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The Influence of Student Affairs
on First-year Students'
Intent to Re-enroll at the
University of Memphis

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Executive Summary

The University of Memphis submitted a proposal for a mixed methods study to examine the impact of its Student Affairs programming and services on student retention to the Vanderbilt University's Peabody College of Education's doctoral capstone program. Doctoral students in the Higher Education Leadership and Policy program were selected to design and conduct the mixed methods study. After consultation with Student Affairs leadership at the University of Memphis and academic advisors at Vanderbilt University, the scope of work, study design, and seven study questions were defined.

QUALITATIVE DESIGN

The qualitative phase of the study was designed to answer two study questions:

1. What is the nature and quality of first-year students' experiences with Student Affairs programming and services?
2. How do their experiences impact their intent to re-enroll at the University of Memphis?

Separate interview protocols were developed for students and staff. Interviews were conducted November 27-29, 2012 on the campus of the University of Memphis with 21 students and 10 Student Affairs staff members.

QUANTITATIVE DESIGN

The quantitative phase of the study was designed to answer the remaining five study questions:

1. To what degree do first-year students participate in Student Affairs programming and access Student Affairs services at the University of Memphis?
2. Do Student Affairs programming and services influence first-year students' perceptions of the institution's commitment to their welfare?
3. Is there a relationship between first-year student characteristics and demographics and participation in Student Affairs programming and/or accessing of Student Affairs services at the University of Memphis?
4. Do first-year students who participate in Student Affairs programming and/or access Student Affairs services report feeling more socially and academically integrated into the University of Memphis community?
5. Is there a correlation between first-year students who participate in Student Affairs programming and/or access Student Affairs services and their intent to re-enroll?

A 59-item voluntary online survey was administered from January 15, 2013–February 1, 2013 to gather data for analysis to effectively answer the five quantitative study questions. After the data cleansing process, there were 195 valid respondents whose responses were used in the analysis phase.

DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative data analysis was conducted December 2012– February 2013. Quantitative data was analyzed during the month of February 2013. Listed below are the major findings by study method.

FINDINGS FROM QUALITATIVE DESIGN

1. Student Affairs plays a critical role in assisting students' transition to college by connecting students with campus resources and programs. The more involved a student is in various Student Affairs activities, the more likely s/he was to know about and engage with other campus opportunities. Student Affairs staff members personalize students' connection to on-campus resources and help students address "out-of-school" needs that can impede students' ability to engage in college.
2. Engagement with Student Affairs helps students build a "Tiger family."
3. Involvement in Student Affairs programming bolsters academics by creating a community of success and support among participants. First-year students

struggle greatly with time management. Counseling from Student Affairs staff members helps students overcome this barrier.

4. Student Affairs facilities dramatically impact students' academic and social experiences.
5. There are differences in the dorm climate and sense of community between the LLC and Richardson dormitories. These differences coincide with residential students' ability to form friendships with dorm-mates and support other residents academically.
6. The nature of Student Affairs is guided by the unique nature of a commuter campus. Commuter and residential students interact differently with Student Affairs. Residents seek social communities; commuters rely on resources and services. Commuter students have trouble participating in campus social life. The commuter student population impacts the social environment for residential students.
7. Student interviewees were very cognizant of the current economy and danger of student debt. First-year students appreciated Student Affairs programming related to major and career guidance. Work conflicts and changing attitudes about career preparation influence how students utilize Student Affairs.
8. There were differences in the perceptions of the degree to which the University of Memphis creates an inclusive environment and what the role of the Multicultural Affairs office should be. The University addresses diversity

through the creation of multiple organizations and isolated efforts rather than a cohesive plan for creating an inclusive environment.

9. The social integration fostered by utilization of Student Affairs plays a significant part in first-year students' intent to re-enroll. Students valued their on-campus relationships for different reasons: building professional networks, forming deep friendships, and having access to socio-emotional support.
10. Student Affairs academic services influence students' intent to re-enroll by helping students feel confident they can succeed.
11. Student Affairs resources encouraged commuter persistence by sending a signal that the University of Memphis cares about them and wants to support them in managing their personal and academic needs while on campus.
12. Student Affairs programs influence students' intent to re-enroll by fostering a sense of school pride that increases their commitment to the University of Memphis.

FINDINGS FROM QUANTITATIVE DESIGN

1. The most influential Student Affairs programming and services on the first-year students' decision to stay at the University of Memphis were: 1) Frosh Camp, 2) on-campus dining, 3) Residential Life, 4) sororities/fraternities, and 5) the University Center.
2. The most influential non-Student Affairs related factors on the first-year students' decision to stay at the University of Memphis were: 1) affordability/cost, 2) receiving scholarships/grants, 3) location/convenience, 4) family/peer support, and 5) quality of teaching.
3. Student Affairs staff members strongly influence students' perception of the University of Memphis's commitment to their welfare.
4. There is a positive relationship between participating in Student Affairs programs/ accessing services and students' feelings of being socially integrated into the campus community.
5. There is a positive relationship between participating in Student Affairs programs/ accessing services and intent to re-enroll. The level of participation does not have to be high to have a positive impact on students' intent to re-enroll. There is also a positive relationship between the University of Memphis GPA and intent to re-enroll.
6. There is a negative relationship between the University of Memphis GPA and participating in Student Affairs programs/accessing services.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH DERIVED FROM EXPERIENCE CONDUCTING THIS STUDY

In order to further enhance institutional research at the University of Memphis we recommend:

1. Improve real-time participation data collection for Student Affairs programs and services.
2. Incorporate ongoing and longitudinal institutional research into the Student Affairs enterprise, its programs and services.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE BASED ON STUDY FINDINGS

Based on the findings detailed in this report, we make the following recommendations to the University of Memphis to optimize the impact of its Student Affairs programming and services on student retention and persistence to graduation:

1. Increase the breadth and depth of the residential experience through increased capacity, updated facilities and more living-learning opportunities. Broaden weekend activity offerings and include students' loved ones where possible.
2. Expand the capacity of Frosh Camp to include all first-year students and include alternative models for different student sub-populations (e.g. adult students).

3. Enhance and increase collaborative efforts with Academic Affairs and faculty and re-examine ways to provide consistency in the ACAD 1100 course experience.
4. Create a culture of inclusion by 1) developing a division-wide policy and diversity statement, 2) fostering collaborative efforts in the division to create programming that embraces diversity in all its dimensions, and 3) encouraging programming and activities across and between affinity groups and institutional departments.
5. Increase the focus on commuter students' needs and delivery of services in response to those needs.
6. Respond to the economic concerns of students by maintaining affordability of the educational experience at the University of Memphis, assisting students to define realistic goals by offering more career development opportunities in their first and second years, and keeping students focused on the potential positive outcomes that are attainable with the completion of their undergraduate studies and engagement with Student Affairs.

Background and Context

RETENTION AND STUDENT AFFAIRS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

The current four-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time freshmen is 12.6%; the six-year graduation rate is 40.4%; and the first to second year retention rate is 75.7% (University of Memphis Office of Institutional Research, 2013). In hopes of improving these outcomes, the first priority of the Division of Student Affairs has become to “increase student retention and timely graduation” (University of Memphis Division of Student Affairs, 2013). The division works towards this goal by offering various programs and services to meet the needs of its diverse student body and the complex institutional characteristics of the University of Memphis (Table 1).

Tinto (2012) asserts that the best retention efforts are proactive, data-driven, intentional and structured. Once appointed in 2003, Dr. Rosie Bingham, the Vice President of Student Affairs, shifted the divisional culture to start to look at outcomes related to Student Affairs participation and to study best practices in Student Affairs literature. In 2006, this focus on assessment was formalized, with the restructuring of the division and appointment of Dr. Daniel Bureau to the position of Director of Student Affairs Learning and Assessment.

Table #1 University of Memphis Student Affairs Structure		
Student Development	Student Life/ Dean of Students	Campus Services
Career Services	Adult & Commuter Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Off-campus Housing	Conference Planning & Operations
Counseling, Tutoring, Testing <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Career Counseling Center○ Educational Support○ Psychological Counseling Center○ Testing Center	Student Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Community Service○ Frosh Camp○ Fraternity & Sorority Affairs○ Leadership Programs○ Student Activities Council○ Student Organizations○ Up 'til Dawn	Residence Life
Student Affairs Learning and Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Commencement Office	Multicultural Affairs	University Center
Student Disability Services	Office of Student Conduct	
Student Health Services	Student Government Association	
Student Success Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ TRIO Classic○ TRIO STEM○ First Scholars Program	Campus Recreation Intramural Services	

Since 2006, this scholarly approach to Student Affairs assessment has been primarily focused on the relationship between Student Affairs programs and learning outcomes. This study marks a new effort in their institutional research: linking Student Affairs participation with retention. However, turning to empirical research for best practices can be a challenge as, with few exceptions, the literature on the relationship between retention and Student Affairs programming is scant, inconsistent and lacks rigor (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Patton, Morelon, Whitehead & Hossler, 2006).

Gathering reliable institutional data on the influence of Student Affairs on retention is also difficult. Previous efforts at the University of Memphis have focused on correlational data analysis of formal programming (e.g. *Is there a difference in retention between students who join sororities and fraternities and those students who do not participate in Greek Life?*). This correlational approach paints only a partial picture of the influence of Student Affairs on retention. Current attendance data do not capture all types of usage of Student Affairs. Data on engagement with Student Affairs activities, events, resources, facilities and many drop-in services are not collected and therefore a holistic view of the influence of Student Affairs cannot be determined. Correlational studies also do not allow for students to voice whether or not participation influenced their decision to stay.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The University of Memphis requested that we conduct a mixed methods study to gain a better understanding of the extent to which participation in Student Affairs plays a role in students' decisions to persist. The original intent of this request was to assess this relationship for the entire student body. Upon reviewing this request with Dr. John Braxton from Vanderbilt, we determined that including upper-classmen would mandate an ex-post facto study design, thereby compromising the rigor of our study. Therefore, we chose to amend the original request and focus on the relationship between Student Affairs usage and first-year students' intent to re-enroll. "Intent to re-enroll" has been shown to be a strong predictor of first to second year retention (Bean, 1980; Pascarella, Duby & Iverson, 1983; Voorhees, 1987). After reviewing the study modifications with the University of Memphis, we collaborated to align their proposed study questions with the revised design, resulting in seven study questions:

1. What is the nature and quality of first-year students' experiences with Student Affairs programming and services?
2. How do first-year students' experiences impact their intent to re-enroll at the University of Memphis?
3. To what degree do first-year students participate in Student Affairs programming and access Student Affairs services at the University of Memphis?

4. Do Student Affairs programming and services influence first-year students' perceptions of the institution's commitment to their welfare?
5. Is there a relationship between first-year student characteristics and demographics and participation in Student Affairs programming and/or accessing of Student Affairs services at the University of Memphis?
6. Do first-year students who participate in Student Affairs programming and/or access Student Affairs services report feeling more socially and academically integrated into the University of Memphis community?
7. Is there a correlation between first-year students who participate in Student Affairs programming and/or access Student Affairs services and their intent to re-enroll?

The first two study questions, addressed through qualitative design, were developed in consultation with a qualitative expert, Dr. Claire Smrekar from Vanderbilt. Question one created the opportunity for students to share their experiences with Student Affairs. Question two allowed students to express why they decided to stay or leave.

Study questions three through seven were addressed through quantitative design. As previously mentioned, data limitations would not allow us to gather information on the total contribution of all Student Affairs programs and services. Therefore we included the third study question to get a baseline of respondents'

total utilization of Student Affairs and included the seventh question to analyze usage's contribution to intent to re-enroll. Questions four and six were derived from constructs in student departure research that have been associated with attrition. Question five was an explicit request by the University of Memphis and allowed us to gain information on the relative utilization of Student Affairs programming and services by student subgroups.

The University of Memphis approved all questions after development.

Theoretical Framework

REVISIONS OF STUDENT DEPARTURE THEORY

This study is grounded in Braxton, Hirschy and McClendon's (2004) revisions of Tinto's theory of student departure. Tinto's theory of student departure is the most cited scholarly work on attrition and has shaped the discussion on why students leave college (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004). However, since its formulation in 1975, scholars and Tinto himself recognized that the original theory begged review. After reviewing research that tests propositions derived from Tinto's theory conducted by Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson (1997), Braxton, Hirschy and McClendon (2004) offered revisions to Tinto's theory. Three aspects of these revisions deem the revisions appropriate for this study. First, unlike the original theory, the three scholars considered distinctions in institutional type. Second, the scholars pulled from multiple bodies of research (economic, organizational, psychological and sociological) – a development that has great utility in understanding the individual and institutional factors that contribute to attrition. Third, the scholars recognize that the departure process may differ for subgroups of students. These updates make the revisions useful lenses in understanding the multiple factors that contribute to students' decisions to leave college. While this study does not seek to test theory, the constructs described below have been used to frame the development

of our study questions, interview protocols and quantitative survey. Where appropriate, they have been referred to in our findings.

University of Memphis's Residential Characteristics

In revising Tinto's theory, Braxton, Hirschy and McClendon (2004) identified that a student's decision to leave college can be heavily impacted by the type of institution they attend. Although the University of Memphis is identified as a non-residential institution (Carnegie Foundation, 2013), its first-year student population does not mirror the overall institutional composition. Nearly half of first-year students reside on campus. As one student interviewee observed, this creates "two campuses". For this reason, we found it important to pull from both the residential and commuter revisions of departure theory.

Why Students Who Live on Campus Decide to Leave

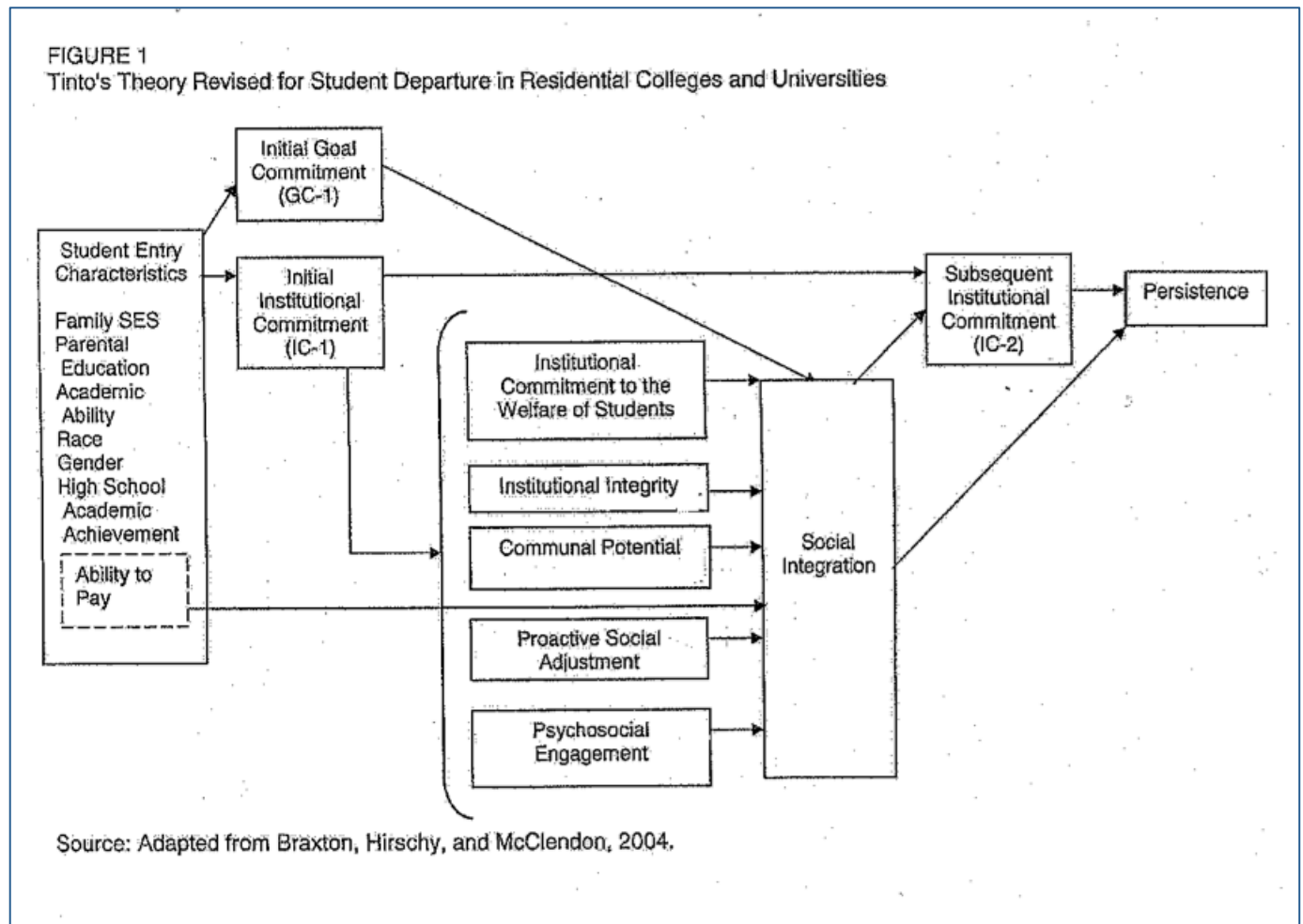
Braxton, Sullivan and Johnson (1997) reviewed empirical studies that tested nine propositions derived from Tinto's original theory. From this review, Braxton, Sullivan and Johnson identified (1997) four logically related propositions that garnered strong support in residential institutions:

- 1) A student's entry characteristics impact his/her initial commitment to the institution.
- 2) A student's initial commitment to the institution affects his/her subsequent commitment to the institution.

