be overcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will learn about eating disorders and what can be done to identify and overcome
Women's Health Seminar	Women's health and maintenance will be discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female students will learn how to manage their health
Mental Health Seminar	Seminar will discuss the maintenance of mental health and available resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will learn about the resources available for the maintenance of mental health

Assessment and Tracking

The assessment and tracking of students is suggested to be handled through software purchased by the Institution such as OrgSync, Campus Labs, Campus Groups, or the program of the institutions' choosing. Software should be chosen based on its ability to track students' participation, organize events on a centralized calendar, and produce a transcript or documentation of students' participation. All programs should include an educational component for assessment, most of which can be directly linked to coursework or soft skill development. A digital portfolio should be used to track the participation and progress of students, which can be done through one of the aforementioned software programs. The digital portfolio should be used to create a second transcript that easily lists students' participation in programming and certifications earned. Students should only receive credit for attendance once they have submitted the corresponding assessment. Workshops and seminars which use activities as assessment are allowable and will not require students to submit an assessment. Students are encouraged to register in advance, however any student who has not registered should not be denied entry. Upon entering a program, students should present their IDs to have their attendance registered. It is recommended that iPads or similar tablet computers be acquired to use in conjunction with attendance tracking and ID scanning applications.

Much like the FYE programs, HUGE will require students to receive a certain number of credits in each module for every semester of enrollment. The tables below show the recommended number of credits for participation in activities and events that students should earn in for each module by student classification and credits per semester for each classification. The plan for assessment and tracking as detailed below can and should be modified to fit the needs and goals of the Institution's students.

	Classification			
Module	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Total
Academics	6	4	3	
Leadership	4	3	5	
Service	2	2	2	
Wellness	2	1	1	
Professional Development	1	5	4	
Total	15	15	15	45

Semester Credits							
	Fall			Spring			
	Classification						
Module	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Total
Academics	3	2	1	3	2	2	
Leadership	2	2	3	2	1	2	
Service	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Wellness	1	0	1	1	1	0	
Professional Development	0	3	2	1	2	2	
Total	7	8	8	8	7	7	45

Incentives

Incentives for the program are an essential element to gaining the interest and participation of students. Access to special events on and off campus, as well as educational excursions should be explored as potential incentives for students, however these will need to be considered during the development of the budget. Other potential incentives associated with the program are professional certifications and advanced registration for courses. Those students earning the required number of credits at the end of each semester should receive special recognition through an awards ceremony luncheon or other small acknowledgements such as gift vouchers as the budget allows. Students participating for the entire three years should have their achievements acknowledged during the commencement ceremony through the use of honor cords, stoles, or certificates. Tiers for accolades can be developed to recognize students at varying levels as the Director sees fit. Suggested incentives for the program will vary based on the allotted budget for the program as well as the interests of the students. The Student Advisory Board should be utilized to gain insight in this area.

Student Advisory Board

The Student Advisory Board is made up of five to seven co-ed student members. Students are expected to be highly engaged, motivated, forward thinking, and show an interest in leadership opportunities. Typically, students should be juniors and seniors, however, highly recommended sophomores should be considered. These students will serve as the face of the program and encourage their peers to participate, essentially serving as a liaison between students and program facilitators. Additionally, students are expected to suggest and assist in the development of programming.

Budget

A preliminary budget for the program should be developed to include the estimated costs of outsourced workshops, activities, and programming, as well as incentives that will be offered to students. Specialized equipment that must be acquired such as iPads to be used to record attendance should also be factored into the budget. It is recommended that workshops be hosted by students, faculty, and staff to keep spending low. Funds should be put toward incentives for students and programming that cannot be offered by one of the previously mentioned parties. When creating the budget, it is best to overestimate costs and readjust where necessary.

Phase 3

The final phase of implementation for the HUGE program will consist of finalizing the calendar of events for the academic year, hosting informational sessions to introduce and recruit students to participate in the program, and assessment of the program. This phase of the program will take place at the end of each semester to prepare for the coming semester.

Calendar of Events

The calendar of events should be finalized for the upcoming semester at the close of each semester. This will include scheduling all signature events and listing them on the public calendar provided by the software chosen by the institution. Programming that is proposed throughout the semester should be scheduled around signature events. When scheduling signature events, it is suggested that they occur on the same date or within a specific timeframe for the purpose of developing a habit within the schedule.

Informational Sessions

Informational sessions should occur at the close of each semester to introduce and recruit students for the program. Multiple sessions should be held to give as many students as possible the opportunity to learn about the program. These sessions should occur at least three weeks prior to final exams with at least two held each week leading up to exams for a total of six sessions. Sessions should be no more than 45 minutes in length including questions from students. Sessions should be hosted by the Director or a member of the Steering Committee with assistance from the Student Advisory Board.

These sessions should be used to explain the objectives and goals of the program, as well as the desired outcomes for students. The expectations for participation including the digital portfolio and tracking system should also be discussed, in addition to incentives associated with the program. Questions in regards to the program should be addressed during these sessions.

Program Assessment and Evaluation

A thorough assessment of the program should occur at the conclusion of each semester. Surveys should be distributed to students to capture a general review of programs that were intended. Focus groups and individual interviews should also be conducted to obtain more specific feedback from students. Attendance for programs should also be reviewed alongside survey results during the assessment period. Ten to fifteen percent digital portfolios, reflective of the number of students enrolled in the program should also be reviewed. The portfolios selected for review as part of the assessment should include those of students who exceeded the yearly credit requirement, those who met the requirement, and those who were highly inactive based on the number of credits earned. In identifying students to participate in

individual interviews and focus groups, the digital portfolios reviewed may be used in the identification process.

Individual interviews and focus groups should be conducted by the Director or members of the Steering Committee, particularly those who have a frequent, positive interactions with students. An interview protocol should be used for the semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Interviews and focus groups should take anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour to conduct and should be considered voluntary giving students the right to exempt themselves from any questions or end the interview at any point. A total of five to seven individual interviews and two to three, 3- to 5-person focus groups should be conducted if enrollment allows. An example of the protocol to be used can be found in the index of this document.

SUPPLEMENT

Facilitator Name: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Date: _____

Location (If no location, please describe preferred location): _____

Assessment Description:

Faculty Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Facilitator Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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Interview Protocol

Demographic Questions

Classification

Major

Age

Gender

Programming Specific Questions

1. What programs did you attend this semester?
 - a. If a series was attended, were all sessions attended?
2. What were the most memorable programs that you attended?
 - a. Why were they memorable?
 - b. What did you learn or were any skills acquired? Explain.
3. Did you lead any programs?
 - a. If so, what was the title of your program(s) and what did you cover?
 - i. Do you think it was well received by participants?
 - ii. Did you receive assistance from a staff member? If so, who and in what way?
 - iii. What, if anything, would you change about your program?
 - iv. Would you consider offering this program or another topic again?
 - b. If not, are you interested in leading a program?

HUGE Questions

4. Overall, how would you rate HUGE on a scale of 1 to 10? Why?
5. What did you like about HUGE? Why?
6. What did you dislike? Why?
7. What, if anything, would you change?
8. Tell me about your digital portfolio.
 - a. What did you like about using the digital portfolio?

- b. What did you dislike?
- c. Did you find that it was easy to submit your work?

Suggestions

- 9. Will you continue to participate?
- 10. If so, what do you look forward to? Incentives, specific programming, etc.
- 11. Please describe your overall experience participating in the HUGE program.

Chapter 6

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to depict the development and implementation of the Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience (HUGE) program, a student success and retention program that spans the second year of undergraduate study through graduation. An increased amount of attention was dedicated to examining the development of the aforementioned program than to its actual implementation to provide a more comprehensive framework. Moreover, this study sought to expand student development theory and practice to include an international perspective, specifically one from the Middle East.

This study should best serve administrators, student success and retention program directors, faculty, and potential employers. Administrators should look to improve the structure of their institutions to build an environment that encourages communication and collaboration across units. Administrators are also encouraged to consult this study to develop or improve the student success programs that are currently offered on their campuses in order to address the needs of the whole and ever-changing student.

Program directors of student success and retention programming or those parties who are interested in developing a similar program should also consider using this study as a guide in their endeavors. However, it is important to note that this study should be used only as a framework. The nuances of this study, including the structure of the university, geographical location, and culture, should be taken into consideration as differences in these areas will be inevitable.