- 3) The more the student is socially integrated into the university, the greater his/her subsequent commitment to the university.
- 4) The greater his/her subsequent commitment to the institution, the more likely it is that s/he will persist.

Note that the academic experience is not mentioned in these four propositions. In testing the academic and social influences of student persistence, Braxton and his colleagues (1997) found through their review of empirical studies that only “social integration,” or the degree to which the residential student finds that s/he fits into campus communities, had the ability to transform “initial commitment to the institution” to “subsequent commitment to the institution.” Their tests propelled them to remove “academic integration,” or a student’s appraisal of academic fit, and focus on those factors that may impact social integration.

Pulling from the large body of retention literature, Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon (2004) identified six factors that influence social integration in residential colleges and universities (Figure 1): 1) institutional commitment to student welfare, 2) institutional integrity, 3) communal potential, 4) proactive social adjustment, 5) psychosocial engagement, and 6) ability to pay. We chose to focus on four of these six factors. We describe these four factors below.



I. Institutional commitment to student welfare

The first factor that leads to a student's level of social integration is "institutional commitment to student welfare." If a student feels like the university cares about him/her, s/he is more likely to want to be part of the social environment (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004).

II. Communal potential

In order to feel like the University of Memphis is a good social fit, students must believe that there are groups on campus that they could be a part of. That is, students must feel that there are other students who share their values, beliefs and goals. The researchers caution that minority students who are under-represented on campus may struggle with finding a cultural community (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004).

III. Institutional integrity

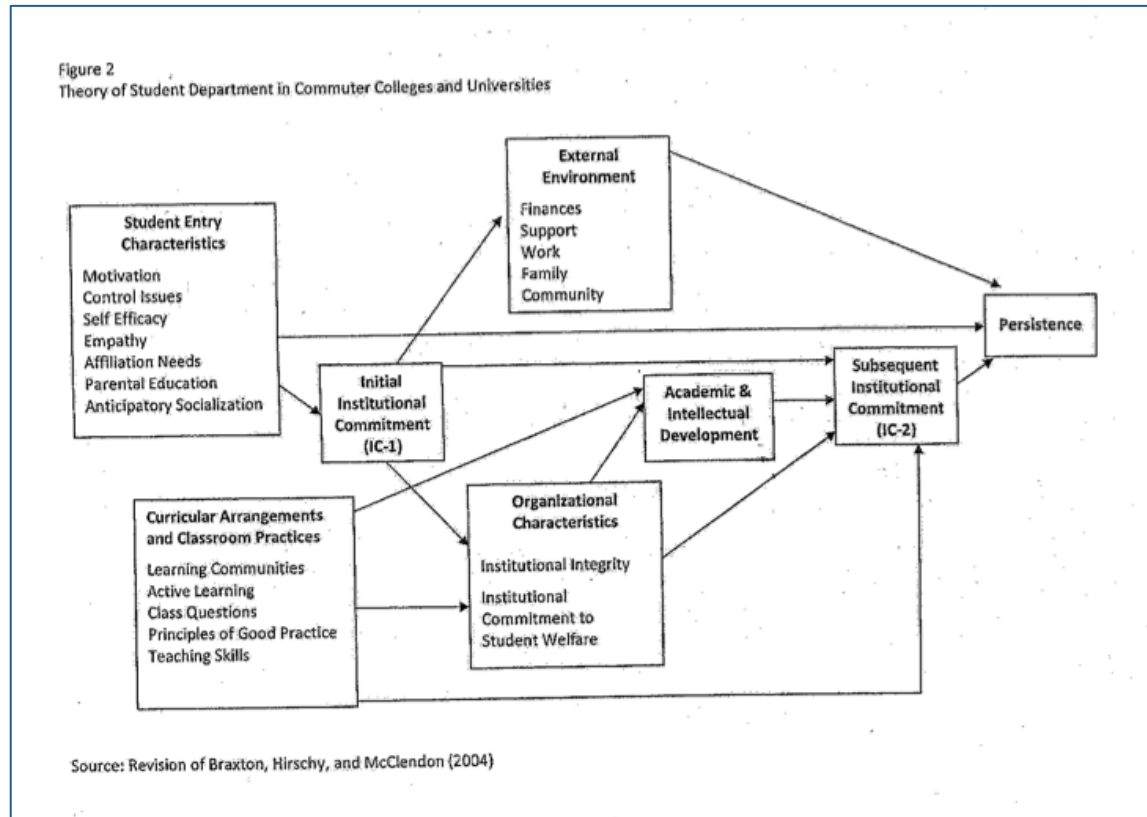
An institution demonstrates that it has integrity by staying true to its mission and goals (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004). Does the university deliver on its pre-enrollment promises? Do staff members administer policies and rules fairly? Students who respect their university's actions are more likely to want to become socially integrated into the university.

IV. Ability to pay

"Ability to pay" simply translates to satisfaction with the cost of the University of Memphis (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004). Students with financial barriers cannot engage in campus life and are less likely to persist.

Why Commuter Students Decide to Leave

Tinto's original theory was grounded in the experience of traditional students on a residential campus. Braxton, Hirschy and McClendon (2004) recognized that commuter students have a very different relationship with their campus, so different that they called commuter departure an "ill-structured problem" (p.35). Because no current theory exists for commuter student departure, the researchers drew from a wide body of research conducted in commuter institutions to conceptualize sixteen propositions related to commuter student departure (Appendix A). They included four major elements in their working theory of commuter student departure: 1) student entry characteristics, 2) the external environment, 3) the campus environment, and 4) the academic communities of the institution.



I. Student entry characteristics

Family background, academic ability and high school achievement influence a student's initial commitment to the University of Memphis. This initial commitment affects his/her subsequent commitment, which then influences his/her decision to leave school.

II. External environment

Unlike residential students, commuter students are not able to solely focus on engaging in the college experience. Work and family obligations impact their daily involvement (Webb, 1990). Commuter students may be affected by the sacrifices

their loved ones make so that they can attend school. Lower college costs help to assuage these worries. Support from family and friends can be essential in keeping commuters in school (Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon, 2004).

III. Campus environment

A large commuter population creates a chaotic campus environment, one that Braxton and his colleagues describe as “a well-worn path between the parking lots and the classrooms” (p. 45). Residential students have the benefit of structured social communities (e.g. dorm communities, clubs) that anchor them to campus as others rush to their destinations. Commuter students, on the other hand, often do not have defined out-of-class communities, a situation which puts them at risk for departure.

A unique set of psychological traits makes commuter students more likely to succeed. As students try to balance their home and school lives they must be flexible enough to cope with stress, must feel like their efforts will help them succeed, and must have strong motivation to graduate.

The constructs “institution’s commitment to student welfare” and “institutional integrity” described in the residential theory above, also shape the campus environment. These constructs influence commuter students’ subsequent commitment to the institution, which then impacts their persistence.

IV. Academic Communities

The developing theory of commuter student departure hinges on the academic, rather than social, integration of commuter students as commuter students' primary interactions are in the classroom (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004). Classroom life plays an enormous role in commuter students' decisions to persist. For commuter students, the more academically integrated they are into the institution, the more they will be committed to the institution as they progress in college. This subsequent commitment makes them more likely to persist (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004).

APPLICATION OF BRAXTON, HIRSCHY, & MCLENDON'S REVISIONS IN THIS STUDY

The table below indicates how the residential and commuter theories were incorporated into this study. Because of the tight alignment in the protocol and survey instrument, the majority of the residential constructs and commuter variables were included in both the qualitative and quantitative design.

Psychologically derived variables and constructs (psychological entry characteristics) were not explicitly included in the study instruments, as they did not speak to the role of Student Affairs. The academic communities variable embedded in the college environment variable was also not included, as Student Affairs is not conducted in the classroom.

Table #2

Use of Residential and Commuter Theories in Study by Source of Data

Construct/Variable	Residential/Commuter Theories	Source of Data
Student Entry Characteristics (Demographic)	Both	Office of Institutional Research data, student interview protocol, quantitative survey
Student Entry Characteristics (Psychological)	Commuter	-
Initial Institutional Commitment	Both	Survey, student interview protocol
Institutional Commitment to Student Welfare	Both	Survey, student interview protocol
Institutional Integrity	Both	Survey, student interview protocol
Communal Potential	Both	Student interview protocol
Social Integration	Residential	Survey, student interview protocol
Subsequent Institutional Commitment	Both	Survey, student interview protocol
External Environment	Commuter	Survey, student interview protocol
Cost	Commuter	Survey, student interview protocol
Academic Communities	Commuter	-
Ability to Pay	Residential	Survey, student interview protocol

Qualitative Design for Study Questions 1 & 2

Our study addressed the following two study questions using qualitative methodology:

1. What is the nature and quality of first-year students' experiences with Student Affairs programming and services?
2. How do their experiences impact their intent to re-enroll at the University of Memphis?

The primary focus of this study was to understand *students' perceptions* of the relationship between Student Affairs and their intent to re-enroll.

Qualitative interviews allowed us to gain a more nuanced understanding of this relationship— to go beyond pre-defined program objectives and retention research variables to learn about the specific experiences of students in their own words (Patton, 2002).

We employed a standardized open-ended interview strategy in order to:

- Allow Vanderbilt University and the University of Memphis to review the instrument for research strength and utility
- Reduce interviewer effects and bias
- Facilitate ease of analysis
- Present the University of Memphis the final instrument for future use

PROTOCOL DEVELOPMENT

We created separate protocols (Appendices B and C) for students and Student Affairs staff. The protocols were designed to be complementary and were informed by retention theory and client needs:

1. Background information
2. Engagement with/role in Student Affairs
3. Awareness/advertising of services
4. Academic & intellectual development
5. Social integration
6. Institutional commitment to student welfare
7. Intent to re-enroll/student departure

Questions for constructs 1,4,5, and 6 were grounded in Braxton et al.'s (2004) theories of student departure in residential and commuter colleges; questions for constructs 2 and 3 were added to address client's needs; and questions for construct 7 were created to address the primary focus of the study.

Dr. Claire Smrekar and Dr. John Braxton from Vanderbilt and Dr. Dan Bureau from the University of Memphis reviewed the protocols prior to IRB review and approval. The structure and complementary nature of the two instruments allowed us to easily compare responses within and across groups. The protocols were also designed to align with our quantitative survey for triangulation.

STUDENT SAMPLING & RECRUITMENT

In order to allow opportunities to capture the breadth and depth of students' experiences with Student Affairs, we narrowed our recruitment to those departments that work most intensely with first-year students:

- Student Leadership & Involvement
- Student Success Programs
- Multicultural Affairs
- Adult & Commuter Services
- Residential Life

Conversely, the other nine Student Affairs departments were excluded based on one or more of the following criteria: 1) the department serves primarily in an administrative capacity, 2) the department has little or no attendance records, 3) the department's services are confidential, and/or 4) the department does not have programs or services designed for first-year students.

Student Affairs administration and the Office of Institutional Research worked together to provide us with the names, e-mail addresses, age, race, and gender of all known first-year program participants in the five aforementioned departments. We defined "first-year" as any first-time student who matriculated in Summer or Fall 2012. For administrative ease

in the consent process, we excluded students under the age of 18 (n=140). The resulting list captured 1795 unique students.

Attendance information captured the following programs and services:

- Residence Life
 - List of all first-year students on campus
 - List of living-learning community participants
- Student Leadership and Involvement
 - List of Emerging Leaders
 - List of first-year fraternity and sorority members
 - List of Frosh Camp participants
- Adult and Commuter Services
 - List of first-year drop-in users
- Multicultural Affairs
 - List of first-year drop-in users
- Student Success Programs
 - TRIO/TRIO STEM/ First Scholars

Most likely due to the time of the recruitment (prior to Thanksgiving Break), we had an extremely low initial response rate (n=2) to our recruitment e-mail invitations (n=120). In order to achieve our desired sample by the arranged interview date, we sent an additional 540 e-mails, yielding a total of 43 respondents. We selected 20 participants that provided maximum

variation in background characteristics (Table 3) and Student Affairs usage (Table 4). One additional participant was added to the sample on the day of the interview (n=21).

Most notably, the commuter population is significantly under-represented in the interview sample. While commuters make up 52.6% of the total first-year population, only 4 commuters were included in the qualitative study. This is expected as Student Affairs program attendance data was used to determine the interview pool. Residential life provided a list of 1356 students; Adult & Commuter Services provided a list of 69 students. See Appendix D for additional

TABLE # 3 Student Demographic Characteristics of Student Interviewees		
Race	Black	9
	White	10
	2 Races	2
Gender	Male	9
	Female	12
Age	18	10
	19	10
	20	1
First-generation	Yes	8
	No	13
Disability Status	Yes	2
	No	19
Residential Status	Commuter	4
	On-campus	17
Graduated May 2012	Yes	20
	No	1

comparisons of the interview sample to the total first-year population by background characteristics and program participation.

The intent to capture representation from five departments with varying attendance-keeping methods and numbers of participants naturally led to great discrepancies in the ratio of program participants to the total program population. For example, the inclusion of one student in the Engineering living-learning community represents 20% of total Engineering LLC students, while the inclusion of 17 residential students makes up 1% of the total residential population. Consequently, there was not consistency in the ratio of program participants in the interview sample to the total sample (i.e. 1 Engineering student= 5% of sample).

Throughout the interview process, we learned that there was more variation in Student Affairs engagement than suggested by the attendance lists. We discovered that the level of engagement with the recorded programs differed greatly and that many interviewees engaged with Student Affairs programs, services, and events not recorded in attendance data. Where possible, program participants were stratified by age, race, and gender. Additional demographic information was obtained during the interview process (Table 3). Each student was compensated with a \$20 gift card for on-campus dining.

TABLE #4 Program Involvement of Student Interviewees		
Residential Life	LLC: Engineering	1
	LLC: Honors	6
	LLC: Emerging Leaders	1
	Richardson: First Scholars	2
	Richardson: Freshmen First	3
	Richardson (non-LLC)	2
	Carpenter	1
	South	1
Student Success Programs	TRIO	1
	First Scholars	2
Greek Affairs	Sorority	4
	Fraternity	1
Adult & Commuter Services	Commuters	3
Multicultural Affairs		4
Frosh Camp		12
<p>* 11/21 interviewees used more than 1 recorded program</p> <p>* 20/21 interviewees used more Student Affairs programs and services than captured in the attendance data</p>		

STAFF SAMPLING & RECRUITMENT

Student Affairs administration provided staff lists for each of the five departments. Thirty-two staff members who worked directly with first-year students in Summer and/or Fall 2012 were eligible to participate. Lists were stratified by department and randomly sampled. Eleven staff members were contacted by e-mail and/or phone; 10 were able to participate. The final sample of 10 reflected representation from each department.

DATA COLLECTION

We chose to reduce interviewer bias by dividing the interviewing process. We each interviewed a mix of students and staff. Student interviews lasted 25-30 minutes. Staff interviews took 30-45 minutes. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by a professional transcription service.

We took several measures to protect the identity of our interviewees. All interviews took place away from Student Affairs offices and participants were given the option to go to an off-campus location. We have provided pseudonyms for student participants and, where applicable, removed other identifiable information. Because the pool of staff is significantly smaller, we added extra precautions: 1) all staff members are referred to as “staff member #,” and 2) any references to their roles in their departments have been removed. Recordings were submitted via a secure server to the

transcription service. Raw audio data and transcriptions have not been shared with anyone other than the transcription service and the researchers.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

One researcher performed qualitative data analysis. Patton (2002) recommends that without a coding system for qualitative data there is “chaos and confusion” (p. 463). For this study, the capstone team prepared for content analysis by using Patton’s recommended coding system in which the team developed a codebook in tandem with reviewing the data. In addition to labeling themes and concepts, the capstone team also accepted Rubin and Rubin’s (1995) guidance to pay close attention to the unique vernacular of staff and students. Each audio recording was reviewed twice alongside the transcript. During the second playback, the interview was classified and coded. Each code was recorded in Excel, along with a page reference, interviewee identifier, interviewer identifier and notes and/or quotations. The data was labeled from subsequent interviews either with a pre-existing code or by designating a new code. When a new code was added, the transcripts of previous interviews were reviewed for similar content. The Excel file allowed sorting to identify theme/concept repetition as well as examine interviewees’ files as a whole. When a repeated theme was identified, the integrity of the theme was verified by returning to the transcript and reviewing if the label accurately captured the same concept.