It is also recommended that faculty review this study as a means of improving their communication and collaboration with other professional staff, auxiliary units and programs, and

students. Given that faculty are often held in high regard by students in terms of ensuring their academic success, it is also imperative that faculty consider the importance of developing students beyond the classroom. For this to be achieved, faculty must make efforts to “reach across the aisle” and build bridges for the sake of student success.

Finally, potential employers should take note of this study with the intent of developing collaborative relationships with universities. These collaborative relationships should assist in identifying desired skills and providing opportunities, such as career fairs and mentorship, to prepare students for post-graduation experiences.

Summary of Findings

Student success and retention programs have become staples on university campuses around the world, but most prominently in the United States. However, these efforts are usually focused on first-year students, with students in their second and third years of study more often regarded as “forgotten” (Gahagan & Stuart Hunter, 2006; Tobolowsky, 2008). Bearing this fact in mind, the opportunity to provide a solution for this issue was presented through the development of a program whose focal point was students in their second year of study through graduation. Given the location of the researcher in the United Arab Emirates, it also became more apparent how higher education has traditionally been explored from the perspective of White males from North America, very rarely taking into account the experiences of “others.” This led to three questions being posed to guide this study.

Research Question 1

The first question posed to guide this study was “How, if at all, can the development of a holistic student success and retention program impact students beyond the classroom?” To answer this question, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with participants from two groups

within the campus community—students and professional staff—were conducted. By conversing with these two different groups, the perspectives of people with varying experiences, needs, and desires were gained, which in turn produced a more vibrant portrait of what was currently being offered and what was missing from the upperclassman student experience. The purpose of asking such a question was to collect information on what these two groups considered to be valuable skills, qualities, and knowledge required to be successful leading up to and after graduation.

In speaking with students who were in their second year of study or higher, the researcher obtained information about the University's FYE program. Students cited programming that covered such topics as time management, critical thinking, teamwork, and study skills.

Subsequently, students went on to mention their desire to see programming similar to that of FYE be made available to them beyond the first year of study:

So maybe they could—we have, I'm just saying maybe if we had the same thing for older [students]. It's not [a requirement], but it's an additional thing. For example, if you gathered around fifty stamps in a semester from several activities, you will have a chance to do something, you know? To travel, to do something, you know? Give them more opportunity—like this will spot the active students on campus. It's not just the freshman year, it's all the years.

Through this line of questioning, it also became apparent that students deemed public speaking, presentation, and confidence as skills and qualities that would benefit them throughout the remainder of their studies and well beyond. However, the researcher also realized that each of these qualities could be linked to the grand theme of leadership. Not only did students identify these qualities and skills as being valuable outside of the classroom, but they were also adamant about accessing opportunities that would strengthen those skills. Most students reported on the lack of programming dedicated to them after the first year of study, and more specifically focused on any aspects associated with leadership.

Leadership was also recognized in discussions with professional staff as an area of importance in the development of students. After acknowledging the importance of such skills, at least two professional participants spoke about leadership programs they hoped to introduce during the following fall semester. Others also agreed that making a program available to students that spanned the second year of study until graduation would not only be beneficial during undergraduate study, but would also instill in them lifelong lessons:

I remember we had a special interest group meeting on Saturday and one of the presenters said that a senior student had come to her and said, I wish I had applied what I learned in my first year all through. But she didn't have the maturity to do that in her first year and remember, you know, it was just a course she wanted to get through to get to the engineering courses. But I think, I am hoping that if we can implement this kind of, sort of, ongoing system in through their four years, that would be great. . . . I want to figure out a way to, you know, peel away that silo so students know to carry, whatever, so, we need continuity. It's like at the end of the whole thing, when you finish your senior year you are not going to get anything if you didn't go through the steps that are required so. . .

Given that this is a professionally-focused university and students are guaranteed employment after graduation, the researcher found it necessary to ask student participants about their post-graduation plans, considering that the goal of the proposed HUGE program is to prepare students beyond the classroom. While students' contracts do require them to be employed by ADNOC or one of its conglomerates after graduation, students have the option to defer in order to pursue an advanced degree. Many students stated their intent to pursue either a master's degree or doctorate after graduation; however, their knowledge about their post-graduation options, specifically the application process and admission requirements, were greatly deficient. A student in her junior year of study recalled visiting her academic advisor and being told that it was too soon to discuss graduate studies; instead, she should return to discuss the matter at a later date in her senior year. Students who were more knowledgeable about their options after graduation usually sought out information on their own by attending "Open Day" or

a campus preview at other local universities to obtain information about the degree programs offered.

Discussions about students' perceptions of their career preparedness did arise, producing varying results. Students classifying themselves as unprepared usually expressed that they expected to feel more prepared after completing their internship, which occurs the summer between junior and senior year of study. Those students who considered themselves prepared to enter the workforce attributed their preparedness to coursework, specifically the required senior design course. Interestingly, when questioning students about skills and qualities that they thought would be important in their careers, most cited knowledge from coursework. Although presentation and other soft skills were mentioned as being important, students spoke of them only on rare occasion.

As conversations progressed, balance became a popular topic of discussion, with students describing their need to access activities and events that supplemented their academics. Several students explained that the amount of coursework they received from faculty often limited the number of co-curricular activities they could participate in, successfully forcing them to choose between academics and campus activities.

Even though students often complained about heavy course loads, they reported overwhelmingly positive interactions with their faculty members, noting their willingness to make themselves available to students through various modes of communication. However, in select instances, a professor was regarded as intimidating due to upholding a strict policy on contact and forcing students to schedule appointments ahead of time while drastically limiting access to students who had not scheduled appointments in advance. Although an isolated

incident, professional staff were no strangers to the difficulties of communicating and collaborating with faculty.

The overall takeaway from conversations regarding the first research question was that both students and professional staff desired to partake in or offer opportunities that would lead to the development of more well-rounded students. Leadership was one of the main areas viewed as important for both groups when considering skills that would be necessary and beneficial outside the classroom and after graduation. Students expressed their need for access to more educationally enriching activities that went beyond standard workshops and seminars, and also included more of their hobbies and interests outside the traditional classroom setting after the first year of study. Moreover, they articulated their need to find balance between academics and co-curricular activities, often crediting their belief in an inability to do so because of the heavy workloads that faculty placed on them.

Research Question 2

This led to the second question that guided the study, “How can a holistic student success and retention program that begins at the conclusion of the first year until graduation be developed and implemented at a 4-year university?” Ultimately, students’ and professionals’ experiences with faculty prompted exploration and identification of other challenges associated with the development and implementation of the proposed program. In addition to interviews, the researcher reviewed university documents, most notably the strategic plan, to answer this question. The three most prominent challenges that were recognized included the issues of collaboration, communication, and buy-in.

A secondary goal of the program is to encourage a more collaborative campus atmosphere in order to offer students access to activities and events that will lead to their success

and becoming more well-rounded. Through the researcher's conversations with professionals, it became apparent that collaboration on campus was limited to select departments, most prominently FYE and the Student Success Department. The Student Success Department did indicate working with academic units, though to a much lesser degree, to identify at-risk students. However, faculty were cited as the toughest group with whom to collaborate. Zedan, the Activities and Events Coordinator, recalled an attempt he made to collaborate with faculty by integrating an activity into a course:

I did my best to during my previous experience with FYE, I request from the professor to join me in this activity, just one professor, he's my friend so he help me especially in science. . . . I try to link my activity to science. I did the proposal for head of science because most of science they are familiar with rock climbing, at least who is mountaineering. . . . But my request, it's not approved. . . . I don't know, I don't like to say what's happening but just they refuse my request.

Based on Zedan's comment, attempts to collaborate with professors to link activities to courses are being made, but to no avail. Professors' dedication to their courses often impedes with efforts to offer students a more well-rounded student experience, one in which they are not forced to choose between academics and co-curricular activities.

Further exploration of professionals' experiences with attempts to collaborate with faculty led to the realization that the hesitation of faculty members to participate in collaborative efforts was not isolated to this particular campus; it was an issue that prevailed on most campuses. Faculty have been conditioned to fulfill three main roles: teaching, research, and service. These roles effectively foster a culture of autonomy and limit their desire to reach beyond those roles (Bland, 2006). This, in turn, facilitates a culture among faculty that is separate from that of the university, where their courses and research are perceived to take precedence over being active, collaborative members of the university campus. One professional explained from his position as a former faculty member at another university that even he was

hesitant to share time during his course to allow external announcements that were not directly related to his daily objectives.

This brought about the issue of buy-in: If it already was a challenge to get faculty to collaborate on co-curricular activities, it would also be a challenge to gain their support of the proposed program. Although faculty could very well be supportive of a program of this nature, their likelihood to collaborate and offer their expertise in adding an educational component to activities and events of the program seems unlikely, unless the topic is broached in a way that clearly benefits both them and their students. Faculty would need to be convinced that the participating in the proposed HUGE program would increase students' GPAs, as well as make them more polished for the job market.

Students were another group from which buy-in would have to be earned for them to participate in the proposed program. Even though students showed interest in having access to programming dedicated to upperclassmen, they were admittedly hesitant to participate, given the same stipulations set forth by the FYE program. Students had no desire to participate in a compulsory program that would affect their grades if they chose not participate, but they did like the idea of having participation goals to reach each semester in order to receive certain rewards and recognition for their involvement. Surprisingly, although students often suggested the addition of programming that went beyond their classroom studies, such as sports, arts, and social activities in partnership with students from other universities in the city, they also expressed their need to access activities and events that included an educational component or supplemented their classroom studies. Many students suggested tutorials in computer software, woodwork, and laser cutting—information and skills that would be useful for their senior projects. Therefore, while buy-in among students remains a cause for concern, the students at the

PI possessed a strong desire for the proposed HUGE program, though this could be attributed to the professional focus of their campus and their heightened desire for more balance between academics and co-curricular activities.

While students often indicated their disdain for the lack of programming dedicated to them after the first year of study, they did make it clear they were not completely excluded from participating in events that were designed for their freshman peers. Instead, they explained that information about events was communicated to them much later, at which point seating was limited. Students who became frustrated with the lack of information and communication they were receiving about events taking place outside of campus eventually formed an initiative to collect and disperse information to students.

Students' frustration with communication and the researcher's previous observations of the campus culture led to the identification of another challenge, not just in the development and implementation phase of the program, but also likely after the program is piloted. The researcher observed early on that the departments on campus did not effectively communicate with one another, often resulting in duplication of documents, unclear processes and procedures, and low attendance at events. It is believed that the issue of communication was more pronounced at this university as a result of the gender-segregated campus.

Another minor challenge mentioned rather casually in conversations was that of the impending merger that the PI is currently undergoing. Staff and students were generally unsure of how that would affect them as individuals, but it must be acknowledged with regard to the development and implementation of the proposed program. The merger has already caused the termination of programs, both academic and co-curricular. Therefore, the immediate implementation of this program at the conclusion of this study seems unlikely.

In summation, staff members, and in some cases students, often referred to faculty as the toughest group with whom to collaborate. This led to the identification and examination of the challenges associated with developing and implementing the proposed HUGE program. In addition to collaboration emerging as theme, communication and buy-in also emerged as themes that were identified as challenges. Collaboration was reported to work well between select units, although when it came to including faculty, efforts and experiences yielded less positive outcomes. Communication between units and the university with students was also regarded as lacking in many areas; this led to a student-driven initiative to identify opportunities in the community for students. Buy-in was also thought to be one of the more challenging issues that would need to be overcome to develop and implement the proposed program successfully. Students and faculty were identified as the groups who would be the most difficult to convince of the program's benefits. However, in conversations with students, the researcher realized that even in cases where they were skeptical about continuing to participate in a program that was similar to the current FYE programming, the students' interest grew upon learning that the proposed program would not enforce many of the same requirements, such as graded participation. While gaining student support is still a matter that needs ongoing monitoring, the biggest concern is faculty—a group that is historically more difficult to convince about being part of initiatives that are similar to what is being proposed. Issues of collaboration and communication will require a shift in the university's culture before any real change can be seen, although this is admittedly not an impossible feat to accomplish.

Research Question 3

The remaining question asked, "How does a university's location affect the development and implementation of a student success and retention program that spans the second year until

graduation?” It was necessary to ask this question for obvious reasons, given the physical location of the University and the dearth of information related to higher education in the Middle East. In launching this study, the researcher expected differences in universities and culture, although how these differences would be exhibited was unanticipated.

The differences in campuses were almost nonexistent, at least in the way they had been anticipated. The PI is structured in the same vein as a university in the United States, housing most of the same departments and positions. Essentially, the most drastic difference observed lies within monetary benefits that students are awarded. Every student who attends the PI is not only tuition-free and receives a monthly stipend, but is also guaranteed employment through the University’s sponsoring corporation, ADNOC. This is typically unheard of in higher education, particularly in the United States. One would assume that students’ motivation would be greatly provoked by this; however, students revealed in their conversations that most of their academic achievements were motivated not only by their own desires, but also by their families. Students’ GPAs were not requested, but those who did provide such information reported being dissatisfied with their performance:

Well, to me, I’m not satisfied right now because my first year, like first year and a half it was four. But then, I started taking more than eighteen credits. Like, I took eighteen credits before going to Colorado School of Mines. And, I’m taking nineteen credits this semester. So, my GPA is 3.7 now. I think, I should work harder, and I’m trying my best to be involved in everything at PI, so . . .

Many students shared the same feeling of dissatisfaction with their grades while still maintaining an A- average. When questioned on what could be done to increase their satisfaction with their grades, the students noted that no services would contribute to their satisfaction, but they were solely dependent upon their performance and management of their own time. Although students attributed their motivation to personal goals and family expectations, one

professional partially attributed the University's high retention percentage to the scholarships, stipends, and guaranteed employment.

Another difference between this university and others was the segregation of the campus by gender. Even though single-gender campuses are not new or unique, the way in which PI handles this separates it from traditional single-gender campuses: Many of the labs and facilities are duplicated on both the men's and women's campuses. The PI's decision to provide separate campuses for each gender, whether driven strictly by the culture of the locale or otherwise, was cited as one reason some female students chose to attend the university. While the separation of genders in public spaces is less prominent than it once was in this country, the practice is typical of the culture.

Given the location of the institution, along with men and women residing on separate campuses, gender was expected to play a much larger role in discussions. However, this topic was usually discussed in terms of culture and how women at the university are subjected to many more restrictions than their male counterparts both on campus and in their homes. When gender was discussed with professionals, a frequent statement was that female students tended to be more engaged and interested in academics than male students. Students also correlated this observation, and the researcher noticed as well that female students were much more likely to consider pursuing advanced degrees after graduation than their male colleagues.

Although female students were more inclined to consider pursuing advanced degrees after graduation than male students who planned to go straight into their careers after graduation, almost all students indicated their parents or a member of their family had influenced their decision to pursue engineering. As one student specifically mentioned, it was the expectation of his family to pursue engineering.

Parents' involvement in their students' education does not end at secondary education; many parents continue to remain enmeshed, often visiting campus to speak with instructors and administrators about their students' issues. This is a common occurrence especially because of the absence of FERPA laws, which are in place to protect the privacy of adult students in the United States. The absence of such laws can be viewed as both a cultural difference and an institutional difference that must be considered in the development and implementation of the proposed program. In light of the former and given how much parents continue to be involved in their students' educational endeavors, it is worth considering that students' decision to participate in the HUGE program may be contingent on gaining approval from their parent or guardian.

To conclude, institutional location was examined as part of the study. Differences in universities and culture were presumed to be themes that would be covered heavily in discussions. While this assumption was correct, the ways these themes manifested clearly differed from what was anticipated. While the PI employs a variety of tactics that set it apart from other universities—namely being an engineering-focused university with a campus segregated by gender that guarantees jobs and salaries to all students—it is still rather “normal” in comparison to other western institutions of higher education.

The most distinct variance in expectations of the two was culture, and while it was anticipated to be an anchoring theme in the discussion of location, it was not predicted that gender in relation to culture would be such a prominent theme. What was gathered from the interactions was that while female students tended to be more engaged and tenacious, they endured more restrictions than their male counterparts. The cultural aspect of the location also revealed that parents remained involved in their students' educational affairs even at post-

secondary levels because FERPA laws are not enacted in UAE, thus granting parents the freedom to visit campus and request information at will without the permission of their adult students.

Overall, the researcher's experiences with program development prepared her for many aspects that were raised in the interviews, although to a much lesser degree. The themes categorized under institutional location offered the most astonishing details, as expected, and allowed a more global lens to be applied to the study. Admittedly, although the appearance of many of these themes was anticipated, others were thought to have a much greater impact, such as the merger in which the PI is currently involved. This particular subject was not broached unless it was provoked, and even in those cases, it was not discussed at length because of the lack of information available to participants.