After salient minor concepts were identified, the data was reviewed to discover overarching themes.

Both members of the capstone project team acknowledge that their background in student services may impact their analyses of the data. The data was carefully viewed through multiple lenses, grouping responses together by staff/student, interviewee background characteristics, and program involvement. Where categorical groups did not logically explain similarities or discrepancies in the data, the data was reviewed for other respondent commonalities/differences (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

After the final themes were determined, they were counted to verify patterns and the transcripts were reviewed again for the accuracy of the findings.

LIMITATIONS TO METHODOLOGY USED FOR QUESTIONS 1 & 2

The qualitative analysis was confronted with several logistical constraints that tempered our conclusions and recommendations. The accelerated timeline mandated interview administration late in the fall semester. This study could benefit from pushing the interview date to late spring, giving first-year students' more time to engage with Student Affairs and assess if the University of Memphis is a good fit. Time constraints also restricted our ability to continue recruitment to gain more variation in program

participation. The sample over-represented honors students in living-learning communities. Unfortunately, no adults or non-black minority students replied to the recruitment e-mail.

Limits in attendance data became a barrier to gaining optimal variation among participants. The lists provided by departments mainly focused on participation in formal programming (e.g. Frosh Camp, Emerging Leaders, Greek Life, etc.). Some “drop-in” service data was provided, however, level of involvement was difficult to determine. Multicultural Affairs and Adult & Commuter Services participants were under-represented in the sample. Fortunately, students in the sample used a variety of Student Affairs’ programming and we were able to get a more holistic view of the influence of Student Affairs on their decision to stay at the University of Memphis.

Findings for Study Question #1

What is the nature and quality of first-year students' experiences with Student Affairs programming and services?

Eight major themes emerged when students described the nature and quality of their experiences with Student Affairs. We describe each of these eight themes in the corresponding sections below.

THEME 1: STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMS & SERVICES ASSIST

STUDENTS IN TRANSITIONING TO COLLEGE

Student Affairs plays a critical role in familiarizing students with campus. In addition to simply promoting opportunities, Student Affairs helped students engage with programs, resources and events on campus by connecting them with other students who participated in programs, providing individualized services and working with them to overcome external barriers to success. Three sub-themes surfaced as students and staff described the role of Student Affairs in helping first-year students transition to college: a) involvement in Student Affairs was like a “chain reaction”– participants were more likely to utilize additional programs and services, b) Student Affairs staff members help students seek out the resources most relevant to

students' needs, c) Student Affairs staff members support students with external barriers to transition– the “I know your life” model.

“Chain Reaction”

The more involved a student is in various Student Affairs activities, the more likely s/he was to know about other campus opportunities. Eleven students we interviewed discussed how they learned about opportunities and decided to engage in Student Affairs opportunities via other Student Affairs programs.

“Like I would encourage any freshman to go to Frosh Camp. Like I learned so much that week about what the university offers. I mean you learn stuff when you go on your tour or when you come to orientation. But Frosh Camp it's just a totally different experience and there was different, there like during the day we'd go to sessions. And they were different subjects about the University of Memphis. Like there was one for going Greek like going, you know, doing a sorority... There was another one for what like resources the campus offers. That was my favorite one because I learned things like that that are really helpful.”

–Kelly, Frosh Camp participant

Much of this can be accounted for by intentional publicizing efforts by Student Affairs towards existing program members. Six staff members shared the importance of capitalizing on time spent in Student Affairs as a way to connect the students to more resources. Explaining offerings in person in small settings such as Frosh Camp, a registered student

organization or ACAD 1100 seemed particularly effective in expanding students' knowledge of resources.

Staff also designed program requirements to include interaction with other departments or resources. Staff recruitment efforts included asking other offices for recommended students. These strategic efforts seem fruitful— all students interviewed were able to articulate campus resources and programming opportunities.

But beyond these departmental efforts, Student Affairs participation also connected students with peers that could endorse other programs. Alexis described Frosh Camp as a portal to other campus programming:

“Oh, yeah. I do Up 'til Dawn and I actually ended up joining a sorority which I was really surprised I did but— I went to Frosh Camp so I did that. And when I met people who are part of like Greek life, then I kinda got an idea of like who they were without like I guess the stereotypes. And so I felt less intimidated and I decided I would try it out and then I was like, okay, I'll, I think I could see myself like actually being part of like this group so.”

This peer endorsement may play a more important role in campus involvement: moving students from knowledge to action. Two staff members shared that word-of-mouth advertising was particularly effective in bringing in new students because “students in our program do the best job of selling our program.” Staff also indicated the importance of peer mentoring

programs in building enthusiasm for program participation and pairing students with resources they need. Hesitant students seemed to desire this type of peer referral. Desiree, a commuter student who expressed her lack of social engagement, knew that she could get involved in campus, but was reluctant to join because she lives close enough to spend in-between class time at home. She did indicate, however, that if she got an on-campus job she would look into more opportunities. Yet she did not say she would follow up on those opportunities she knew about through on-campus advertising. Rather, she said that if she worked on campus she hoped to learn about an organization from a co-worker:

“So you know, being here, if they, I don’t know had an organization thing where there was somebody that was in an organization, I was like oh, that would be cool then I would probably get more involved in it.”

– Desiree, commuter student

Cathy, another commuter student, expressed a similar statement regarding the hurdle that exists between knowing about a resource and taking advantage of one. She shared how knowing a student in the Student Affairs office gave her the extra push she needed:

“I found out about it (the Adult and Commuter Services office) maybe about a month ago from a friend that works over there. And so I was like, well I heard about it but I was always like afraid to go up there because I didn’t know what to expect but since the first day I went I’ve been up there like every day. It’s like really useful.”

Helping Students Seek

Another way Student Affairs encourages engagement is by individualizing students' relationships with campus resources. Seven staff members reported that one of their major functions is to introduce the student personally to an office or service, demonstrate how to interact with a given office, relate how the service applies to them in particular and make sure that they have received the service they need.

"I think that students' help-seek skills are not necessarily there and that they know that resources are there, but they're not necessarily comfortable saying that they need help and so, and that's from, to me it's not an academic issue, generally, it's generally some other issue, whether it's emotional health or the financials that I mentioned before, but that willingness to go to tutoring or to go to counseling if that's what's needed... my role is to sit down and try to meet whatever their needs are that are making them feel that they can't do it and to refer them to places if that's, if I'm seeing that they noticeably need counseling then I would—I have physically walked students over to counseling, or if I see that maybe they're just not finding a student organization that they wanna be a part of I might pick up the phone and call."

- Student Affairs Staff Member 1

"But we try to make them feel comfortably knowing wherever we send you we're going to call before you go and make sure they know that you're coming, they are, they are expecting you and we want you to get the service and the help that you need and there is a holistic approach in making sure that what we can do for them outside of the classroom impacts successfully in the classroom."

- Student Affairs Staff Member 3

“Don’t panic, don’t leave. You know, here we go. But, you know, same thing with housing conflicts. And I would tell you that probably in most of the areas that impact our students we have a go-to person at each one of those areas. And I think that’s very important that you have a go-to person. It might not be the right person, but you have a go-to person that I probably can tell you somebody in each area whether it’s financial aid, whether it’s TRIO, whether it’s housing, whether it’s ESP, whether it’s CCLT, whatever it is we have someone that I could pick up the phone. In most cases I have a cell phone number for them, and I call them, ‘Hey, I got a problem. I need some help for this student. What can we do, you know, to try to fix this problem?’ What, and I think, I think it’s important that students know that your job has nothing to do with a clock on the wall. It has nothing to do with 8 to 4:30.”

- Student Affairs Staff Member 8

Students took notice of Student Affairs staff members’ willingness to support them and expressed appreciation for the role the support plays in their comfort at the University of Memphis. Kala, a student with sickle cell anemia was grateful that Student Affairs helped her to communicate with her professors. Paul, a first-generation student, was relieved when a Student Affairs staff member worked out a registration hold.

“I know your life” model

Six Student Affairs staff also indicated the importance of helping students address out-of-school needs that can impede students’ ability to engage in college. Staff members shared the importance of addressing students’ out-of-school needs.

“But that’s our primary function and I think that intrusive, of having a conversation with you on a continual basis, I’m concerned about you; I know that you’re not doing well so I’m going to point you to the correct resources to do well. I know you. I know your situation. I know what’s going on outside of the classroom so we can talk about that. It’s that one-on-one intrusive, I just don’t know your academic life. ‘I know your life’ model that I think is most successful for us.”

- Student Affairs Staff Member 7

Staff recounted stories of students dealing with situations that might otherwise lead students to depart.

“...but I do know from you know from individual interactions that people that are involved in something on campus are much more likely to succeed and that’s because there’s somebody that’s there, that if they’re having a problem at home that may be impacting their school work, they have somebody to go to talk about that. As I have students come into my office saying, ‘I’m gonna get kicked out of my apartment because my roommate didn’t pay rent and I don’t have the money to pay their rent,’ that’s obviously gonna impact their success at staying at the University of Memphis. If you don’t have money to pay rent, you sure as heck don’t have money to pay tuition, so having somebody that can intervene as well as support when things are going well I think is the role that we play with persistence and so, just going back again why Frosh Camp is so successful as well as some of our programs is there’s that personal interaction and it comes back to the relationships and there are services on campus that are there for students that are struggling financially, but do they know how to get them? So having somebody whether it be an upper class student who knows how to apply for food stamps or a staff member who knows where the financial aid office is, those are two really valuable resources for somebody that’s saying, ‘I’m worried about where my next meal’s coming from.’”

- Student Affairs Staff Member 6

“...You know, they come- especially out of state students- come without the necessary resources that they need. And their parents didn’t realize it and don’t read the financial award letter correctly. And so we’re running around trying to see where we can plug that in. You know, try to get them the resources. Or helping them, financial aid means a lot, you know, whether that means then that we need to make some connections with financial aid to see where the gap or miscommunication is, helping them find jobs by, through our own resources, because I know you. Do you have a job open because this student really needs a job? And I guess second would be conflict with their peers, with their peers or something like that. Or even believe it or not even a home conflict. You know, I’m having this kind of problem with my mom or, and believe it or not we haven’t had it quite this year. Looks like spring is when it happens but for the last couple years we’ve had several young ladies that found themselves becoming young mothers. And they are ‘What do I do?’ ... So I’m able in some cases to help them [get social services] as well to try to help them stay focused on school while becoming a new parent. And try to get them adjusted and see how they can do both things at once. So we do a lot of things.”

-Student Affairs Staff Member 8

THEME 2: STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMS HELP STUDENTS BUILD A “TIGER FAMILY”

Throughout the interviews, it was impressive how many students used

words related to family and home to refer to interactions they had with Student Affairs. Staff Member 6 astutely recognized the degree to which the family model resonated with Frosh Camp participants. Eleven of the twelve students who attended Frosh Camp internalized the familial structure to describe relationships formed there. These relationships extended beyond the three-day session into the semester, further revealing the depth of these bonds.

“It definitely has like; I saw one of my Frosh Camp sisters today. Like, ‘oh, hey, sister!’ Just because when like I step on campus, like even people that I might have only talked to once at Frosh Camp, we were kinda all in this awkward situation and like, hey, we’re all on this big campus and we’ve all not really sure what to do, but, ‘hey, I think I met you at Frosh Camp.’ What’s your name again? And so we kinda all just like connected whereas like all the other people who hadn’t gone are like how do you know so many people? Oh, Frosh Camp, Frosh Camp, Frosh Camp! And so we all kinda really got to like have this bond together even if we had only said like two words or we like thought we saw each other at Frosh Camp, we kinda had this connection of like we feel less awkward because we had the same experience at Frosh Camp or, ‘oh, you went to Frosh Camp. Which one did you go to? Oh, which cabin were you in?’ We have this like common bond already even if we had, hadn’t really talked before so it was; it was definitely a really cool thing.”

- Alexis, Frosh Camp participant

“And my dad was only a sophomore, and he was not, he was like really young for his grade so it was weird cause he’s my age. But he, I mean I looked up to him so much, and he still like will check in on me and help me. And he’s an Emerging Leader it turns out so like I said it all connects really good.”

- Kelly, Frosh Camp participant

Sarah's "family" was her main social connection to campus:

"Most of the people I've met are from Frosh Camp. So when I came to campus I knew familiar faces and I've been meeting people randomly and talking to people- but through the people I already knew from Frosh Camp... my Frosh Camp siblings."

In addition to the informal interactions with counselors on campus, Student Affairs programming that involved intentional efforts to reconnect students with their Frosh Camp family seemed effective. Sarah indicated that she appreciated that her Frosh Camp counselors became her Tiger Leadership Institute instructors.

Students, especially those in formal or high-contact programs, also found family in Student Affairs staff members. Paul, a member of First Scholars, referred affectionately to a staff member as his "second mom." He described her as someone who he could share his problems and get help when he didn't know where to go. He also mentioned the impact of connecting with his First Scholars group, saying they took the place of a fraternity.

He shared:

"Because the First Scholars is kinda the same thing (as a fraternity). Well, we're all from the same place, from the same kinda growing up and our parents don't really understand what we're doing here. So it's kinda, we bond that way."

Cathy, a regular user of the Adult and Commuter Services office, described the people and environment as a “home away from home, like family.”

Student Affairs staff identified this type of familial role as common:

“I’m not parental at all- they treat our relationship as a I don’t want to disappoint my parent kind of thing on report card day. So, you know, if they do poorly on a test, they’ll say, ‘[Staff Member], you’re going to be mad at me.’ Or, ‘I didn’t do good on this test.’ So it’s almost like they want to, they want to show how they are succeeding. They want to impress you. They don’t want to let you down kinda thing.”

- Student Affairs Staff Member 7

THEME 3: INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

BOLSTERS ACADEMICS

Two subthemes emerged that demonstrated how Student Affairs supported first-year students in their academic pursuits: a) Student Affairs connected students to peers who can encourage and support them academically, b) Student Affairs played a role in helping students with the primary barrier to academic success: time management.

Peer Encouragement and Support

The social connections made through Student Affairs create a community of success and support. Paul, a first-generation student, shared that he was worried that college would be “secluded” and was surprised that his peers in First Scholars helped each other with homework. An LLC member described how her residence hall helped connect her to fellow classmates:

“And so like I said I didn’t know any of the baseball players before and now there’s one of my closest guy friends on campus like cause we’re athletes. Like I’m an Emerging Leader, that’s why I’m in the dorm, but I’m also an athlete so we can relate and stuff. And a lot of us are randomly are in classes together. Found that out after we moved in so we help each other with homework...”

- Kelly, LLC resident

“I was in there working on a project awhile back, and I was in the TRIO lab, and my handwriting is terrible, and there were these two girls next to me and actually helped me do my poster for my project. They were in the TRIO program. I know them now- that’s how I met them. And

they were just surprisingly helpful, they were in there doing work on their own, but they were willing to stop to help me do my thing.

- Keith, TRIO participant

Student Affairs programs also set a tone for peer encouragement towards academic excellence.

Barrier to Academic Success:

Time Management

Thirteen students believed that the University of Memphis was less

“EMOC is, I don’t know, it just kinda makes me feel - what’s the word? I just feel proud to be who I am, ‘cause I know that there are a lot of other people out there like me who are here to get an education and are serious about that education...”

- Keith, Empowered Men of Color member

challenging than they expected. When asked about academic barriers to first-year student success, five staff and eleven students attributed the ability to manage time as critical to their success or struggle. Some students struggled with learning how to study with new types of class structures and varying due dates. Others were learning how to balance their social, work, home and academic commitments.

Melissa expressed her difficulty with juggling her sorority and school responsibilities:

“I think time management is really, it, it’s, it was very hard for me transitioning from high school to college, trying to manage when papers are due- exams are coming up and then you have like other stuff to go to with like me with sorority and stuff. It was just really hard to manage that and try to figure out when I was going to put in like those things that I have to go to or things that I wanted to attend.”

Student Affairs staff work to help students make time management choices that will prepare them for success. Staff members described conversations they had with students, or specific programmatic elements that addressed time management.

“I would say a barrier is probably family responsibilities, you know, where students, it’s very common that a student would have to work 40 hours a week and go to school full-time because they have, you know, family commitments that they need to help meet. One of my students at the beginning of the semester was working 40 hours a week and was registered for 18 academic hours and I sat him down and I said, you know, this is not gonna work, like I mean it’s ultimately your decision, but you’re setting yourself up for failure because there’s just not enough hours in the day and I just broke it down by, you know, how many hours per week he’s in class and how many hours he needs to study and how many hours there are in a day, and it just didn’t work out.”