Recommendations

The data gathered and used in this study were analyzed with the student development theory (Astin, 1984; Bandura, 1977; Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1994; Tinto, 1993) in mind. The proposed Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience student success and retention program addresses the “multidimensional needs” of students, as proclaimed by Rhatigan (2000) and Carpenter (2011) and as evidenced by the use of the five modules: academics, leadership, community outreach, professional development, and wellness. Although the PI has established a FYE program that addresses the needs of the whole student, this program concludes at the end of the first year of study for students. Considering this, HUGE does not seek to compete with current FYE programming, but instead serves as an extension and enhancement of the original program to maintain students' engagement and acknowledges the imminent changes that students will experience as they progress through their postsecondary education, as

identified in Erikson's (1968) identity development theory, Marcia's (1994) ego identity statuses, and Chickering's (1969) seven vectors. HUGE will build on the foundation of the PI's FYE program by offering complimentary programming that acknowledges the development and changes students experience through their constant transition, while also exposing students to topics that were not covered in the FYE program. Essentially, these programs will work together to assist in students' transition into the University, followed by their transition into the workforce while achieving student success and continuing to increase student retention.

The findings associated with this study produced recommendations that confront the specific institutional structure of the PI as well as of other institutions of higher education and members of the university community. These recommendations have been organized to address the research questions that guided this study.

Research Question 1

To begin, it must be understood that this program was formulated on the premise that an FYE program had already been established on the PI campus. Therefore, the program was designed to satisfy the need for programming dedicated specifically to upperclassmen. Furthermore, the results of this study should be used strictly as a framework to design an institution-specific program that addresses the specific needs of that university and its students.

In order to ensure that students are afforded the chance to become more well-rounded individuals, institutions should seek out opportunities to build partnerships not only with potential employers, but with community and international organizations that can assist in preparing students for their careers and other post-graduation options. Establishing an alumni mentorship program as a part of the proposed HUGE program has the potential to expose students to individuals who can offer first-hand knowledge based on their personal experiences.

Campuses should also work to address the issue of balance that students have between not only co-curricular activities and academics, but also course requirements. This should be addressed by instituting spaces for collaboration between academic and auxiliary units on campus. It is also recommended that collaborative efforts be required to provide students with more of a direct link between technical and practical knowledge. Furthermore, more of an effort should be made toward academic units and departments working closely on the development of syllabi to lessen the likelihood that students experience burnout from large amounts of assigned coursework. This should also reduce the chance of intradepartmental exams coinciding with one another.

Research Question 2

In order for the development and implementation of this program to occur successfully, a series of steps must be taken and information gathered. A complete assessment of the institution's infrastructure, including its organizational structure, culture, policies, procedures, services, and programs offered, should be observed and documented throughout the process of development and implementation. This assessment may also include in-depth interviews with students and professional staff to evaluate the needs and perceptions of the campus community.

The development and implementation of the proposed program also requires an evaluation of the campus climate in terms of collaboration and communication. Considering the secondary goal of the program is to encourage a more collaborative atmosphere between campus units, it is important to establish a setting in which ideas can be shared, much like a faculty and staff senate, to enhance communication and collaboration between academic and auxiliary units.

During the assessment of the institution's infrastructure, the strategic plan, mission, vision, and goals of the entire university and the department in which HUGE program will be

housed should be examined closely to ensure adherence to the mission, vision, and goals of each of these entities. In some instances, the culture of the institution may need to be revised to provide an environment in which the proposed program can flourish.

Given that this program has been designed to target students in their second year of study and beyond, it is recommended that the proposed program be treated as a student-led program. Of the students who were interviewed, many expressed the need and desire to be more involved and have more control over the programming that is made available to them. Presenting HUGE as a student-led effort provides students with a sense of independence and offers the opportunity for their leadership skills to be further developed. A student-led effort would also reduce the workload of faculty and staff directly involved with the program so they can serve more in the capacity of mentors to students rather than as full-time facilitators for the program. Ideally, staff and faculty would guide and assist students in executing their plans.

Resources that are available both on campus and in the surrounding community should also be sought out to contribute to the development of module programming and student development in each of these areas. Students tend to be very knowledgeable about opportunities for growth that are being offered in the local community; thus, allowing them to take the lead on identifying and establishing partnerships, when necessary, is highly recommended.

Finally, an annual assessment and evaluation of the program is recommended in order to identify gaps and improve program offerings. Each activity and event should be assessed by participants to determine what will be offered the following year. These assessments should be used in the overall evaluation of the program in conjunction with in-depth one-to-one interviews and focus groups with students to garner their perspectives of the program and receive

recommendations for how it can be improved. Given that the proposed program is driven by the needs of students, it is important that their opinions and suggestions be valued.

Research Question 3

It is recommended that the PI continue to pursue partnerships with universities around the world and utilize benchmarking to identify strengths and gaps for the Institute as a whole and for student success and retention programming more specifically. The establishment of associations with other universities within the region should also be sought to foster relationships between students. Given that the University is a professionally focused institution, efforts should be made to create opportunities for students to engage with peers from other campuses who are pursuing majors outside of engineering to provide broadened experiences that include the arts and humanities.

Furthermore, the University should consider offering more programming in addition to the current Global Day activity to strengthen students' cultural awareness. More opportunities are recommended for undergraduate students to connect with the graduate student community, which is made up primarily of international students of various backgrounds and nationalities. This not only allows students to be exposed to different cultures and traditions, but serves to help students better understand their own culture and how it intersects with others.

Suggestions for Future Research

As mentioned at the beginning, this study sought to expand the research pertaining to practice and theory building in higher education. Research surrounding student success and retention efforts geared toward students in their second year of undergraduate study and beyond should be extended. Furthermore, the literature surrounding the experiences and perspectives of these students should be broadened.

Through data collection, the researcher realized that faculty seemed to separate themselves from the university. Keeping this in mind, future research should seek to explore ways to integrate faculty and university cultures to facilitate more collaborative campus atmospheres. Ways to close the divide that seemingly exists between faculty and the rest of campus should also be examined.

Given the location of this study, it is also important that future studies address higher education outside of the traditional setting of the United States and other western universities, particularly regarding culture and gender. The perspectives and experiences of those situated in those communities have the ability to increase the literature by leaps and bounds. Future studies should also seek to examine the effects of taking a North American concept, namely student success programming, to other countries. It is also important to consider the process of implementing a student success program at an institution in the United States that has been developed in a Middle Eastern country, given that an American concept has been used for the development of a program in a non-traditional location and returned to a more “traditional” setting in North America.

Forthcoming studies should also address the internationalization of higher education, given the influx of U.S. institutions that are developing satellite locations in other countries. This also paves the way for research to cover the application of U.S. concepts in differing contexts and countries.

Speaking to differences in universities, higher education institutions with professional foci, such as military, liberal arts, and science and technology, should also warrant further study in how they address student engagement in areas outside of their concentrations. Also, research surrounding gender-segregated campuses should also be increased, particularly in reference to

the structure of such campuses. For instance, the PI is a gender-segregated campus in that its male and female undergraduate students do not have contact with one another. However, it differs from campuses that are segregated both physically and in name, but allow their students to intermingle.

The U.S. Department of Education has developed a college scorecard to track the average annual cost, graduation rate, and salary after attending (Louisiana State University, 2015). With this in mind, future studies should consider developing a similar tool that measures the success of students participating in the proposed HUGE program. Suggestions for data to be tracked should include, but are not limited to, graduation rate, advanced degree attainment rate, and interdepartmental collaboration efforts.

Finally, extensive research should occur on holistic programming both as it pertains to appealing to the “whole” student and to improving collaborative efforts on university campuses. Future research should speak to both the development and implementation of successful efforts. Considering that this was a qualitative study, forthcoming studies should seek to measure the impact of such programming, including the success of students after graduation and retention rates, through the use of mixed-methods or quantitative research.

Conclusion

In higher education, the transition of students from high school to college has been a concern for many years, resulting in FYE programs. However, after the first year of study, second- and third-year students are overlooked and, in most cases, no longer have access to programming that is dedicated to them. Consequently, higher attrition rates are observed for second-year students (Bisese & Fabian, 2006; Jordan, 2011). Some universities have begun to offer sophomore seminars and second curriculums; however, these are not nearly as common as

FYE programs. This particular group of students not only lacks programming dedicated to their success, but also literature that examines their experiences.