- Student Affairs Staff Member 1

“I would say time management is one as well. I think a lot of times they come to us with an ability to keep track of things on a calendar, but they don’t know how to prioritize based on urgency or based on overall importance of something. You know for instance if you’ve got three finals that are coming up and you know one of them is in the class where you’ve got a C and you have potential to pull your grade up, the others are in classes where you have a solid A, yet they’re going to give equal time to each of the three as opposed to focusing in on that one where it really can have a pretty significant impact on their grade, and so helping them understand this is more important to, to have a little bit of your time so put more time here, don’t split it up equally.”

- Student Affairs Staff Member 5

THEME 4: STUDENT AFFAIRS FACILITIES DRAMATICALLY IMPACT STUDENTS' ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

Lomas and Oblinger (2006) note that intentional design of learning spaces creates a campus culture that can “encourage students to spend more time on campus, increasing engagement and improving retention (pg. 5.1).” The University of Memphis’s Student Affairs facilities made a difference in students’ academic and social interactions. The significance of three facets of the physical environment gave rise to three subthemes a) the importance of creating space specifically designed for commuters, b) the role of the University Center for supporting unstructured learning, and c) the impact of residential hall design on the academic and social environment of the dormitories.

Physical Environment: Commuter Spaces

Lomas and Oblinger (2006) also stress that the design of spaces should be aligned with student behaviors. Addressing the different needs of residential

“... Like I actually didn’t know that we had Commuter Service. Like when I found out about it, that was pretty awesome they actually have something for people that don’t live on campus cause everyone can’t afford to live on campus all the time so I think it’s kinda cool that they actually have something for people that live off campus... You know, they’ve got a computer room and a study room and like snacks sometimes. You might go up there and they have donuts and coffee, you know, little things like that so they kinda cater to us because, you know, sometimes it’s kinda hard, you know, not living on campus at times. Like you don’t always have time for this, this and that but they’re really cool.”

- Theresa, Commuter Student

and commuter students appeared to be essential in Student Affairs facility design. Commuter students appreciated quiet areas to work and relax in between classes. Student Affairs Staff Member 6 reinforced the importance of commuter space.

“So we try to connect them with our services by telling them what we offer, we have a lounge area, we also have a, a mini kitchen with a microwave, a refrigerator, and space for them to store food if they’re bringing their lunch from home. We also offer them an opportunity to get to know other students by coming to our lounge area. We have a TV there, it’s a relaxed atmosphere, but there is also a quiet study area for them and a mini computer lab located within this facility and the university center. So it’s a good way to show that the university is offering a place for our commuters so they won’t have to sit in their car and eat their lunch, or wait for their class to start in the cold, or if it’s too hot, too hot. It’s a place for them to come and connect with other commuters and relax before going to class or get to know students or even study quietly before they go to class. All of that can take place within this facility that we offer commuter students.”

Physical Environment: The University Center (UC)

Students and staff also noted the importance of common spaces for unstructured learning and bonding throughout the campus:

“What I find since we just built the new UC, students for some reason really like that learning environment rather than the library. You have to meet students where they are I believe... for some reason people don’t like it [the library], you know, maybe it’s too structured for them. But to give them the environment in which they want to learn, want to interact cause you see them using the chalk boards, and you know, I mean if you go over there [the UC] now, they’re [the study rooms] full. And I think that that’s what students want and that’s what students would like to have.”

- Student Affairs Staff Member 8

Physical Environment of Residence Halls:

“It just depends how the building’s set up more than anything”

While commuter students sought a quiet place to relax and study in between classes, residential students’ primary need seemed to be social interaction. A Student Affairs staff member noted extremely low attendance at residential life activities, especially those that were academically focused. However, the availability of a dorm lounge seemed to be very effective in facilitating a sense of community.

“... There’s like the, like a lobby lounge thing on each floor so that definitely helps build relationships. We’re all hanging out there. And then the RA’s plan some rec once a month on their floor which I don’t, I don’t necessarily, I’ve only gone to a planned thing, just because the timing like out there. So that in itself I haven’t necessarily gone to but just by being out there and like, oh, I’m just going to go study. Oh, look who like randomly showed up or like I want to go over to this floor. And like one night someone who like, on one of the floors somebody brought a ping pong table and so then like everybody was hanging out on that floor...”

- Alexis, LLC resident

Several LLC students also described how common areas in the dorm also created opportunities for peer academic support.

“...and then have a little lobby area with like chairs and tables so we can do homework and stuff... We’ll just sit out there and do homework, and we’re all in the same kind of general classes, so we help each other out and we just hang out and do homework until the wee hours of the morning.”

- Jen, LLC resident

In contrast to the LLC residents, students who lived in Richardson Hall did not express spontaneous social or academic interactions. Of the seven Richardson residents, only two students met any friends in the dorm, compared with all of the LLC residents indicating that they had a group of friends in their residence hall. Two Richardson students did indicate use of the study lab in Richardson as an academic space, but used it solely for individual study. Richardson's locked common areas and formal study space may restrict students' ability to connect to one another or engage in peer learning.

Students did indicate the importance of amenities to their residential choice and experience. Private bathrooms and a kitchen area to cook were the most frequently mentioned desirable features.

THEME 5: SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN LIVING LEARNING COMMUNITY (LLC) AND RICHARDSON RESIDENCE HALLS

In addition to the impact of structural differences in the residents, there were noticeable distinctions between the dorm climates of the Richardson and LLC residence halls. Braxton, Hirschy and McClendon (2004) posit: “communal potential finds expression as a student’s perception that a subgroup of students with attitudes, values, beliefs, and goals similar to those of other students exists on campus (pp. 72-73).”

For students in the LLC, it was apparent that they had been appropriately matched with peers that had the same goals.

“You get to meet people that has like the same drive kind of thing that you have and I would say it gives you an opportunity to be around people that wants the same type status that you want for school.”

- Brianna, LLC Resident

The sense of community amongst the LLC residents seemed absent in Richardson Towers. LLC residents suggested that the other halls were like a different campus. Both LLC and Richardson residents referred to a lack of safety, cleanliness, and compliance with campus rules as characteristic of the Richardson climate.

Both the LLC residents and a staff member seemed to attribute the behavior in Richardson as indicative of a categorical difference between the two groups of students. LLC students were referred to as academically focused; Richardson students undisciplined.

I think like cause I'm with honors students and I think for some reason that just like, makes a difference for people that like make it, like kinda, it's kinda sad to say but it really does like make a difference in just the environment so it's nice though cause other people, I mean there's definitely always like people hanging out but it's a different environment.

– Alexis, LLC Resident

While the aforementioned issues do indicate that some Richardson residents engage in inappropriate behavior, the Richardson interviewees craved the type of scholarly environment in the LLC. Richardson residents seemed to acquiesce to the undesirable environment.

“Like I feel safe and whereas like sometimes like I hear about other things going on at some of the other buildings and some with like roommates that people have and I would not feel safe. You know what I’m saying? That was something else like going on in the university, not because it wouldn’t be something that I would like want to come to school and have to deal with like people having roommates that are like involved in domestic issues and disputes and fights. And, you know, like I just, I didn’t even know that was like something that you like bring onto the college campus I guess. I don’t know...Like there’s really not anything I feel like in my area of campus but I think some of the other things on campus so I don’t know, I feel like I don’t really, I feel like I don’t have any interactions with people that like scare me on campus. I feel like other people do and maybe I, maybe I’m like not paying attention or I segregate myself from that or like seclude myself from that, but that’s kinda like, I don’t know... so I think it just depends on like who stays in which dorms...like I can’t even imagine that type of stuff like happening in my dorm room.”

- Alexis, LLC resident

“And when I’d get on the elevators, I’d be seeing trash all over the elevator. Like people would just throw their food that they finish on the elevator, (laugh) that people just throw their cups down there. One time I actually saw an open condom on the elevator (laugh) and I was by myself. These fools were not trained... The hall like climate; I mean my stay on the 7th floor. Most of my hall is actually very interesting. In fact, I’m remembering one time this guy actually had a golf club and this other guy had some ninja, had some nunchucks. They jumped in a fight. I was like, ‘Oh, man. I’ve got to get in and stop this.’ I grabbed the dude with the golf clubs because I the other guy, the dude with nunchucks he was going to hit me in the face. (Laughs) So I grabbed the dude with golf clubs and told him, ‘Calm down. Well, calm down.’ And then this other guy, he was a, he was like a big athletic football star type and he grabbed the guy with the nunchucks. We held them back to make sure they didn’t fight each other. The next thing we knew, the guy with the golf clubs and the guy with the nunchucks, they went back in their room and they were cool for the rest of the night. I was like, ‘Oh, man. They’re going to kill each other.’”

– Jack, Richardson resident

Jack saw the lack of regulation as a lack of institutional commitment to student welfare and a lack of institutional integrity.

“At the university level... they will deal with some problems, but they will not deal with all problems. I remember probably a few months ago in J-, in October there was, I saw like 6 or 7 beer bottles on the ground right near Richardson Towers and this is a university campus? And RAs aren’t even doing nothing about it. The Residence Life and Dining director isn’t doing anything about it and you see beer bottles all, a lot less than a few feet from the door and you’re not doing anything about it? And it really bothers me and then you have beer bottles all around campus at the other dormitories and people aren’t doing nothing about it and this is a dry campus. And the thing about it is they’re not going to do nothing about it because nobody hasn’t gotten hurt yet and then you have the smoking ban, which go, which is for the entire campus to be banned, smoking, and there are students smoking less than five feet from the door of the dormitories. And it really bothers me. Like why would you be smoking and the ban clearly says you cannot smoke on Memphis property?”

The stark contrast between the two environments is especially disheartening because many students in Richardson have more barriers to persistence. Because the LLC has admittance criteria, many of Richardson residents are less academically prepared than their LLC counterparts. The Richardson interviewees also mentioned that the cost of living in the LLC was prohibitive.

Stassen (as cited in Smith, MacGregor, Matthews & Gabelnick, 2004) asserts that students in living-learning communities transition to college better, are more engaged than, succeed better academically, and are retained at higher rates than their peers. Interestingly, unlike the living-learning students in the LLC, living-learning students in Richardson did not cite the academic or social benefits of together. It is possible that the effect of the differences between dorm climates lessens the impact of the living-learning model, as the implementation of living-learning communities dictates its impact (Lichtenstein as cited in Tinto, 2012). This is especially significant because students in the living-learning communities in Richardson may gain more by having a more comprehensive program, as these students are less likely to succeed. Neither “First Scholars” nor “Freshmen First” participants have academic requirements and the former is geared specifically at first-generation students.

THEME 6: COMMUTER POPULATION REQUIRES ADAPTATION BY THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Eighty-nine percent of the student body and 52.6% percent of first-year students at the University of Memphis commute to campus (University of Memphis Office of Institutional Research, 2013a). This commuter population greatly shapes the nature of Student Affairs programs and services. Three subthemes emerged as staff members and students discussed the role of Student Affairs on a commuter campus: a) commuters value resources and services over social opportunities, b) although commuters primarily have academic ties to campus, engaging them socially is a great opportunity for improving their college experiences, and c) the large percentage of commuters on campus impacts the residential students' social environment.

Commuter Students Primarily Value Resources

Commuter interviewees brought unique needs to the University of Memphis and the nature of their engagement with Student Affairs differed from that of their residential counterparts. Consistent with Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon's (2004) recommendations, Student Affairs resources and services were appreciated by commuter interviewees. The availability of computers and printers, on-campus dining, tutoring and the recreation center allowed commuters to be productive in between classes. These

resources also eliminated the need for students who lived nearby to go home, thereby further connecting them to campus. Student Affairs' role in familiarizing commuters with other information such as parking policies, transportation options and child care services helped commuters balance their home and school responsibilities. The Adult & Commuter Students Office was an important touch point for commuter students as it provided many of these resources in one place.

Socially Engaging Commuters: "Our biggest opportunity"

Naturally, commuter students and Student Affairs staff cited the classroom, pre-existing relationships, and social media as the primary social connections to campus. However, it was clear that commuters who made new friendships on campus had more commitment to the university.

While engaging commuters socially is a challenge for Student Affairs staff, its impact was fruitful for deepening commuters' commitment to the University of Memphis. Commuters' relationship to campus can be more transactional than that of residential students and can prevent students from experiencing the non-academic benefits of college attendance. Student Affairs Staff Member 1 indicated many commuter and working students do not understand the concept of a "degree plus."

Even if a student was only able to be on campus during the school day, s/he found significance in having someone to bond with. The Adult & Commuter Office offered a reliable place to hang out in between classes and meet new friends. Structured commitments allowed commuters to form deep new relationships. One student described the importance of being involved in TRIO, Frosh Camp and a registered student organization:

“If I wasn’t involved in some of the groups I mean, I wouldn’t know as many people as I do and I wouldn’t feel as comfortable here because I have a lot of downtime, well, not a lot of downtime, but I do have some downtime here, because I can’t just go home immediately, and I wouldn’t be comfortable just sitting up here if I didn’t know anyone.”

- Keith, Commuter Student

The Commuter Population Impacts the Social Environment for Residential Students

The large commuter population also shapes the environment for residential students. For students who live on campus, dorm communities seemed to be the only option for evening and weekend bonding. Jack, a Richardson resident without a dorm community, expressed his frustration with the empty campus:

“The social life like here is very interesting because a, it, because it’s like during the weekdays it’s very social, but the weekends it’s like nothing ...And they don’t want to stay on campus because ever-, one the weekends because there’s hardly anything to do. I mean if the university was all the way up in the suburbs or in another county then they would be here almost every night.”

On the other hand, one student with a dorm community expressed that the absence of commuters on weekends further fostered campus relationships and positively affected his decision to come to the University of Memphis:

“Second of all, it’s a large school, but it has the nighttime population of a small school so you can m-, it’s mainly commuter. So most everybody who comes here is commuting so it’s got the feel of a small school after classroom hours, but you still have that large community.”

– Edward, LLC resident

Regardless of the student’s residential status, the high percentage of students in Shelby and surrounding counties also presents a barrier to building a weekend campus environment. Several residential students indicated they lived close enough to visit family or a significant other, or to connect with high school friends rather than stay on campus. But Briana, a LLC resident, used her proximity to home as an opportunity to connect her family to campus:

“Yes, my mom and my auntie, they love the SAC movie nights. They love- they always come on Fridays.”

Staff members indicated that there was no simple remedy to campus desertion for developing evening and weekend campus-wide programming.

“And I think part of the reason too, or part of the challenge is it’s kind of the cart before the horse or the chicken and the egg, where more students might live on campus if there was more to do on the weekends, but until we have people to program for on weekends, we’re not gonna do, so it’s kinda trying to figure out how to gradually shift that way.”

- Student Affairs Staff Member 6

THEME 7: THE NATURE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMS & SERVICES IS ALTERED BY THE ROUGH ECONOMY

Overall, student interviewees were very cognizant of the current economy and the danger of student debt. Although financial concerns would naturally occur for some low-income and first-generation students, this awareness seemed to be exacerbated by national and media attention to the value of higher education. The prioritization of finances and the economic benefits of college changes the role of Student Affairs in professional development. Two subthemes emerged: a) first-year students are anxious to solidify their career path earlier in college, and b) students have logistical and attitudinal barriers to campus involvement that prevent them from gleaning the intangible career benefits of participation in Student Affairs.

Finding a Career Fit

Career readiness and job security were high priorities for freshmen. Students carefully weighed majors based on post-graduate earning potential. Melissa, who originally wanted to major in journalism, opted for a more stable major:

“Like I realized what was going to happen afterwards because that’s a hard major to choose and not know if you’re going to have a job afterwards. It’s kind of up in the air.”

But some staff members caution that student fixation on earning potential can lead them to careers that are not aligned to their skill set:

“We, I have students who come in here who want to be nursing majors. They hate math. They hate science. They hate biology but they want to be a nurse. I ask ‘why?’ They say ‘because I want to help people.’ And so that’s when I have one of those ... I don’t say, I don’t say it immediately but after a semester of doing poorly, a year of doing poorly in all of your sciences, ‘I’ll be honest with you.’ So, you know, just being there to say, ‘you know, I’ve noticed by looking at your transcripts that you don’t do so well in sciences but you’re flourishing in all of your humanities. Why don’t you consider this?’ You know, having those conversations.”

- Student Affairs Staff Member 7

Students spoke highly of Student Affairs programs focused on career guidance. “Discover Your Major” day comforted students, providing clarity on the potential of their degree. Direct guidance from a Student Affairs staff member or campus advisor calmed them as they thought about their future. Desiree, a commuter student, discussed how her ACAD 1100 teacher provided individual career support:

“And I also talked to my ACAD teacher...s/he had little like one-on-ones with everyone in the class. And we just went in and talked about our classes and where we were going and stuff like that. It was nice... I’m psychology right now. But I’ll probably change to biology. I want to be a psychiatrist. And I came in thinking that a psychology degree would be good for that. But I know that like the MCAT’s changing. It’s like they think biology would be a lot better for all the sciences and things. So I actually talked to my ACAD teacher about that. Before because I was just like, I didn’t really process that, until just lately. I was like ‘oh my God, what am I going to do?’ I was kind of freaking out, but s/he definitely helped.”

Challenges to Engagement and the Intangible Professional Benefits of Participation in Student Affairs

Although Student Affairs has the great potential to impact students' career readiness, the repercussions of the current economy created logistical and attitudinal barriers to involvement. The increased need for students to work present staff members with many challenges as they tried to design high-impact programming:

“Students are having to, to find some money out of pocket at, at every level of the program, especially in that first year when they have to live on campus to be able to pay for everything, so more and more students are having to work more hours, or having to work, or work more hours and that makes it a challenge from time to time when we've got an obligation for them on a Friday afternoon or an obligation for them on a Saturday through the program, you know regardless of whether they've known about it for months and months it's still hard for them to take that 8 hour shift off of work on a Saturday to be there for something.”

– Student Affairs Staff Member 5

“ I think that students are very career focused and very much about getting in, you know, doing what they need to do here, and then graduating, and then, so that from day one they're really focused on what that's gonna look like.”

– Student Affairs Staff Member 1

As students view college as a linear path to a job, staff members reported that students are less likely to take advantage of those college experiences that would make them more holistically job ready. This career “tunnel vision” has prompted staff members to rethink the role of each department in career preparation.

“I think that particularly the students here at Memphis, what it seems like, they don’t want to get involved in things that aren’t going to provide them the tools necessary to be successful after college. Even if they’re coming in as a freshman and have no idea what they want to do after college, they only want to get involved in things that they think are going to be tangibly helpful so, which is, which is interesting. I think it makes our jobs little bit more difficult at times just because it’s a little bit more difficult to translate to a student who doesn’t know about the fraternity experience, how it can be beneficial in the future. I think that for our students that we really try to promote in order to help them in preparation for life after college, is, you know, explaining to them the opportunities that are available at the alumni of your organization is that even from the recruitment period explaining to them you can get connected with internships because of your connection with your organization. You can get connected with your job or job opportunities. I think also when I talk to students all the time and say, ‘hey, you want to be an event planner, get a leadership role in your organization that offers you the opportunity to plan social events or plan philanthropy events. You know, then that looks great on your resume, be able to say that you have that kind of event planning experience. Of if you’re a business major and want to go into accounting, become the Finance Vice President of your organization. You’ll be managing budgets of thousands of dollars and that’s a great opportunity to get some hands-on experience also.”

– Student Affairs Staff Member 9

There did seem to be differences in students’ levels of understanding of the intangible career benefits of Student Affairs.

“I knew when I started to find a college that I wanted to go somewhere with a Greek system just because I’ve seen it, I know all the stereotypes for it, but I was really looking for somewhere that I could fit into and have lifelong connections and network and scholarship opportunities, job opportunities. So I’m now an initiated member of one – Kappa Delta, my little necklace [smiles and shows off necklace with sorority

charm]... We have different events that we have to go to. We go to different Greek like, philanthropy events- we go to all of those. We have meetings every Sunday. And I applied to be on their Executive Board Council type of thing, so next semester and the semester after that I will have even more responsibility with it.”

– Jen, sorority member

Jack indicated that a major reason he decided to come to the University of Memphis was the broad array of student organizations. He described how his connection to an older accomplished student helped him to advance to a leadership position in the Freshmen Senate.

Staff Member 1 described the term “first-generation professional” – that parental education status may contribute to a lack of motivation to join clubs for career connections. Interestingly, the only first-generation student who indicated the value of the social networks in college was a member of that staff member’s program:

“Well not only just getting a job or money, it’s, it’s a, I’ve met people here that I feel like I could come to Memphis and live in Memphis if I wanted to, instead of back home. So networking and stuff like that.”

-Paul, first-generation Student Affairs participant

THEME 8: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ROLE OF MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

Perhaps the most complex theme that arose from the interviews surrounded issues of diversity. Three subthemes emerged in relation to the role of Student Affairs in creating an inclusive environment: a) how students and staff described the need for diversity efforts on campus, b) differing perceptions of multicultural programming, and c) staff members' desire for a more cohesive inclusion plan.

The Need for Diversity Efforts

For both students and staff, there were differing attitudes on the racial climate at the University of Memphis and the need for Student Affairs to create opportunities for facilitating an appreciation for diversity.

For some students, the diverse composition of the University of Memphis was sufficient in fostering an inclusive environment. For example, Edward, a white male shared:

"I haven't been to, I haven't really been to anything that steamed up conversations like that, but just because of the amount of students that we have together and the diversity between them, there's always students talking with other students... there doesn't have to be events because there's a guy in my biomed class where I've talked to him about his religion and I actually really love talking to people with different religions. So I will openly just ask them about it because it's good to learn more about other cultures around the world and what they believe in and even

though I haven't been to any like event that may have sparked that in any way, shape, or form, I've definitely had plenty of conversations with plenty of people."

Theresa, a biracial student, discussed students' motivations to remain separate:

"I don't know that its hostility but I can, I think people do mix around a lot, but also I think with a lot of freshmen, you kinda come in and you still kinda have like that high school mentality. You kinda come in grouped into the same kinda people, the same race of people... You're a good person, you're a good person, and sometimes I do see people kinda cliquing off sometimes but I think it's a comfort thing or what not. I think people have to kinda do, get out of their comfort zone. I think that's kinda like a thing for some people."

Some students did not state the need for expanding Student Affairs diversity efforts, but their experiences may suggest an opportunity for programming.

James, an African-American student, echoed Jen's theory and shared his initial experiences on campus:

"People, some people are very friendly. I think it's more, it gets it down to the racial, sometimes because a lot of people from Collierville, other surrounding areas, they're not, you know, used to being around black people all the time. So it's, at first they're kind of apprehensive and they warm up to you after a while."

Alexis, a white student, had indicated her appreciation for intentional diversity efforts at Frosh Camp and expressed her desire for more racial integration on campus:

"Like I feel like the most of that [integration] happening was probably, it was probably like, the best taste I got of that was probably at Frosh Camp honestly because we

were so like, they emphasized diversity when they split up like our cabin groups like in families. And I mean that was, that was really based on race when they did it that way and but that was probably the most like equalized because when you go into UC, it's very obvious like there's kinda like a section and it's really divided by race. And it's kinda sad because like I went over to the side and I was the only one, and there weren't even a lot of people over there but then I felt like I got bad looks. I was like, 'Wow! I'm sorry.' And so that was something else like, well even like that where I was just trying to like, trying to like break it, not break it up but just like there was probably like around five other people in that, in that section that day and so it wasn't even like a big deal or I didn't think it was. I felt like I was so kinda like, oh, like I was doing something wrong."

Some staff members urged that the need for diversity efforts was especially important due to the campus's surrounding environment. For example, Staff Member 1 shared:

"We did a climate survey, this is the second generation of that, and students report that they, you know, they feel those racial tensions on campus. Again, I think most of them are hidden, but I see it most visibly with common spaces and common areas and students tend to, you know, not interact as much as potentially they could. And I think that, part of that is just the history of Memphis, where there are lots of historical events that have shaped that and the city in and of itself is, you know, polarized ... so I think that, you know, a lot of that trickles into the school."

Conflicting Views of the Role of Multicultural Programming

Students and staff members interpreted multi-cultural programs on campus very differently. For nine students, the existence of multicultural clubs signaled that the university cares about creating a welcoming environment.

“I think, yes, because of all the different RSO’s that they have. You know they have Asian-American Association. They have like, you know, all these different type of organizations for students for a particular race, gender and all that to you being proud of your race or your ethnicity and your gender and what not. So I think that having the opportunity to have organizations like that definitely promotes that [university welcoming diverse students].”

- Cathy, black student

Staff Member 1 observed that isolated programs did not foster inclusion, but rather allowed students to “co-exist.”

“I think that s-, that there’s a lot of covert, there’s nothing that’s overt, students are pretty civil with each other, but I think it’s very obvious when you go and sit at a dining hall and those kinds of things that students are sort of co-existing and, you know, going to the same institution, but sit with people who look very much like them, interact with people who look very much like them.”

There did seem to be a sense that this created an us/them campus.

“...I know that for my ACAD class we had to go to the, the minority services. Or whatever that’s called... A lot of people over in there were African American. But I think that, you know, for anybody who was, whether you are Asian or Hispanic or anything, they would still be just as helpful. And I know that there is plenty of things on campus for them, to help them or whatever. Different organizations, whatever.”

- Desiree, white student

One student interpreted multicultural programming as divisive:

“... The thing about it is that when it comes to student involvement, we have a Minority Cultures Activities Council, which is basically the dealing with multicultural and other racial activities of all races like the NAACP. You have the NAACP. You have EMOC, the Empowered Men of Color. You have PAUSE, which is for the

women of color. You have the Latino Student Association, the Asian Student Association. You have the International Student Association and I rarely hear about meetings where they invite students of, or the other races. I mean like EMOC. One of my friends asked me, 'You know I'm thinking about joining EMOC.' And I told him, 'You can try, but I, they're not going to let you in because they are only going to accept men of color.' I mean the thing about it is they call themselves the Empowered Men of Color when really they're only allowing black men there, but not Asians and Latinos and the thing about it is, and I, a friend of mine asked me, 'You should join,' but I told him 'I'm not joining because they only allow black men there instead of just allowing Asians and Latinos and even whites.'"

- Jack, African-American male student

Other student interviewees indicated that although multicultural programs were targeted at one group or another, students (rather than the university) made efforts to integrate them. They generally felt welcome going to a group not geared at their own race. When asked about institutional efforts toward diversity, Michelle, an African-American female student stated:

"I think, I think they [the University] do, not saying because they like, not saying because they go out of their way to try to make sure that they're comfortable, but I think it, I think it's more, not, less of the school and more of the students in the school. That kind of take care of that part. Because everybody just embraces everybody."

Some students recognized that a club title did not mean that they were excluded and were self-motivated to learn about people from different races and religions. A white student smirked (affectionately) as he revealed that he was a member of the National Association for the Black Engineers. Keith,

a black student described his enthusiasm when he realized he could attend the Hispanic club:

“There’s a club for Hispanic Americans, and anyone can join that and they’ll actually help you with your Spanish if you’re taking Spanish... There’s actually someone in that club who told me about that, ‘cause they were, they were asking if I was interested in taking a m-, a like, minoring in language, and I was saying I was thinking about Spanish and they spoke Spanish and they were in that club, they were like ‘you should join the club,’ I didn’t know you could, I thought it was specifically for Hispanic people, nope, they were just like you ‘come and we’ll speak Spanish to you, and you can, you can practice.’”

Isolated Efforts to Embrace Diversity: The Need for a Cohesive Inclusion

Plan

Seven staff members felt that diversity efforts were disjointed and did not place enough emphasis on creating a culture of inclusion.

“Well, our strategic plan has diversity and inclusion in it, so I would say that our rhetoric says we are, I don’t know that our, realistically, and I would say that if we are, it’s race and that’s it, so we’re very situated in a very racially diverse yet racially polarized area, and so I think just by default we have a lot of students who fall into various racial categories, but, well really just two, but you know, I’d say there’s like a small 3% of ‘other’ that they tend to lump, so I mean, I think that’s an area of growth in that we say it but it often g-, it’s translated into these marginalized areas or you’re TRIO, you know, you’re TRIO, federally funded grant, or Multicultural Affairs which is really just where the black students feel most comfortable going, so and really our chief diversity officer who serves in that role is really just hiring and doing EEOC paperwork, so I don’t know that there’s a huge, there are so many priorities and so I feel like that’s, often one that’s not necessarily put, you know, to the forefront”

-Student Affairs Staff Member 1

“Because students of today, more people, as we’ve had more companies locate in Memphis, you’re looking at places like FedEx and you know AutoZone and St. Jude and all of the medical, we’re drawing more people in that aren’t from, southern Bible belt, and so we’re seeing this bigger mixture of people, but I don’t think that our students that are from this area necessarily really understand how to inter-, interact with one another. So I would, I would honestly say I’d love to see improvement in that area, I think until recently we have a Minority Affairs Office, just recently it switched to Multicultural Affairs, but and this is more of a question than a statement: *Have we shifted our attitudes along with that name change?* I don’t know. I’m not totally sure. So I think that we still, we still see a lot of focus, you know when students say, ‘oh it was a really diverse crowd,’ well what do you mean by that? Oh I would say that you know there were a hundred people there and 50 of ‘em were black and 50 were white, so that equals the diversity. And I’m like, ‘uh, okay let’s, let’s re-adjust our conversation around that’ so... Yeah I don’t know. I would like to see us do a better job. Of really, really defining diversity and then making it a real commitment to that education too. “

–Student Affairs Staff Member 6

Staff members were not aware of institutional policies or a diversity statement that clarified the institution’s commitment.

“I mean I think that we say we value it and I don’t know that we, that, I’m not saying that we don’t, I just don’t know that we truly think about how we engage students in a way that recognizes that. So you know I think that we certainly have things like TRIO grants that are important and connect with that student, but we don’t have a statement on diversity, we don’t, you know we don’t have things that we readily reference that represent the students’ value. I think we just need to do a lot more things, even just visually that you say, this is, this is the institution’s value, this is what we want you to walk away from, this is your connection, you just don’t see it here.”

-Student Affairs Staff Member 4

Without these policies, staff members followed their own philosophies on diversity.

“Generally we don't have an issue. I mean, if we do, they aren't public. They don't come out. You know, we don't see them... But, you know, we generally don't have any race issues or any, you know, religious issues or things like that, where people are graffiti-ing, writing, you know, inappropriate words about people. That's usually not common. So I think that's a good thing. And that's, you know, a good thing about this culture, you know, they're selfish and all self-centered, they are open-minded because they're, that's everywhere now. It's in the media. It's on TV. They see it everywhere, so diversity to them, it's a lot easier for them to handle. You know, the ones that don't handle it are those ones coming from that small town where everyone's the same. And that's sometimes a challenge, but overall there's no issues or incidents that occur because of diversity... [On directly confronting students who exhibit negative attitudes towards another student because of race, religion, sexual orientation, etc.] Generally we take the easy route... Cause we can't, we're not gonna change, we're not gonna try and change someone's views. You know, you have your personal views... You know, yeah, I think we could try and talk to them about it, but that gets, again I get them to change, we don't want to do that.”

- Student Affairs Staff Member 2

“Well you know I think we've been very intentional about for me personally making sure that the people that go to [program name] are diverse, that used to be just a certain generation or race. You know that's a difficult question to ask because I never really, I mean I think we're here for all students, but I don't think we have some honest conversations.”

- Student Affairs Staff Member 4

Some staff members struggled with peers' views on diversity and how they shaped the student experience:

“We made a switch for our, for the name of our multicultural office a couple of years ago from Minority Student Affairs to Multicultural Affairs, and you know I, I guess they started advising some non- some student organizations that went beyond just advising African American students on campus, but I don't know that there's a real understanding about the unique issues that one culture versus another versus

another bring, brings to the table and, and I would even say you know that, that is an office that I've had a number of, of students who have sat down across from me and you know they, they've talked about how the staff and that office have given them a hard time because they're not participating in you know our Black Student Association or our Empowered Men of Color or whatever organization and they're almost giving them the, the sense that you are turning your back on your race by not participating in these even though you're doing this great thing and this great thing and this great thing on campus, it doesn't really count because it's not one of the, the black student organizations. And, and that's disheartening, it is really disappointing to have to explain to a student that no, you're doing everything that is right you know for your involvement on campus and, and get them to understand and get them to see that because another staff member who is the same color as them has said you're not doing right by our race by doing this, and so that's, that's part of the reason I would say even though we've had these really good steps in the direction of you know civility and GLBT understanding and acceptance race is our big one, and race is still one that we haven't figured out on this campus."

- Student Affairs Staff Member 5

Findings for Study Question #2

How do first-year students' experiences with Student Affairs impact their intent to re-enroll at the University of Memphis?

In analyzing the impact of Student Affairs on re-enrollment, it was useful to look at how committed students were when they entered the university.

When explaining their college choice process, only nine of the twenty-one students referred to a specific program or characteristic of the University of Memphis that motivated them to attend. The majority of the students came for reasons unrelated to institutional fit (e.g. affordability, proximity) and expressed minimal enthusiasm for enrollment. Twelve students expressed doubt, reluctance or objection to attend.