Realizing the need for continued engagement among its students past the first year, the PI saw fit to instate a student success program that was similar to its current FYE program. This led to the development of the HUGE program, which will ultimately serve as the continuation of the current program, although with a more student-driven and student-led approach. Student and professional participants in this study each expressed their desire to see upperclassman undergraduate students have access to workshops, activities, and events that are dedicated to them and address the changes in students' needs throughout the course of their undergraduate study.

The development and implementation of a program of this magnitude also require that an institution work together at every level to provide students with quality programming. Collaboration and communication are key to achieving ultimate efficiency and effectiveness. It is also imperative that the infrastructure of the institution be reviewed to ensure that the mission, vision, and goals of the program and university are aligned.

It is important that students feel empowered and be provided with opportunities not only to remain engaged in their campuses, but also to prepare for the next steps after graduation. Exposure to skills and post-graduation options is essential at this stage in students' lives. Holistic student success programs should produce well-rounded students who excel both inside and outside of the classroom. Additionally, students should be willing to take part in leadership opportunities on their campuses and in their local communities. Finally, the proposed program should assist in developing students who are more than prepared to pursue graduate studies or enter the workforce upon graduation.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Participant Letter

March 5, 2017

My name is Bianca Teats, and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Research in the College of Education at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I am completing my doctoral studies with a dissertation that will (when finished) document the development and implementation of a holistic student success program.

As a student at The Petroleum Institute, I am asking that you would consider participating in my research study. The purpose of the study is to develop a student success program that is driven by the needs of students. I am asking that you would lend your time to discuss your experiences as a student at PI.

I am interested in talking to students both one-on-one and in groups. All interviews will take no more than one hour. However, it may be necessary to schedule additional interviews if more time is required. All interviews will be recorded on audiotape, but only so that I can transcribe your responses as accurately as possible. I, along with my doctoral committee, will be the only persons to have privilege to these interviews. Your responses will be strictly confidential and you will not be required to use your real name. You may use a fictitious name if that would make you more comfortable.

Little or no potential risks are identified with your participation in this study. The benefits would include personal growth for each participant through opportunities for reflection and dialogue about your student experience.

If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact me by email at bteats@pi.ac.ae or by phone at 055 585 9671 to schedule a time to meet. I am available at your convenience.

I truly appreciate your consideration to participate in this project.

Best,

Bianca Teats
Visiting Graduate Student
Louisiana State University

Appendix B – Institutional Review Board Exemption

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 using 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 is used to request an exemption.

– Applicant, Please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as parts B-F, listed below, when submitting to the IRB. Once the application is completed, please submit the completed application to the IRB Office by e-mail (irb@lsu.edu) for review. If you would like to have your application reviewed by a member of the Human Subjects Screening Committee before submitting it to the IRB office, you can find the list of committee members at <http://sites01.lsu.edu/wp-content/human-subjects-screening-committee-members/>.

– A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:

- (A) This completed form
- (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.
*If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
- (D) The consent form that you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information.)
- (E) 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>)
- (F) Signed copy of the IRB Security of Data Agreement: (<https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp-content/files/2013/07/IRB-Security-of-Data.pdf>)

LSU

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8682
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

1) Principal Investigator: Rank:

Dept: Ph: E-mail:

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

3) Project Title:

4) Proposal? (yes or no) ☒ No If Yes, LSU Proposal Number

Also, if YES, either ☐ This application completely matches the scope of work in the grant
OR ☐ More IRB Applications will be filed later

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

6) PI Signature Date (no per signatures)

** I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changes, 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 ☐ Not Exempted Category/Paragraph

Signed Consent Waived?: ☐ Yes or ☐ No

Reviewer Signature Date

Continue on the next page

Appendix C – IRB Email Approval

On Feb 24, 2017, at 10:42 AM, Institutional R Board <irb@lsu.edu> wrote:

Hi,

The IRB chair reviewed your application, The Holistic Undergraduate Growth Experience: A Case Study exploring the Development of a Student Success and Retention Program, and determined IRB approval for this specific application (IRB# E10335) is not needed. There is no manipulation of, nor intervention with, human subjects. Should you subsequently devise a project which does involve the use of human subjects, then IRB review and approval will be needed. Please include in your recruiting statements or intro to your survey, the IRB looked at the project and determined it did not need a formal review.

You can still conduct your study. It falls under a certain category that does not need IRB approval.

Elizabeth

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Elizabeth Cadarette

IRB Coordinator

Office of Research and Economic Development

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LSU Research - The Constant Pursuit of Discovery

Appendix D – Petroleum Institute Strategic Plan

Contributing to Excellence in Education and Research The Petroleum Institute Strategic Plan (2013-2018)

Vision

The Petroleum Institute aims to be the preeminent and preferred university in the region, producing internationally recognized graduates and focused research to advance innovative solutions for the energy sector.

Mission

The Petroleum Institute will provide high quality engineering and science professionals through a continued commitment to excellence in its undergraduate and graduate academic programs alongside fundamental and applied research serving the Oil, Gas and Energy sectors' need for talent, solutions and advanced technical innovations that contribute to the UAE society and economy.

Core Values

Excellence and Creativity – We commit ourselves to outstanding performance, innovation and continuous development in all aspects of our mission.

Diversity and Tolerance – We recognize the inherent value of a diverse faculty, staff and student body. We respect and treat all individuals with utmost respect and dignity.

Inclusiveness and Collegiality – We support an environment that engages our faculty, staff and students and promotes effective participation. We seek and value individuals' input.

Transparency and Fairness – We conduct ourselves and our affairs in an open, transparent and equitable manner. We base our decisions on objective and verifiable information free from personal bias or prejudice.

Accountability and Commitment – We fully accept our responsibilities and are committed to achieving them. We take responsibility for our performance in all of our actions and decisions.

Pillars

The Strategic Plan (2013 – 2018) is supported by six pillars to develop the institutional goals, objectives and measurable targets. The pillars are:

1. Foundation and Undergraduate Education
2. Graduate Education
3. Research
4. Students
5. Faculty and Staff
6. Visibility and Outreach

Institutional Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Provide state-of-the-art facilities and employ innovative undergraduate curricula design in accredited programs to attract high quality students and faculty, achieving excellence in engineering and science education and producing outstanding alumni and leaders for the oil, gas and energy sectors.

Objective 1.1. Student Excellence – *Ensure that PI students progress through the curriculum in a timely manner, graduating with the knowledge and skills required of a 21st century engineer and scientist, and meeting the needs of ADNOC Group of Companies.*

The PI attracts, retains and graduates the quantity and quality of students needed by ADNOC Group of Companies. Student retention is maximized through a program of active interventions that include academic, personal and career counseling, enabling them to progress through the curriculum in a timely manner. PI students are able to exit PI at an appropriate level of professional competence. PI graduates are highly qualified engineers and scientists who will contribute to a knowledge-based UAE society.

Strategy 1.1.1 Increase the number of undergraduate student body size through developing specific annual recruitment targets based on total number of admitted students, gender distribution, student quality characteristics and distribution based on nationality.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Number of students, undergraduate</i> <i>Including Fall 2013 intake</i>		
➤ Student Body	1416	2100 (50% increase)
➤ Male students	60%	65%
➤ UAE nationals	85%	90%

Strategy 1.1.2 Attract and retain the top UAE nationals from high schools with grade point of 95% or higher in mathematics and science stream for each admitted cohort annually. This will help in increasing the grade point average for intake.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Admitted UAE nationals, undergraduate</i> <i>Fall 2013 intake</i> <i>High school grade</i>		
➤ 95% or more	12% (57/469)	25%
➤ 90% or more	42% (198/469)	65%

Strategy 1.1.3 Increase students' retention rate, especially at the foundation and freshman years, to meet international standards based on the adopted practice in Northern American universities and typical engineering and science programs.

KPI	2009	2010	2011	2012	Target
<i>Student retention rates, undergraduate</i>					
<i>Intake cohort: 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 ➤ After 1 year</i>	79%	73%	87%	83%	92%
➤ After 2 years	69%	62%	73%		80%
➤ After 3 years	66%	57%			78%
➤ After 4 years	59%				78%

Strategy 1.1.4 Improve graduation rate of undergraduate students.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Graduation rates, undergraduate</i>		
<i>Foundation is included</i>		
<i>Class of 2013 (202 graduates)</i>		
➤ Up to 4 years	13%	20%
➤ 4 to 5 years	44%	50%
➤ 5 to 6 years	25%	25%
➤ More than 6 years	18%	5%

Strategy 1.1.5 Improve the quality of graduates to meet the standard set by the employer; ADNOC Group of Companies.

Employer rating of satisfaction which is mainly ADNOC Group of Companies will be used to benchmark PI graduates.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Employer rating of satisfaction</i>		
➤ ADNOC Group of Companies Survey	No data	80%

Objective 1.2. Curricular Innovation and Excellence – Provide foundation and undergraduate engineering and science curricula that follow best practices taking into account requirements of the regional energy sector while meeting international accreditation standards.

The PI curricula build a culture of excellence and achievement in education that attracts the quality and quantity of students needed to meet the needs of ADNOC Group of Companies. Academically rigorous standards promote

student engagement in collaborative, hands-on learning using the latest educational technology. Particular attention is paid to educating the whole person through the teaching of practically applicable skills that meet and exceed international accreditation requirements.

Strategy 1.2.1 Receive national and international re-accreditation to help monitoring and improving the quality of education considering the planned future growth.

The PI was awarded the following accreditations; The UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, *MOHESR*, for five years and the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, *ABET*, for six years. The PI will maintain the accreditation for the next accreditation exercise.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Awarded accreditation, undergraduate</i>		
➤ MOHESR	5 years (2009)	Reaccreditation (2014)
➤ ABET	6 years (2012)	Reaccreditation (2018)

Strategy 1.2.2 Participate in universities ranking to benchmark PI against local, regional and international academic institutes in Engineering and Science.

The PI will participate in two ranking exercises, local (such as Center for Higher Education Data and Statistics, *CHEDS*) and international. The PI will strive to be one of the top three institutes in Engineering and Science in UAE and among the best 500 in the world.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Ranking exercise, undergraduate</i>		
➤ Local, <i>CHEDS</i> Top in UAE	None	3
➤ International Best in the world	None	500

Strategy 1.2.3 Develop and implement a concise and clear outcomes-based assessment plan to ensure that the learning objectives are achieved and to meet future needs of knowledge and skills offered to students.

Student outcome based on *Commission for Academic Accreditation, CAA MOHESR*, will be used to assess student performance.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Student Outcome, undergraduate</i> <i>Minimum percentile for "Achieved"</i>	None	75%

➤ MOHESR

Strategy 1.2.4 Establish multiple degree awarded programs for PI students (certificates, minors and/or other alternatives to traditional single major B.Sc. degrees) to help in shaping up 21st century engineer and scientist.

Two new undergraduate programs will be established; *Metallurgical Science & Engineering* (under Mechanical Engineering) and *Polymer Science & Engineering* (under Chemical Engineering). Also, a new track in Petroleum Geoscience will be established which is Petroleum Geophysics. In addition, three minor programs will be introduced as new track option for undergraduate students. In addition, two certified programs in time/project management and in HSE will be offered.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Number of established programs, undergraduate</i>		
➤ Fully accredited programs	5	7
<i>Number of additional not mandatory programs, undergraduate</i>		
➤ Program track Petroleum Geoscience	1	2
➤ Certified programs	None	2
➤ Minor track programs	None	3

Strategy 1.2.5 Raise the awareness among students of local, regional, and global energy and environment challenges (e.g. ethical, social, technical, etc.) through direct infusion into coursework and extracurricular opportunities.

A minimum of two courses (technical elective courses) in the final two years of each program will have assessment related to local, regional and global energy and environment challenges. In addition, a major event for students' competition PI wide will be held to encourage students from all Engineering and Science programs as well as from Arts and Sciences to participate.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Number of required energy/environmental courses, undergraduate</i>		
➤ Technical elective in each program	None	2

Number of extracurricular activities, undergraduate

➤ Major students' competition-PI wide None **1**

Strategy 1.2.6 Expose undergraduate students routinely to experience the interdisciplinary nature of work typically found in the energy sector, ADNOC Group of Companies, during their undergraduate studies. Interaction between undergraduate students and work environment should be encouraged based on credited and noncredited courses and training seminars.

Undergraduate students are required to take one internship course (three credit course for a maximum of eight weeks) during their senior year. The internship course is taken at ADNOC Group of Companies during summer period. Other existing courses in the undergraduate curriculum for Engineering and Science programs will be utilized to increase students' interaction with work environment. In addition, the number of seminars related to oil and gas will be increased as well as the invited speakers from ADNOC Group of Companies and their International Share Holders.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Number of credited courses, undergraduate</i>		
➤ Required courses	Internship course	Internship + modifying 2 existing courses
<i>Number of non-credited courses/Seminars</i>		
➤ Seminars	1	2
Per semester		

Strategy 1.2.7 Strengthen the experiential component of the PI curriculum (research, internships, student exchange program and international experiences).

Undergraduate students will be encouraged to join professional societies, conduct research and/or internship based on credited and non-credited courses, within academia or industry and locally or abroad.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Students participation, undergraduate</i>		
➤ Professional societies	Less than 10%	30%
➤ Research	Less than 3%	10%
➤ Optional Internship	None	3%
➤ Student exchange	Less than 1%	3%

Objective 1.3. An Optimal Learning Environment – *Create an optimal learning environment including state-of-the-art facilities in and out of class.*

The PI's integrated campus plan provides the latest state-of-the-art facilities to maximize student learning, a sense of belonging and community amongst students, faculty and staff including non-catered spaces for student and large group meetings and discussions. Facilities are integrated with one another and the PI's vision in a coordinated fashion to allow for future needs and development. Educational and laboratory facilities maximize collaborative, hands-on learning, and are operated and maintained by quality faculty and staff who regularly review and update facilities in accordance with the needs of the PI and ADNOC Group of Companies.

Strategy 1.3.1 Maximize the usage and availability of existing learning environments, with adequate qualified manpower available for maintenance and operation. Maintain students/faculty ratio and students/staff ratio in the undergraduate program within the international standards.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Students/faculty ratio, undergraduate</i>		
➤ Overall	8/1	10/1
➤ Foundation	11/1	10/1
➤ Undergraduate	7/1	10/1
<i>Students/Academic staff ratio, undergraduate</i> ➤		
Overall	22/1	20/1
<i>Designated spaces allocation</i>		
➤ Professional chapters <i>Per program</i>	None	1
<i>Student satisfaction survey, undergraduate</i>		
➤ Classrooms	84%	90%
➤ labs	None	85%
➤ Library	75%	85%

Strategy 1.3.2 Provide state-of-the-art technology supports the curricula and enhances the learning environment.

In Fall 2012 Studio concept was implemented as the education approach to teach Physics I-Mechanics in order to increase students' interaction inside the class room. Faculty, academic staff and students will be encouraged to use state of the art technology supporting curriculum including electronic book to replace existing text books. Also, interaction using web tools will be encouraged.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>State of the art technology utilization</i>		
➤ Electronic book	None	70%
➤ Web interaction	Less than 10%	50%
➤ Studio concept <small>Number of subject</small>	1 (physics lab)	3
<i>Student satisfaction survey</i>		
➤ IT Facilities	63%	70%

Goal 2. Develop into a dynamic engineering and science graduate school that is highly respected in the region and beyond, with an established reputation for outstanding student accomplishment and excellence in both teaching and research.

Objective 2.1. Student Enrollment – *Increase full-time graduate student enrollment in existing programs and expand into additional disciplines of relevance to ADNOC Group of Companies.*

The PI will work closely with ADNOC Group of Companies to promote the growth of the Graduate School by improving both internal recruitment and external outreach and broadening the scope of its programs. In addition to encouraging ADNOC Group of Companies national employees to undertake full-time graduate studies, the school will also better meet ADNOC Group of Companies needs by expanding into additional relevant disciplines.

Strategy 2.1.1 Increase the number of full-time Master of Science students to support research projects and activities in PI considering gender distribution and nationality.

Alumni from local and regional universities are encouraged to enroll into the graduate program as well as alumni from partner universities.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Number of students, graduate</i>		
<i>Including Fall 2013 intake</i>		
➤ Student Body	75	200 (170% increase)
➤ Ratio of graduate student to faculty <small>Engineering and Science programs</small>	0.86	2
➤ Female students	30%	40%
➤ UAE nationals	15%	30%

Strategy 2.1.2 Expand the graduate program to include additional disciplines that are related to ADNOC Group of Companies and can serve them.