Despite initial doubts or indifference, most students enjoyed their first semester. The majority of students reported overall satisfaction with the university due to caring faculty, helpful academic advisors, affordability and committed university administration. However, for many students, Student Affairs also played a significant part in their intent to re-enroll. When asked what factors most influenced their decision to stay, thirteen included Student Affairs programs or services as a factor that built their confidence that University of Memphis was the right fit. However, there was a lot of

variation regarding the manner in which Student Affairs influenced re-enrollment. Four major themes on the role of Student Affairs on intent to re-enroll emerged. We describe each of these four themes in the following sections of this report.

THEME 1: SOCIAL INTEGRATION IMPACTED RE-ENROLLMENT, BUT FOR DIFFERENT REASONS

Ten students indicated that the social relationships they formed through Student Affairs involvement was a primary determinant of their intent to re-enroll. However, while social relationships did facilitate a tie to campus, they did so for different reasons. Three subthemes emerged: (a) establishing professional networks, (b) having a source of socio-emotional support, and (c) developing friendships for a “lifetime.”

Establishing Professional Networks

Jack, a student who entered the university with plans to transfer his sophomore year, described the influence of student organization participation in his decision-making. The networks that Jack made through his active engagement in professional and community service clubs made such an impact that he began to reconsider transferring:

“The club involvements are definitely ma-, have made, definitely have made a major impact in me in staying on the university because around two, about two, the first two weeks I was definitely saying, ‘Okay, I’m definitely going to transfer,’ and then

after the third week I said, 'Maybe I'll give it [re-enrolling at the University of Memphis] some serious consideration.' And then after the month, the first month and a half, I just said, 'Okay, now I'm at a real crossroads. I'm either going to transfer or stay.' And then after two months, I was like, 'Okay, maybe I should give it some serious consideration on staying.'

A Source of Socio-emotional Support

Friends and Student Affairs staff members helped those students who had personal struggles in the first term persist. Melissa went through extreme hardship in her first two months of school. After coping with a series of health issues, dealing with family concerns, and facing prejudice on campus, her mother wanted her to come home. However, she decided to stay and attributed much of this decision to the friends she met in Student Affairs programs:

"...I didn't like it here at all. I was ready to go home. I had a lot of people encouraging me, a lot of people saying, 'Stick through it. You know it will get better. We promise it'll get better,' and it did. It got a lot better. I, there's a lot of things on campus that I've yet to do that I wanted to do with activities and stuff. Up 'Til Dawn is a huge thing I want to be a part of. I'm really, I really love philanthropic activity and I really want to get involve in that. I did a lot of clubs and service projects in high school and I want to be able to like come to college and do the same thing. And another thing would I guess just be really the friends that I've made. They've made all the difference here... then on a social and Greek aspect, just the connections that I've made and the friends that I've made not only with sorority sisters, but with fraternity boys as well. I've made a lot of good friends in there and I was sick all this weekend. I had a fever of 103 on Monday and they were texting me, 'Hey, hope you're feeling better. Let me know if you need anything.' And like that just, it means a lot knowing that I have people there to support me."

Anna, a student who had been a victim of domestic violence, shared that the counseling center staff and the stress management component of ACAD 1100 have been major factors in helping her to stay.

“Yeah, definitely because I got in the counseling center here to help me, you know, with that. And also I took academic strategies class and that helped me to, you know, manage my time and things like that so I wouldn’t have to worry about the stress of that cause if you get stressed, you know you can just fall apart and things like that. So the counseling center in Wilder Tower and this, you know, there’s just so many people that you can call that say if you need help, come to us. You know they give you their number and you just call ‘em up if you’ve got trouble. So I mean there is no, there’s really no room for failure cause just, I mean you’re surrounded with success. Like all you have to do is just, whenever you need help and to call somebody, they’re just a phone call away, you know. So it’s just, you know, it’s really easily, it’s easy accessible to get the help that you need if you need help.”

Friendships for “a lifetime”

Although having only completed one semester, ten students expressed that they had already developed deep friendships at the University of Memphis, which they cited as a major reason to stay. Frosh Camp attendance, Greek membership, living on campus, and high involvement in registered student organizations were the main sources of these friendships.

“Dorm life I love it. I’ve made, my roommate and I are best friends and we’ve made a ton of more friends and definitely relationships that I hope will last throughout the ages.”

- Edward, LLC Resident

Michelle shared the depth of her Frosh Camp friendships:

“I will go back to Frosh Camp just because that it put you through so much and it feels like you, it was only three days, but it felt like you built something for like a lifetime kind of thing, like that’s something that I will never forget. I feel like I won’t get that feeling or that opportunity anywhere else and that it’s probably hard to come by and I wasn’t even encouraged to go at first, but the students were like ‘you should really go.’ It’s a great, a great opportunity, it’s a great program and it really was and that, I’ll stick to that all day.”

Alexis emphasized the significance of the relationships she developed by living in the LLC, joining a sorority and attending Frosh Camp:

“I would definitely just say like the relationships that I built and the people that I’ve met. So I mean if I hadn’t made those relationships, if I hadn’t had an awesome experience with the people I’ve met, then obviously, it wouldn’t really be worth staying, you know, away from home when I could have gone somewhere else because like I could have gone for like the same amount of money cause I was big into like scholarships and so I got like equal amount.”

Sarah, a student who was against attending the University of Memphis but had to for financial reasons attributed her participation in Frosh Camp as the major influence in changing her mind about the university:

“Yes, because at first I was just like ‘I’m going to come here, I’m going to hate it. I don’t want to be here.’ But after getting involved, you see that it’s not that bad, even though you’re not far away from home. You still have another family here. And it’s like- it’s very welcoming.”

THEME 2: STUDENT AFFAIRS SERVICES BUILD ACADEMIC CONFIDENCE

Although academic programs were not generally included in students' top reasons, Melissa, a frequent Educational Support Programs user, included it with social connections as a major factor in her intent to re-enroll:

"I think they've [Student Affairs] helped me to become a better student. They help me to grow not only learning, but as a person. I've learned so much from going to tutoring that I would not have gotten if I would've just come to class and sat every day. They really have people in there who take the time to explain it to you if you don't understand. That's made all the difference for me..."

THEME 3: RESOURCES MATTER FOR COMMUTER STUDENTS' DECISIONS TO RE-ENROLL

Unsurprisingly, relationships with faculty and enjoyable coursework were the primary reasons that commuter interviewees cited as a factor in their decision to stay at the University of Memphis. However, three of the four commuters indicated that the Student Affairs resources on campus (TechHub, Tiger Dining, University Center, Adult & Commuter Services lab and study space) demonstrated that the University of Memphis cares about them, and one student cited these resources as the primary reason she decided to stay.

THEME 4: LEARNING TO “BLEED BLUE”

Braxton et al. (2004) propose that a commuter student’s initial commitment to an institution impacts his/her subsequent commitment, which then impacts his/her departure. For Cathy, a commuter student, Student Affairs involvement changed her attitude before she arrived on campus. Her initial reason for attending was to be close enough to help family, but she wasn’t too excited to come. She shared the effect Frosh Camp had on her initial commitment to the University of Memphis:

“Frosh Camp was awesome! ...I was so pumped to come to school. Like I really, the Frosh Camp counselors that make you want to get involved and they make you want to, not just go to school, just go to class and go home. It makes you want to get involved and, you know bleed blue, have Tiger pride and all that and definitely started building some of that up. I wanted to go to everything even though I necessarily couldn’t but I just was encouraged to.”

Keith, another commuter student, shared how his Frosh Camp experience increased his desire to attend:

“I got accepted, I just, I was gonna go to Xavier University in Louisiana, but decided to go here. I wasn’t even really sure until I went to Frosh Camp and that actually made me happy to go here.”

This building of “tiger pride” is an intentional effort by Student Affairs says Staff Member 6, with careful attention to “getting (students) excited just about being a Memphis Tiger in general.” Staff Member 4 also confirmed

Frosh Camp was a vehicle for helping students decide if the University of Memphis is the right fit.

Quantitative Design for Study Questions 3-7

We used a quantitative design to address the remaining five study questions:

3. To what degree do first-year students participate in Student Affairs programming and access Student Affairs services at the University of Memphis?
4. Do Student Affairs programming and services influence first-year students' perceptions of the institution's commitment to their welfare?
5. Is there a relationship between first-year student characteristics and demographics and participation in Student Affairs programming and/or accessing of Student Affairs services at the University of Memphis?
6. Do first-year students who participate in Student Affairs programming and/or access Student Affairs services report feeling more socially and academically integrated into the University of Memphis community?
7. Is there a correlation between first-year students who participate in Student Affairs programming and/or access Student Affairs services and their intent to re-enroll?

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

We developed the questions for the survey in collaboration with the University of Memphis Student Affairs Learning and Assessment team and

Dr. John Braxton at the Vanderbilt University. The 59-item survey was divided into six sections:

1. Usage of and involvement in Student Affairs programming and services
2. Influence of Student Affairs programming and services on first-year students' intent to re-enroll
3. Demographic characteristics of survey respondents
4. Students' perceptions of the institutions' commitment to their welfare
5. Academic & Social Life
6. Students' intent to re-enroll

Questions from "The Spring Collegiate Experiences Survey" (Braxton & Noseworthy, 2003) were selected to assess students' perceptions of the institution's commitment to their welfare and their enrollment experience on the social and academic integration domains. Institutions can convey their commitment to student welfare through programming that promotes students' social integration into the campus community. This can then, in turn, strengthen students' transition from initial commitment to the institution to subsequent commitment to the institution, ultimately increasing the likelihood that a student will re-enroll (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004). The survey instrument was administered through Vanderbilt University's REDCap program by one of the researchers. One of

the functionalities of REDCap is the ability to code the variables as you create them, which facilitates the subsequent data analysis phase.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT

The population for study questions 3 to 7 consists of all first-year, first-time undergraduate students at the University of Memphis who initially matriculated in the summer or fall semester of the 2012-2013 academic year. Exclusions included transfer, transient, dual enrollment, under 18, and graduate students. These exclusions reduced the possibility that additional variables such as students' experiences with other institutions or enrollment statuses that inherently imply a temporary standing with the University of Memphis, void of any initial commitment to the institution (transient or dual enrollment status), would influence results. It was important to us that the students invited to participate in the survey would all be first-time, first-year undergraduate students at least 18 years of age to allow us to examine the impact of other individual student characteristics. Based on these exclusions, a population of 2,168 first-year students resulted to whom the survey described above was sent through an e-mail message. Based on this criteria, the Office of Institutional Research transmitted a file for this population with the following data elements: age, gender, race/ethnicity, estimated family contribution (EFC), high school GPA, ACT/SAT composite score, University of Memphis GPA at the end of

the first semester, first-generation status, high school graduation year, citizenship/visa status, University of Memphis ID number and email address. These data elements were exported from the University of Memphis' Banner student information system.

The email address was used to create the participants' list for all communications out of REDCap. The University of Memphis ID number was used later in the data analysis process to match the survey respondents' responses with the data exported from the Banner student information system. As an incentive for participation, the University of Memphis ID numbers for all survey respondents were entered into a drawing for one of eight \$25 gift cards for campus dining facilities.

DATA COLLECTION

The survey was launched on January 15, 2013 with an introductory email to the target population of 2,168 first-time, first-year students from the Vice President for Student Affairs, a highly respected senior administrator. In addition to the incentives, it was our hope that an introductory email from someone familiar to, and respected by, the students would encourage participation. Immediately following the email from the Vice President of Student Affairs, we sent an email to the entire target population out of REDCap introducing the study and providing an individualized link to the

survey instrument. Based on our criteria, emails were sent to a total of 2,168 first-year students inviting them to participate. REDCap has the ability to maintain the participant list, track respondents, provide individualized links, and send reminder emails to non-respondents only. The survey was open from January 15, 2013 – February 1, 2013. We sent weekly reminder emails until the last two days of the open survey period, when we changed to daily reminders. We sent a total of four emails including the initial invitation. The Vice President of Student Affairs sent two emails, including one reminder email five days before the deadline.

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

After the survey closed, there were a total of 260 respondents – 201 complete, 59 incomplete, representing an initial response rate of 12%. The data file of the survey responses was exported from REDCap directly into SPSS for analysis by one of the capstone project team members. As a part of the data cleansing process, the 59 incomplete records were deleted. Using the University of Memphis ID, the data from the Banner student information system was matched to the corresponding survey participants' responses. There were 11 records where the self-reported University of Memphis ID did not match with those exported from the Banner system. It was determined that for five of those records, the respondents had entered their University of Memphis username. The Office of Institutional Research

was able to use those usernames to provide their University of Memphis ID number to complete the data matching process. There was no way to resolve our inability to match the remaining six records. Therefore, those records were deleted, resulting in a final sample size of 195, or a final response rate of 9%. Once the matching process was completed, the University of Memphis ID number was removed from the dataset to ensure anonymity and de-identify the dataset. Next, the data exported from the Banner student information system was coded for analysis, and frequency descriptive statistics tests were run to create a demographic profile of the sample.

Based on Table 5, where the survey sample profile is compared to the population profile, we assert that the sample is representative of the population with the exception of the gender. The variance between the sample and population's characteristics averaged between 5-6% on all characteristics with the exception of gender, which saw a variance of closer to 10%.

TABLE #5 Profile of Survey Sample in Comparison to First-Year Population					
		Sample (n=195)		Population (N=2168)	
		#	%	#	%
Race	Black	74	37.9 %	768	35.4%
	White	95	48.7%	1145	52.8%
	Hispanic	10	5.1%	88	4.1%
	Asian	9	4.6%	56	2.6%
	2 Races	6	3.1%	83	3.8%
	Native American	0	0%	8	.4%
	Permanent Resident	0	0%	17	.8%
	Unknown	1	.5%	3	.1%
Gender	Male	65	33.3%	964	44.5%
	Female	130	66.7%	1204	55.5%
First-generation	Yes	85	43.6%	807	37.2%
	No	110	56.4%	1361	62.8%
Housing	On-campus	101	51.8%	1223	56.4%
	Commuter	94	48.2%	945	43.6%
		Sample Average		Population Average	
ACT score		23.5		22.3	
H.S. GPA		3.48		3.34	
Age		19		19	

A mailing wave analysis was also conducted to see if there were any differences in the characteristics of the sample based on when they responded to the survey invitation. Mailing wave analysis is a frequently used method to determine response bias in mail surveys and is recommended by Goode and Hatt (1952) and Leslie (1972).

A new mailing wave variable was created and coded to divide the 195 respondents into two groups: 1) those that responded to the initial survey invitation email, and 2) those that responded to the subsequent email reminders. Of the 195 survey respondents, 85 completed the survey after the initial email invitation, and 110 completed the survey after the subsequent reminder emails. Four respondent characteristic variables were chosen for analysis – on-campus housing, gender, first generation, and race. A crosstabs statistical test was applied to assess the variance in student characteristics based on when the survey was submitted.

The mailing wave analysis for respondent individual characteristics confirmed that the sample was representative of the population for housing status and race with variances within the wave analysis only ranging between 1%-2% for each group. However, for gender, the variance between the group that responded to the initial email invitation to complete the survey and the population was even greater at 15%. However, for those who responded to the subsequent reminder

emails, the variance dropped to 8% when compared to the population. The mailing wave analysis also revealed that for first-generation students, those who responded to the initial email invitation were representative of the population with a variance of about 1.5%. But, for those who responded to the subsequent reminder emails, the variance jumped to 10%. Male and first-generation students responded more to the subsequent reminder emails.

Table #6				
Crosstabs Table Results: Mailing Wave Analysis on Survey Respondents' Characteristics				
Independent Variable	Responded to Initial E-mail Invitation		Responded to Subsequent Reminder E-mails	
	#	%	#	%
On-campus Housing				
• Yes	45	52.9%	56	50.9%
• No	40	47.1%	54	49.1%
Gender				
• Female	60	70.6%	70	63.6%
• Male	25	29.4%	40	36.4%
1 st Generation				
• Yes	33	38.8%	52	47.3%
• No	52	61.2%	58	52.7%
Race				
• No Response	1	1.2%	0	0.00%
• White	40	47.1%	55	50.0%
• Black	32	37.6%	42	38.2%
• Hispanic	4	4.7%	6	5.5%
• Asian	4	4.7%	5	4.5%
• Biracial	4	4.7%	2	1.8%

A second mailing wave analysis was conducted to assess if there was any response bias on the main four dependent variables identified through the study questions: 1) students' perception of their social integration, 2) students'

perceptions of Student Affairs staff impact on their sense of the institution's commitment to their welfare, 3) level of Student Affairs programming involvement, and 4) intent to re-enroll. An independent samples t-test was applied with the four dependent variables and the mailing wave variable as a grouping variable.