Two additional Master of Science programs in Petroleum Engineering and Petroleum Geosciences will be added to the existing six programs; Applied Chemistry, Chemical, Electrical, Mechanical, Petroleum and Petroleum Geosciences programs.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Number of existing Master of Science programs, graduate</i>		
➤ Engineering and Science programs	6	8

Objective 2.2. Program Quality – *Deliver graduate programs of the highest academic quality that adhere to best practice and meet or exceed accreditation requirements.*

The Graduate School will strive to produce students who will demonstrate their command of both theory and practice in highly specialized areas relevant to ADNOC Group of Companies. The graduates will provide leadership in their respective fields and address significant local and regional issues.

Strategy 2.2.1 Obtain and maintain full UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, *MOHESR*, accreditation for all existing programs at graduate level.

PI currently has six Master of Science programs and five Master of Engineering programs. Departments of Chemical, Electrical, Mechanical and Petroleum Engineering have both programs while Petroleum Geosciences and Chemistry have only Master of Science and Health Safety & Environment Engineering has only Master of Engineering.

PI was awarded initial accreditation from *MOHESR* for both Master of Science and Master of Engineering programs.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Accreditation from MOHESR, graduate</i>		
➤ Master of Science	Initial Accreditation	Full Accreditation (2014)
➤ Master of Engineering	Initial Accreditation	Full Accreditation (2014)

Strategy 2.2.2 Achieve a reputable international ranking for the graduate program by undertaking both self- and external assessment, and implementing necessary ranking criteria.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Ranking exercise, graduate</i>		
➤ Local, <i>CHEDS</i> Top in UAE	None	2
➤ International Best in the world	None	500

Strategy 2.2.3 Enhance thesis quality by making publication a mandatory requirement upon finishing Master of Science thesis.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Required publication upon finishing Ms. thesis</i>		
➤ peer-reviewed conference	None	1

Objective 2.3. Expansion to Ph.D. – Offer programs at Ph.D. level.

The PI will expand its educational provision to Ph.D. level with the long term aim of developing graduates who will become internationally recognized in their field of specialization. These graduates will help support ADNOC Group of Companies' Research and Development capability.

Strategy 2.3.1 Establish Ph.D. program by applying for UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, *MOHESR*, approval.

A minimum of two Ph.D. programs proposals will be submitted forward to *MOHESR* by Fall 2015 to be initially accredited and start by Fall 2016.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Initial accreditation for Ph.D. programs</i>		
➤ Number of programs	None	2 (2016)

Strategy 2.3.2 Prepare faculty for supervising Ph.D. students by encouraging them to obtain external adjunct professor appointments with the aim of obtaining Ph.D. development and supervision experience.

Increase the number of visiting Ph.D. students, with PI faculty members serving as co-advisors.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Visiting Ph.D. students</i>		
➤ Number of students	5	30 (2016)

Strategy 2.3.3 Prepare PI graduate students in Master of Science program to pursue Ph.D. studies in PI.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>PI Ms. students to pursue Ph.D. degree</i>		
➤ Percentage of students	None	25%

Goal 3. Emerge as a leading engineering and science research university focused on the oil, gas, and energy sectors.

Objective 3.1. Research Program – *Develop a focused research program providing solutions and innovations in collaboration with ADNOC Group of Companies to align the research portfolio of the PI with the strategic priorities of ADNOC Group of Companies while accommodating and developing faculty research interests. A research program that focuses on the oil, gas, and energy sectors will be developed. It will include fundamental and applied research serving the current needs and future challenges of ADNOC Group of Companies, and the society of the UAE. The research program will be based on a dialogue between the PI, its sponsors, stakeholders, and partners, and will take advantage of an excellent research infrastructure.*

Strategy 3.1.1 Improve research opportunities, impact and visibility through establishing and maintaining a dialogue with ADNOC Group of Companies to identify research and development as well as technical challenges.

Research projects sponsored by ADNOC Group of Companies and their shareholders will participate in local conferences related to oil, gas and energy sector such as Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference, *ADIPEC*, and The World Future Energy Summit, *WFES*. Also, high impact publication, patents and technology transfer will be encouraged.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Faculty engaged in research funded by ADNOC Group of Companies/shareholders</i>		
➤ Engineering and Science programs faculty Out of total faculty	No data	70%
<i>Conferences Participation</i>		
➤ Local conferences related to oil, gas and energy Out of total research faculty	No data	50%
<i>Journal publication</i>		
<i>Per faculty</i>		
➤ Peer reviewed journal	1.3	2.5
➤ Publication with international coauthors	No data	XX

➤ Citation rate	No data	XX
<i>Patent</i>		
➤ Filed	No data	XX
Annually		
➤ Issued	1	3
Annually		
➤ License agreement	None	1
Annually		

Strategy 3.1.2 Engage in multidisciplinary fundamental and applied research that addresses present and future needs of the UAE energy sector in particular.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Research</i>		
<i>Out of total funded research</i>		
➤ Multidisciplinary research	No data	40%
➤ Applied research	No data	80%
<i>Research groups</i>		
➤ Multidisciplinary groups	None	8

Objective 3.2. Research Community and Infrastructure – *Attract and develop leading researchers to promote further development of a research culture and ensure that state-of-the-art research facilities are provided with a dedicated research administration.*

The PI will attract and retain outstanding researchers to establish a research culture based on local and international collaboration. This requires the development of Ph. D. programs, adequate funding and supportive infrastructure. The PI will be recognized as an active contributor to the scientific community by promoting engineering and science research through hosting international conferences and workshops. The PI will endeavor to support front-line research activities and facilities through the development of a strong research infrastructure. This will further develop the research capabilities of the PI. This infrastructure will support the activities of faculty, industry professionals, and students to advance fundamental and applied research.

Strategy 3.2.1 Attract excellent faculty, technical experts and researchers, especially those who are leaders in areas related to ADNOC Group of Companies' research interest.

Through utilizing PI's academic and industrial partner in attracting topnotch researchers in areas related to oil, gas and energy. Those recruits can be done based on temporary approach, as for visiting research faculty, and permanent recruitment.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Research Manpower</i>		
➤ Visiting research faculty Per program	None	2
➤ Research Associate Per research faculty	No data	1
➤ Technical expert from industry Per program	No data	2

Strategy 3.2.2 Develop an organizational structure and policies for research.

This structure should consider the process from the start when principal investigators are asked to submit to proposals to reviewing and awarding the projects then the follow-ups with the progress and finally finishing up the projects. To close the gaps after a project comes to end, a business unit office will be established to market the research products and findings as well as taking care of filing patents.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Organizational Structure</i>		
➤ Development of the structure	80%	100% (2014)
➤ Admin staff	Less than 10%	100% (2016)
➤ Business unit office	None	100% (2018)

Strategy 3.2.3 Establish premier facilities to support fundamental and applied research.

Phase I-A of the ADNOC – PI Research Center (ADPIRC) that will be ready by first quarter of 2015 will add 8000 m² of research space. Phase I-B will add 4000 m² and should be ready by 2018.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>ADPIRC progress</i>		
➤ Phase I-A	80%	100% (Q1-2015)
➤ Phase I-B	None	100% (2018)

Goal 4. Create a vibrant campus environment for faculty, staff and students to work together offering innovative and enriching learning experiences that foster students' intellectual and personal development where student success and satisfaction is central priority.

Objective 4.1. Student Involvement – *Nurture a sense of community, engagement and ownership amongst students.*

The PI offers the structure in which students can enjoy a true university experience driven by the students' own interest, initiative and motivation. Students become empowered, resulting in productive members of society with strong ties to the PI community.

Strategy 4.1.1 Enrich student-life with attractive programs of high quality, and a list of PI traditions is maintained and honored.

Students are encouraged to join students groups, clubs and professional societies, which was addressed in the *Undergraduate Education* goal. Currently, ten students groups exist in PI. Students also are encouraged to participate in the Students Council activities in both undergraduate and graduate levels. A new program called *Freshman Year Experience (FYE)* was established in Fall 2013 to strength the involvement of student in playing an active role outside the class room as well as to help and support them toward achieving better academic performance.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Student groups</i>		
<i>Combined male and female average ➤</i>		
Number of groups	10	15
➤ Active student participation	15%	25%
<i>Educational (nonacademic) programs</i>		
➤ Student-centered activities	1	4

Strategy 4.1.2 Establish an incentive/reward system for high achievers, so the PI consistently recognizes students' achievements in education, leadership and integrity.