Table #7 Survey Responses Based on Means for Initial and Subsequent Email Invitations				
	Initial E-mail	Subsequent E-mails	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
Social Integration	2.80	2.93	-1.433	193
	(.632)	(.601)		
Student Affairs Staff Impact on Students' Perceptions of Institutional Commitment to their Welfare	3.08	3.08	0.007	193
	(.561)	(.544)		
Student Affairs Involvement Level	1.13	1.18	-0.579	193
	(.669)	(.593)		
Intent to Re-enroll	0.87	0.90	-0.641	193
	(.338)	(.301)		

The results of the mailing wave analyses exhibited in Table 7 indicate that respondents to the initial and subsequent mailing waves exhibit little or no difference on their responses to the four focal variables of 1) students' perception of their social integration, 2) students' perceptions of Student Affairs staff's impact on their sense of the institution's commitment to their welfare, 3) level of Student Affairs programming involvement, and 4) intent

to re-enroll. Therefore, the sample is representative of the population with respect to the responses to the four focal variables.

LIMITATIONS TO METHODOLOGY USED FOR QUESTIONS 3-7

The following limitations may temper our final conclusions and recommendations concerning study questions 3 to 7:

1. The sample is not representative of the population with respect to gender. Men and first-generation students responded more to the subsequent email reminders than the initial survey invitation.
2. While there were no missing values in the survey data, the data exported from the Banner student information system did have some missing values that further reduced the number in the sample for some of the analyses.
3. During the data cleansing phase it was discovered that the data received from the Office of Institutional Research only included full-time, first-year, first-time students. We had initially intended to also survey part-time, first-year, first-time students.
4. There were not sufficient questions (face validity) on the survey instrument assessing the impact of Student Affairs programs and services on two variables: 1) students' perceptions of the institution's commitment to their welfare and 2) academic integration. This limited our ability to analyze these variables.

Findings for Study Question #3

To what degree do first-year students participate in Student Affairs programming and access Student Affairs services at the University of Memphis?

With the first quantitative study question, we wanted to assess the utilization of Student Affairs programs and services by first-year students. Survey respondents were provided a detailed list of Student Affairs Programs and Services (with descriptions of the programs and services where the title alone may not provide clarity) and asked to rate their accessing of services and involvement with Student Affairs programming on a Likert scale (See Appendix E, survey questions 1-3). After running the initial descriptive statistics test for frequency, we determined that the responses for “never”, “unaware of service,” N/A”, “no involvement,” and “unaware of program” should be combined with a value of zero. The variables were recoded into new variables reflecting this change. The recoded variables had the following response categories and numerical values: 0 = never, unaware, not at all, and N/A; 1 = rarely or a little; 2 = sometimes or some; and 3 = high, often, or a lot. We had initially included “unaware of service” to evaluate if a lack of awareness of a service could be a factor in its lack of utilization. The results consistently showed that this

response accounted for less than 10% of all responses. In addition, by recoding those three responses to a value of zero, we were able to focus on the responses indicating an actual level of usage.

We ran the frequency statistics again for mean and standard deviation on the recoded variables. Table 8 indicates the level of utilization of each program and service for which we surveyed in descending order by means (See complete list and counts in Appendix F).

The top eight services, with means of .70 and above, reflected more programming and services that address students' social needs. With only two or three of the services specifically designed to address the academic needs, this is not surprising. Educational Support Programs' ranking at sixth indicates a good awareness and usage of this service.

With only two services purposed to meet the needs of adult and commuting students, Commuter Services made a strong showing at fourth. It must be noted that the profile of the sample revealed that 101 of the 195 in the sample were residential students. One hundred thirteen indicated they never used the services or were unaware of them (consistent with the number of residential students), which suggests that there is high utilization of this service by the target population. On-campus dining and the

University Center – Tech Hub led the way and indicates that students value these facilities that allow them to create their own social experiences over the more structured, formal programming through the Student Activity Council and Residential Life, which ranked seventh and eighth respectively. The recreation facility and intramurals sports, which also provide facilities for students to create their own experiences, ranked third.

Table #8 Mean Utilization of the Most Used Student Affairs Programs and Services		
Program/Service	Mean	SD
On-campus Dining	2.69	0.696
UC -Tech Hub	2.03	1.067
Recreation/Intramurals	1.35	1.219
Commuter Services	0.91	1.202
Student Health Services	0.84	0.936
Educational Support Services	0.75	1.002
Student Activity Council (SAC)	0.73	0.936
Res. Life (Programs)	0.70	0.923
<p>* Means reflect a computation of participant's level of involvement/usage on an ordinal scale:</p> <p>0= No involvement/usage 1= Little involvement/usage 2 = Some involvement/usage 3= High involvement/usage</p>		

The lower rankings for the Registered Student Organizations (RSO), Student Government Association (SGA), and fraternities and sororities were a little surprising. However, it should be noted that these students had only completed one semester enrolled as a student at the University of Memphis and engagement will likely increase in their second term. The Counseling Center, Student Success Programs, and Disability Services usually have specific populations they serve, and it is possible that there weren't enough survey respondents from these subpopulations.

There were specified Student Affairs programming and services that participation could be ascertained by responding to a yes or no question. Not surprisingly, orientation, which is mandatory, led the list of specified Student Affairs programming. Frosh Camp, which is required for Emerging Leaders and optional for others and requires payment of an additional fee, ranked second. Community service, which is open to all students and encouraged in many Student Affairs programs, ranked a close third. This indicates a strong institutional commitment to community service. Our attendance list indicated that Emerging Leaders has only 52 total participants and is selected based on academic and leadership metrics identified through the admissions process. The Tiger Leadership Institute is open to all students. Assuming that attendance rosters of the Emerging Leaders, Frosh Camp, Tiger Leadership Institute, and community service participants are maintained, this may give more meaningful information

regarding the level of participation in these programs beyond those who chose to participate in the survey. Table 9 below illustrates the number and percentage of survey respondents that participated in the specified programs.

Table #9 Student Participation in Specific Student Affairs Programming		
Student Affairs Program	# Survey Respondent Participants	% Survey Respondent Participants
Frosh Camp	68	34.9
Orientation	181	92.8
Emerging Leaders	15	7.7
Tiger Leadership Institute	6	3.1
Community Service	56	28.7

Findings for Study Question #4

Do Student Affairs programming and services influence first-year students' perceptions of the institution's commitment to their welfare?

For the second study question, question #36 on the survey instrument stated, "Student Affairs staff are committed to the well-being of the students", as a measure of the impact of Student Affairs staff on students' perception of institutional commitment to their welfare. A frequency statistics test was run on question #36 to measure its influence on first-year students' perceptions of the institution's commitment to their welfare. Of the 195 survey respondents in the sample, 95.9% either "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" that Student Affairs staff are committed to the well-being of the students, demonstrating their valuable contribution to the students' experiences and belief that the University of Memphis is committed to their welfare.

Findings for Study Question #5

Is there a relationship between first-year student characteristics and demographics and participation in Student Affairs programming and/or accessing of Student Affairs services at the University of Memphis?

For this question, we chose to do a multivariate logistic regression. The Student Affairs involvement variable was recoded to a binary variable with values of 0 for no involvement or participation and 1 to represent any level of involvement. Logistic regression requires that the dependent variable be binary. For this question, the dependent variable is “participation in Student Affairs programming and services.” The initial set of independent variables selected for the regression analyses were based on themes that emerged through the qualitative interviews as areas of interest. Those variables included estimated family contribution (EFC), Emerging Leaders, Frosh Camp participation, residents of on-campus housing, gender, first-generation college student, and race. To these variables, we added the students’ ACT scores, high school GPA, and University of Memphis GPA. See Appendix G for a table of the independent variables.

Prior to running the logistic regression, a multicollinearity diagnostic test was applied for all of the independent variables in relationship to the dependent variable. According to Ethington, Pike, & Thomas (2002), an acceptable boundary for the variance inflation factor (VIF) is 10. There were no VIF results equal to or greater than 10, indicating that there was no redundancy between our variables. See Appendix H for multicollinearity test results.

The only student characteristic that had a statistically significant relationship with involvement with Student Affairs programming was their University of Memphis GPA ($-.705, p = .026$) from the first semester. The relationship was a negative one meaning that the higher the GPA, the less likely a student was to be involved with Student Affairs programming and the lower the GPA, the more likely a student was involved with Student Affairs programming. This suggests that students prioritized their academic responsibilities over other programming during their first semester at the University of Memphis. This result is consistent with the results of the qualitative interviews, where students expressed the need to focus on their academic transition before becoming more involved with other campus activities.

Table #10 Study Question 5: Logistic Regression Results of Student Characteristics and Student Affairs Programming Involvement	
Dependent Variable= Involvement in Student Affairs Programming	
Independent Variable (missing values excluded)	Coefficient (Standard Error)
Constant	5.757 (2.03)
Frosh Camp Participants	.442 (.68)
Emerging Leaders	.158 (1.12)
On-campus Housing Residents	1.070 (.63)
Gender	.279 (.53)
Race (ref group: White)	
Black	-.017 (.71)
Other Minorities (Hispanic, Asian, Biracial)	-.128 (.89)
EFC (Estimated Family Contribution)	-.177 (.12)
First-generation Students	.121 (.55)
High School GPA	.030 (.31)
ACT Scores	-.113 (.37)
University of Memphis GPA	-.705* (.32)
<p>Standard errors are reported in parentheses.</p> <p>*, ** Indicates significance at the 95%, p< .05 and 99%, p< .01 levels, respectively.</p>	

Findings for Study Question #6

Do first-year students who participate in Student Affairs programming and/or access Student Affairs services report feeling more socially and academically integrated into the University of Memphis community?”

For the sixth study question, the questions from the “Academic and Social Life” section of the survey instrument were categorized to assess the feasibility of creating a scale score for the two domains (academic and intellectual development and social integration). Reliability analyses were conducted on both of these domains to determine if they were strong enough to create a scale score. The items for academic and intellectual development were not feasible for creating a scale. However, for a social integration scale, the Cronbach’s Alpha was .784. Seven survey items (questions 44, 45, 48, 49, 50, 51, and 56) were selected for the social integration scale. Numbers 49 and 56 were reverse coded based on the wording of the item. Since scale scores are computed to the second decimal, the variables were then recoded to allow for analysis based on the original values of 1-4 for Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree.

The Cronbach’s Alpha for academic development was .177 and did not pass the reliability test for creation of a scale. Upon further review, a single item

or individual items measuring academic or intellectual development were not identified. The survey items addressed academic success, not academic or intellectual development. Therefore, our analysis will be limited to social integration.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

A frequency distribution was calculated to assess the perception of survey respondents on the social integration scale. Of the 195 survey respondents, 75.9% “Strongly Agreed/Agreed” they felt socially integrated into the campus community, while 24.1% reported they “Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed” with feeling socially integrated.

We conducted an additional logistic regression with students’ perception of their social integration recoded to a binary variable as the dependent variable with “involvement in Student Affairs programming” as the focal independent variable. Prior to running the logistic regression, a multicollinearity diagnostic test was applied for all of the independent variables in relation to the dependent variable. According to Ethington, Pike, & Thomas (2002), an acceptable boundary for the variance inflation factor (VIF) is 10. There were no VIF results equal to or greater than 10, indicating that there was no redundancy between our variables. See Appendix I for multicollinearity test results. See Table 11 below for the complete regression results.

Table #11 Study Question 6: Logistic Regression Results of Student Characteristics, Student Affairs Programming Involvement, and Perception of Social Integration	
Dependent Variable= Social Integration	
Independent Variable (missing values excluded)	Coefficient (Standard Error)
Constant	.308 (1.13)
Frosh Camp Participants	.571 (.45)
Emerging Leaders	.627 (.83)
On-campus Housing Residents	-.014 (.40)
Gender	-.072 (.39)
Race (ref group: White)	
Black	.125 (.44)
Other Minorities (Hispanic, Asian, Biracial)	.068 (.56)
EFC (Estimated Family Contribution)	-.146 (.08)
First-generation Students	-.286 (.38)
High School GPA	-.216 (.23)
ACT Scores	-.187 (.25)
University of Memphis GPA	.160 (.12)
Student Affairs Programming Involvement	1.675** (.54)
Standard errors are reported in parentheses.	
*, ** Indicates significance at the 95%, p< .05 and 99%, p< .01 levels, respectively.	

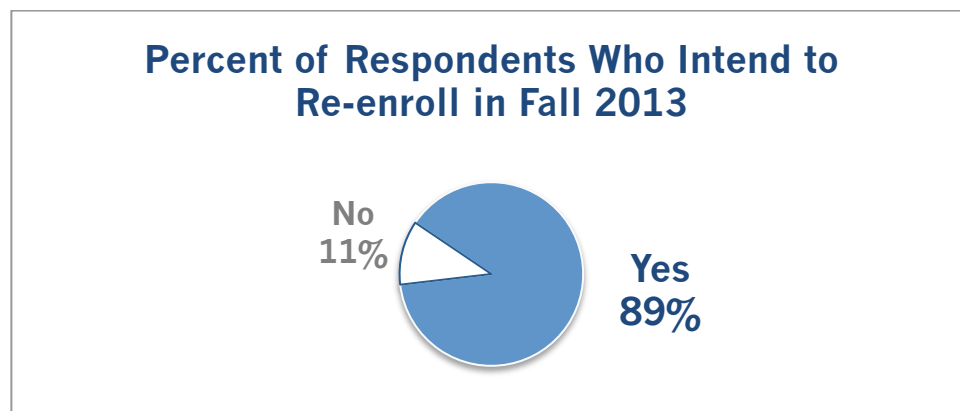
Only the focal independent variable, Student Affairs programming involvement, demonstrated statistical significance in this regression analysis (1.675, $p = .002$). There is a positive relationship between students' involvement in Student Affairs programming and their perception of their social integration into the campus community.

Findings for Study Question #7

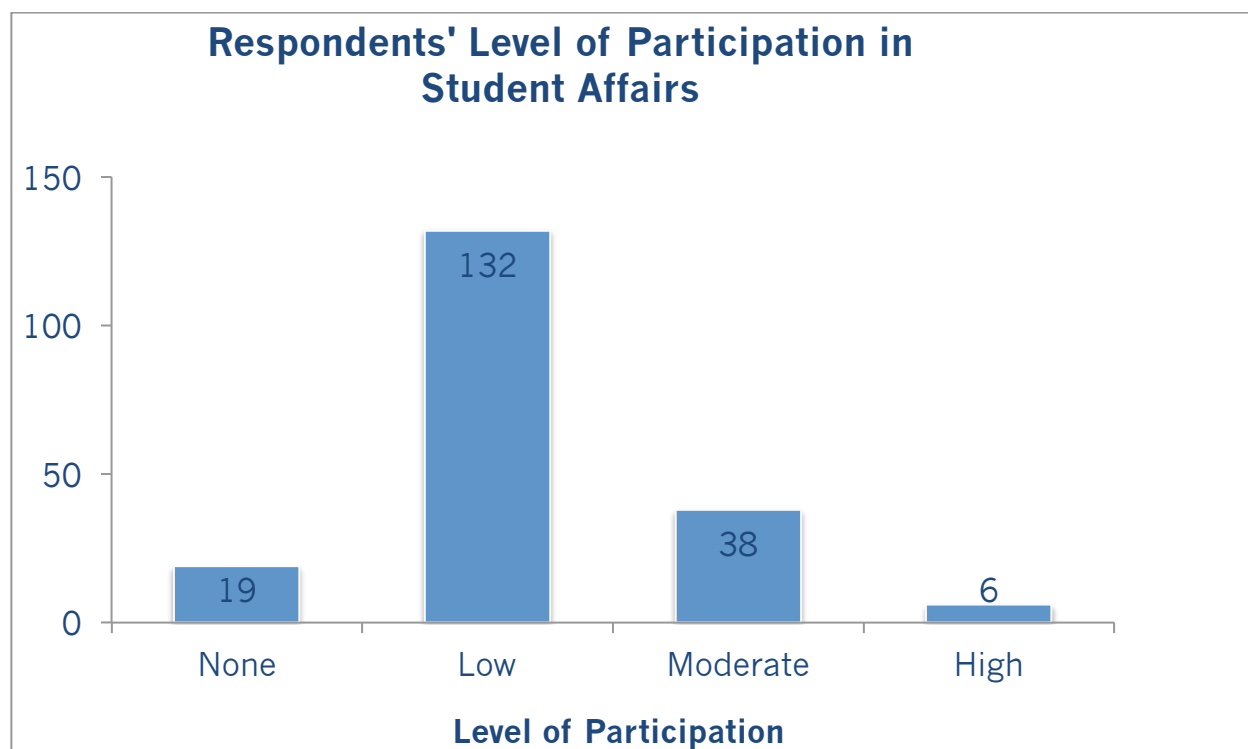
Is there a correlation between first-year students who participate in Student Affairs programming and/or access Student Affairs services and their intent to re-enroll?