Two annual events are held in the female facility, *Arzanah*, to celebrate student success; One to recognize student academic achievement, *Honor Day*, and the other one to recognize those who participate in extra curricula activities, *Arzanah Day*. Also, funded trips are used to award high achievers in different academic levels. Those traditions and celebrations will be extended and continued to be PI wide events.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Student Success</i>		
<i>Combined male and female average</i>		
➤ Student academic achievement Number of events	1	2 (2014)
➤ Student service recognition Number of events	1	2 (2014)
➤ Funded trips abroad Out of total number of students	10%	20%

Strategy 4.1.3 Allocate attractive physical spaces, including PI residence for male and female students, which encourage both organized and informal social interaction.

A new student center will be built as part of PI Master Plan. For male residence, old facilities will be refurbished and new ones will be built to bring the total housing capacity from 750 beds to 1250 beds. Female residence that can accommodate up to 350 beds is under development and should be ready by 2014.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Student physical space and residence</i>		
➤ Student center Number of student centers	None	2
➤ Male residence Number of beds	750	1,250
➤ Female residence Number of beds	88	350 (2014)

Objective 4.2. Student Development – *Provide students with opportunities for meaningful and rewarding personal and professional growth.*

Students are given the opportunity to reach their full potential during their academic experience at the PI. Students are provided with the means to develop the professional competencies necessary to better serve ADNOC Group of Companies and contribute to the development of the UAE. Resources that promote leadership, entrepreneurship, social responsibility and integrity are available to all students.

Strategy 4.2.1 Strengthen the culture of integrity, leadership, entrepreneurship, and innovation among PI students.

Dedicate credited and non-credited courses in leadership and entrepreneurship.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Credited and non-credited courses</i>		
Per semester		
➤ Entrepreneurship	None	1
➤ Leadership	None	1

Strategy 4.2.2 Engage students more effectively with the local community through outreach activities and services.

Emphasize the importance of community service through course work, such as *Freshman Year Experience, FYI*, as well as activities outside class such as dedicating a full day event for community service. Students have been participating annually in local major events to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) such as *Young ADIPEC, Science Festival and Think Science*.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Students participation in community</i>		
➤ Number of major events	3	5
Per year		
➤ Through course works	1 (FYE)	2
Per semester		

Objective 4.3. Student Governance – *Ensure that the student-related policies and procedures are clear and consistent in intent and execution.*

The PI provides a channel through which students can influence student-related policies. Students understand their rights and responsibilities and are confident that they will be treated equitably.

Strategy 4.3.1 Involve students in reviewing and formation of policies and procedures that are designed to meet their needs.

Student Council representatives will be involved when it comes to legislating new policies that are related to students.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Students involvement</i>		
➤ Presence in committees	Less than 10%	100% (2014)
Committees related to students policies		
➤ Student satisfaction survey	71%	80%

Strategy 4.3.2 Streamline communications of policies, events and important information, so there is an effective mechanism by which administration and faculty communicate with students.

A questionnaire survey will be conducted annually targeting new intakes on their knowledge of PI policies. A minimum target of 80% is considered acceptable results.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Students survey</i>		
➤ Awareness of policies	No data	80%

Goal 5. Foster an intellectual and rewarding environment with fair and equitable policies, procedures and practices that are visible at all levels and enhance a performance-driven culture to facilitate the recruitment and retention of high-quality, multi-cultural faculty and staff who are committed to, and satisfied with, their professional development.

Objective 5.1. Performance and Promotion – *Provide clear, consistent and attainable requirements to achieve performance ratings and promotion.*

The PI values its faculty and staff and strives to provide an environment that enables them to be productive and satisfied. Effective policies and procedures will guide faculty and staff to strive for excellence.

Strategy 5.1.1 Define criteria for faculty promotion and faculty ranks across and examine the current promotion criteria by 2014.

Promotion criteria will be developed based on the international standards where faculty's views and feedback will be considered throughout the process.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Faculty promotion</i>		
➤ Development of putting promotion criteria	70%	100% (2014)
➤ Awareness of criteria <i>Survey</i>	No data	90%
➤ Satisfaction <i>Survey</i>	40%	70%

Strategy 5.1.2 Review, improve and implement clear appraisal guidelines by 2014 developed through faculty and staff participation where personal development, recognition and exceptional performance awards are integrated into the appraisal.

The appraisal guidelines should be in line with the faculty promotion criteria and it should support them for the promotion. Incentives and award systems will be developed for faculty, academic and administrative staff with high performance and achievements in the areas of teaching, research and services.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Faculty appraisal</i>		
➤ Development of putting appraisal criteria	80%	100% (2014)
➤ Awareness of criteria	No data	90%
➤ Satisfaction	No data	75%
<i>Staff appraisal</i>		
➤ Development of putting appraisal criteria	80%	100% (2014)
➤ Awareness of criteria	47%	90%
➤ Satisfaction	No data	75%

Strategy 5.1.3 Develop, document and implement a “top-down & bottom-up” appraisal process for all academic and administrative positions by 2015.

The system will be used for quality assurance to make sure that faculty, academic and administrative staff are getting the required support and guidance throughout their career at PI.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Appraisal process, top-down & bottom-up</i>		
➤ Development of putting appraisal criteria	None	100% (2015)

Objective 5.2. Work Environment and Governance – *Create a diverse, competitive, fair and collegial work environment where faculty and staff are actively involved in decision-making processes and the implementation of policies and procedures.*

The PI will continue to enhance its infrastructure and enablers through attracting and retaining top-notch faculty and staff who have sufficient opportunity to participate in the decision making process with formal representation on appropriate committees related to both academic and non-academic matters.

Strategy 5.2.1 Develop, communicate and implement a recruitment and retention plan for faculty and staff.

For academic programs, Full professors and Associate Professors should be considered for the new recruits. At least 30% of new recruit are Full Professors and 50% are Associate Professor. The 2012-2013 retention rate for faculty is 88% which will be increased to 95%. The retention rate for academic and administrative staff is 95% which is considered acceptable.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Faculty recruitment</i>		
➤ Professor and Associate Professor Engineering and Science programs	Less than 20%	50%
➤ Ph.D. from top 100 ranked universities	26%	40%
<i>Retention</i>		
➤ Faculty	88%	95%

Strategy 5.2.2 Promote inter- and intra-departmental cooperation and collegiality.

Multidisciplinary work can be encouraged between academic programs through utilizing technical elective courses, senior design and research projects

Covered in Foundation and Undergraduate Education and Research Sections

Strategy 5.2.3 Implement the policy of rotation for academic administrative positions and standing committees.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Rotation policy</i>		
➤ Development of putting rotation policy for academic administrative positions	None	100% (2014)
➤ Development of putting rotation policy for standing committees	None	100% (2014)

Objective 5.3. Professional Development – *Maintain a supportive work environment that facilitates employee success by providing appropriate training, mentoring and professional development.*

The PI is committed to providing a working environment where faculty and staff have access to development activities that support teaching, research, scholarships and career development.

Strategy 5.3.1 Develop and instate academic mentorship program and process for junior faculty.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Mentorship program</i>		
➤ Development of putting mentorship guidelines for junior faculty	None	100% (2015)

Strategy 5.3.2 Develop, review and revisit a comprehensive training development plan for academic and administrative staff.

KPI	Current	Target
<i>Training development plan</i>		
➤ Development of putting training guidelines for staff	None	100% (2015)

Goal 6. Stand and be recognized as a pillar of the community through a spirit of sharing and engagement towards strengthening the visibility and outreach activities in the region and globally.

Objective 6.1. Visibility – *Strive to be recognized as the premier university in engineering and science in the UAE.*

The achievements and accomplishments of the PI through its faculty, staff, students and alumni are well represented in national and international events. The PI vision and mission are shared with the local and international community.

Strategy 6.1.1 Enhance knowledge and resource sharing to fulfill the local and global demands.

PI will communicate its achievements and accomplishment to the stakeholders, local and international partners and local community as well as its future plans and strategies.

Strategy 6.1.2 Develop an active presence in the community through engagement and participation in social affairs.

Partially covered in *Students Section*

Objective 6.2. Community Outreach – *Utilize the PI's rich resources in engineering and science to support the UAE's vision of development and self-reliance.*

The PI participates in local events and initiatives, especially the ones relevant to its vision and mission, and plays an effective role in supporting the local community.

Strategy 6.2.1 Promote engineering and science in the UAE community through examining the feasibility of establishing a national STEM education center for K-12 with the support of ADNOC Group of Companies, International Shareholders and Government Entities.

This will help in preparing high school students to join higher education institutions.

Strategy 6.2.2 Raise awareness of global issues and events related to energy and environment.

Strategy 6.2.3 Participate in community social service.

VITA

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