Question 10 in the quantitative survey instrument asked students if they had ever thought about leaving the University of Memphis. Of the 195 respondents, 62 (31.8%) indicated they had considered leaving the University of Memphis.

With this study question, we wanted to investigate if students who engage in Student Affairs programming and/or services are more likely to express intent to re-enroll. In order to effectively analyze the data to answer this question, we made several steps to prepare the data for analysis. First, we recoded the responses to our question regarding students' plans for Fall 2013 (Appendix E, survey question #59). "Undecided", "No school", and "other school" were combined into a value of 0. "Attending the University of Memphis" was isolated as the only other response. Of the 195 survey respondents, 173 (88.7%) responded they intend to re-enroll at the University of Memphis in Fall 2013, while 22 (11.3%) responded they were unsure about their plans for Fall 2013.



Next, we wanted to see if there was a relationship between the survey respondents' participation level in Student Affairs programming and services and their intent to re-enroll. A scale was created using the recoded variables created for Study Question #3 regarding access and involvement in Student Affairs programming and services (Appendix E, questions 1 & 2). Creating the scale yielded a score for each respondent based on their individual answers on how often they participated. The individual scores ranged from 0 to 3 in varying increments to the second decimal point. The variable was then recoded a second time by ranges to assign specific participation levels based on survey questions 1 and 2 (Appendix E) of "no participation", "low participation", "moderate participation", and "high participation" in Student Affairs.



Next, we conducted a logistic regression with “intent to re-enroll” as the dependent variable. “Involvement in Student Affairs programming” was the focal independent variable with the other student characteristic independent variables from study questions 5 and 6 included. Prior to running the logistic regression, a multicollinearity diagnostic test was applied for all of the independent variables in relationship to the dependent variable. According to Ethington, Pike, & Thomas (2002), an acceptable boundary for the variance inflation factor (VIF) is 10. There were no VIF results equal to or greater than 10 indicating that there was no redundancy between our variables. See Appendix J for multicollinearity test results.

“Intent to re-enroll” was measured by survey respondents’ answer to item #59 on the quantitative survey instrument, which explicitly asked students what their plans were for Fall 2013. Students were given four answer options, which were recoded to two responses: 1) re-enroll at the University of Memphis or 2) not sure, not attending any institution, or attend another university combined. This created the binary dependent variable necessary for logistic regression analysis. See Table 12 below for the regression test results.

Table #12 Study Question 7: Logistic Regression Results of Student Characteristics, Student Affairs Programming Involvement, and Intent to Re-enroll	
Dependent Variable= Intent to Re-enroll	
Independent Variable (missing values excluded)	Coefficient (Standard Error)
Constant	-1.075 (1.50)
Frosh Camp Participants	.847 (.66)
Emerging Leaders	18.601 (9,830.81)
On-campus Housing Residents	.082 (.54)
Gender	.342 (.51)
Race (ref group: White)	
Black	-.874 (.63)
Other Minorities (Hispanic, Asian, Biracial)	-.753 (.73)
EFC (Estimated Family Contribution)	-.012 (.11)
First-generation Students	.581 (.53)
High School GPA	-.113 (.30)
ACT Scores	.096 (.331)
University of Memphis GPA	.361* (.16)
Student Affairs Programming Involvement	1.708* (.68)
Standard errors are reported in parentheses.	
*, ** Indicates significance at the 95%, p< .05 and 99%, p<. 01 level, respectively.	

The University of Memphis GPA (.361, $p = .021$) and involvement in Student Affairs programming (1.708, $p = .013$) demonstrated statistically significant relationships with intent to re-enroll. Both relationships were positive, suggesting that the higher a student's level of involvement with Student Affairs programming and their GPA, the more likely they are to re-enroll. Finally, survey question 12 (Appendix E) allowed us to drill down into the most influential factors in students' intent to re-enroll. We asked the students to indicate what two factors were most influential in their decision to stay at the University of Memphis. Response options included 20 Student Affairs programming and services and nine other factors that emerged as potential factors through the qualitative interviews.

When considering all 29 factors, the top five factors influencing students' decisions to stay at the University of Memphis were not related to Student Affairs programs or services. They were:

Most Influential Factor	# of Checked Responses
1. Affordability/Cost	82
2. Received Scholarships or Grants	58
3. Location/Convenience	39
4. Family/Peer Support	38
5. Quality of Teaching	32

The next five factors in the ranked list were Student Affairs programs or services.

For Student Affairs programming, the top five factors were:

Most Influential Factor	# of Checked Responses
1. Frosh Camp	30
2. On-Campus Dining	24
3. Residence Life	19
4. Sororities/Fraternities	18
5. The University Center	14

For the overall list, “Relationship with Faculty/Mentor” tied with the “University Center” for 10th place with 14 checked responses.

Summary of Project Findings

While the qualitative and quantitative findings highlighted differing information, their findings did intersect as they related to the first-year student experience and the intent to re-enroll.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND INTENT TO RE-ENROLL

Tinto (2012) explains: “retention requires that a student see him/herself as belonging to at least one significant community and find meaning in the involvements that occur within that community (p.67).” Both the quantitative and qualitative findings emphasized the importance of social integration. In the qualitative study, social integration was a major influence on students’ intent to re-enroll. Student Affairs programming, such as Frosh Camp, on-campus housing, and Greek Life, that created opportunities to make deep connections with other students were particularly significant for student interviewees.

Student interviewees that participated in Frosh Camp stressed the deep impact of the program on their initial commitment to the institution and feeling comfortable at the University of Memphis. Connections with their Frosh Camp family were meaningful. They allowed students to have a second community that extended beyond class participation, affinity groups

or pre-existing friendships. They also connected them with upperclassmen that were able to give advice in the transition process.

The qualitative study also revealed the importance of a residential community in helping students integrate socially and academically. In addition to improving their first-year experience, some students cited that the relationships built from their residential community and the ability to engage with Student Affairs programming were influential in their intent to re-enroll. The qualitative findings unveiled great disparities between the climate, facilities and academic and social benefits of residential life in the LLC and Richardson dorms.

In preliminary data analysis, dummy variables were created for LLC and Richardson residents to see if there were any differences that warranted including them in the final regression analyses in addition to on-campus housing. As related to Student Affairs participation there were no significant differences between living in the LLC and Richardson students, therefore only on-campus housing was included in the final regression analyses. This suggests that while living in the different residence halls may influence social and academic relationships within their dorm communities, they do not necessarily impact students' desire to participate in external activities or programs.

The qualitative interviews revealed that the social environment drastically changed on nights and weekends when commuter students and residential students whose families lived nearby stayed home. Residential students did indicate the influence of the commuter environment on their social lives. Many residential students chose to go home on weekends, which may be partially due to the empty campus. Student Affairs staff members mentioned that they made less effort to engage the small weekend campus community and one staff member wondered if more students would stay if there were more offerings.

The findings of study question 6 revealed that Student Affairs involvement in programs and services had a positive effect on social integration. Like the qualitative findings, Frosh Camp, on-campus housing, and Greek Life had strong quantitative support for intent to re-enroll.

ACADEMIC AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

The influence of Student Affairs on academic and intellectual development was not prominently featured in this study. No quantitative question directly addressed the relationship between academic and intellectual development and Student Affairs engagement. Only one qualitative interviewee cited the influence of academic integration on their intent to re-enroll. Students did report the utility of Student Affairs academic programming for their

success. However, students and staff cited peer relationships and facilities as more helpful for students' academic success. Common areas such as dorm lounges and the University Center's study spaces seemed particularly impactful on student learning.

Our interviews with students revealed that close relationships with faculty and Student Affairs staff made a difference in their intent to persist. Staff members mentioned some faculty partnerships that were helpful, but agreed that more collaboration could positively influence students' decision to stay.

The qualitative portion offered some insight into the role of staff members in students' decision to persist: connecting students with resources and helping them overcome external barriers.

The vast majority of staff and student interviewees identified time management as a large barrier to academic success. While the qualitative interviews did not point to social involvement as a barrier to academic success, the quantitative finding that engagement has a negative relationship with first-term GPA should be considered as staff members advise students in balancing their social and academic commitments.

ENGAGING AND RETAINING COMMUTERS

Although involved commuters expressed the benefits of social relationships on campus, the commuter student interviewees related to the social environment in very different ways than their residential counterparts. Generally, their social environment was tied to the classroom. Engagement in Student Affairs events was generally happenstance, occurring between class breaks. Staff and commuter student interviewees expressed the challenges of formal club involvement and after-hours events, as commuter students were less likely to attend weekend and evening events.

While events and programs were less relevant for commuters, commuter interviewees indicated that resources were critical to their success. The interviewees did share that the Adult & Commuter Services Office provides the resources they need to succeed and stay on campus. Eighty-seven percent of commuter survey respondents used Adult & Commuter Services, further confirming the importance of this space.

GOAL SETTING AND PERSISTENCE

The qualitative interviews pointed to the importance of goal identification in students' comfort, especially in light of current economic conditions. First-year student interviewees were very enthusiastic about career-related events and academic advisors and Student Affairs staff that helped them to clarify

their vision for the future. Student interviewees specifically highlighted “Discover Your Major Day” and individual meetings with counselors.

The quantitative survey showed that the majority of students have not had the same experiences. Survey question #26 stated, “Student Affairs programming or services helped me to clarify my goals for the future (choose a major, career path).” Of the 195 survey respondents, 62.6% “Disagreed” or “Strongly Disagreed” with this statement. However, the survey was taken after only one semester of enrollment, and it is possible that students have not been exposed to all services designed to assist with this area of their development. Survey respondents that are not in formal programs such as TRIO may not have had the opportunity to receive individual career counseling.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS AT CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

To better gauge the overall racial climate, students’ perception of institutional integrity, students’ perception of institutional commitment to student welfare and need for multicultural efforts, both qualitative and quantitative instruments included questions about diversity on campus. Two quantitative survey questions assessed students’ perception of diversity and prejudice on campus. Question #38 stated “I feel there is a general

atmosphere of prejudice across the campus community.” Of the 195 survey respondents, 82.1% “Disagreed” or “Strongly Disagreed” with this statement.” The qualitative interviewees revealed a different side of campus climate. Many student and staff interviewees communicated that students were “coexisting.” This points to a nuance in defining diversity and inclusion – the difference between prejudice and separation.

Differing attitudes towards diversity also presented themselves in relation to the role of multicultural programming as a vehicle for inclusion. Staff and student interviewees had differing attitudes towards multicultural efforts on campus and how they affected the student experience. Generally, the existence of multicultural clubs seemed to indicate to the students that the University of Memphis was committed to diversity, however questions were raised about clubs’ influence on campus unification. The quantitative findings, however, bore different results. Question #39 stated, “The University of Memphis encourages unity across diverse campus groups.” Of the 195 survey respondents, 86.7% “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” with this statement. Again, this difference could be attributed to the differences in design methods on this issue. Many qualitative participants initially answered that the university did encourage unity, however, when probed, could not offer examples of how it does so. Some student interviewees indicated that students (rather than the institution) drive unification efforts.

It is important to note that non-black minorities (Asian, Hispanic, Native American and biracial) were not represented in the interview population and collectively represented only 14% of the survey population. The need for cultural affinity groups may be more applicable to these populations who do not have a “critical mass” of students to rely on.

A FINAL NOTE ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

As we look to find ways in which Student Affairs can influence persistence, we must remember that regardless of the quality of the programs, it is up to the students to get involved. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) note that institutions should focus on ways to encourage engagement. Both qualitative and quantitative findings indicated that students are aware of the options available to them. Less than 10% of survey respondents put “unaware of service” as a response to survey question #1 (Appendix E). Interviewees were also very aware of the resources and programs on campus. They mentioned learning about these offerings in a variety of ways- from the Daily Helmsman, ACAD 1100, Frosh Camp, posters, and e-mails. However, for these interviewees, the most powerful messaging came from the peers they met while engaged in other Student Affairs programs. Even for students who were initially reluctant to get involved could be persuaded to join by a more engaged student.

Recommendations for Research and Practice for the University of Memphis

We have divided our recommendations into two categories. Listed below are two recommendations for research based on our experience conducting this study. Following this section are six recommendations for practice based on our study findings.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS DERIVED FROM OUR EXPERIENCE CONDUCTING THIS STUDY

I. Improve Participation Data Collection

Inconsistent data collection of Student Affairs programs and services utilization was a major limitation in identifying students for the study. More importantly, it was difficult to assess level of involvement, which would paint a better picture of an “engaged” student, and ultimately allow for better gauge of the influence of Student Affairs. In attempting to recruit students for the qualitative interviews, it was difficult to ascertain what types of Student Affairs activities and programs the study participants engaged in. Several students listed clubs that they were involved in, however, when probed, they mentioned they had dropped in for a single meeting. This attendance keeping could prove useful for assessing the impact of drop-in services, residential life activities, and RSO involvement.

Requiring students to swipe IDs when attending programs or accessing services to track aggregate numbers by program or service is one way to gather this data. This would also provide a mechanism to gauge participation by student and make assessment of participation less dependent on survey participation and self-reported responses.

II. Continued Institutional Research

Students mentioned during the qualitative interviews that the university shows it cares about them by responding to their feedback in previous surveys regarding changing the dining facilities' hours and having the opportunity to meet with Dr. Bingham to voice their concerns. Most staff also voiced their support for the learning organization model, and we were impressed with the level of understanding and familiarity of the Student Affairs staff with the theory-based conceptual frameworks for student retention, departure, and the college experience.

In addition to the recommendations made above, we suggest further exploration by institutional research into the influence of Student Affairs on retention.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) emphasize that institutions must monitor the influence of intervention efforts because it is not just important to know if efforts make a difference, it is also important to know *when* they make a difference so that resources can be efficiently be allocated. Longitudinal research is critical to

understanding and mitigating the historically high attrition in upperclassmen. This study, with some modifications based on lessons learned, should be repeated annually with each first-year class and in subsequent years for each class to provide longitudinal data. Incorporating upperclassmen will also present the opportunity to assess the influence of Student Affairs on retention of student groups that have higher enrollment after the first year, such as adult and transfer students.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS BASED ON STUDY FINDINGS

I. Increase the Breadth and Depth of the Residential Experience

Given the impact of on-campus housing revealed in our findings, the University of Memphis should increase the capacity of on-campus housing with competitively priced, communal type residential facilities that include common meeting spaces and programming to encourage student engagement. We recommend that future housing efforts place first-year students together, and follow the successful model of the current LLC environment.

The benefits of living-learning communities have been consistently supported in scholarly research. Living-learning communities support retention for all students and may have more of an effect on minority students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). LLC interviewees consistently indicated the academic and social benefits of their dorm. It is important to recognize that the rich experience offered by the LLC is primarily targeted at high achieving students. The two living-learning communities housed in the older Richardson building are targeted at-risk populations that could arguably benefit more from the sense of community and peer academic support characteristic of the LLC. As Student Affairs plans for its new facility, we recommend that it implement the LLC model for all its living-learning communities, not just the high achieving students. We also recommend housing all freshmen together.

Students repeatedly expressed the desire for cooking areas and private bathroom facilities in their residential space. Future campus planning should consider these desires and incorporate the amenities that would make living on-campus competitive with the off-campus housing options now available to students within a two-mile radius. This may attract more students to live on-campus and potentially bolster residential life activities.

If increasing on-campus housing capacity with facilities that respond to students' desires for more amenities is not financially feasible, improving weekend programming may help motivate residential students to stay on campus as well as draw off-campus students that live near the University of Memphis back to campus for evening and weekend events. Surveying residential and commuter students to learn what types of weekend programming they would attend and if they would stay on campus if there were more things to do may help Student Activities Council and Residential Life to strategically experiment with weekend programming. Designing campus activities that are inclusive of students' family members, friends, significant others and even community members could revive campus life during the evenings and weekends.

II. Expand the Capacity of Frosh Camp

Our Interviews with students revealed the deep significance of Frosh Camp in forming connections on campus, learning about resources and programs, and

fostering inclusion. The findings for study question 7 reinforce this view in more specific terms by confirming Frosh Camp as the most influential Student Affairs program in students' decision to stay at the University of Memphis. The foundation provided by participation in this program is key and was repeatedly cited by students as one of the keys to student success and retention. The Frosh Camp experience should be mandatory for all new students.

Staff conjectured that students who did not attend Frosh Camp did so for external barriers (such as family or work) or due to inability to pay the Frosh Camp fee. Identifying the reasons students did not attend Frosh Camp could be beneficial to future planning. In order to increase the capacity for Frosh Camp to meet this recommendation, we further suggest that alternative models for Frosh Camp that target populations that may not be able to attend (e.g. commuter, adult, and working students) be explored. Hosting weekend Frosh Camps during the fall semester may supplement the summer offerings. By making the Frosh Camp experience mandatory, it could be funded through a fee or included in the cost of tuition, thereby making it eligible for inclusion in financial aid budgets. External grant funds are another possible funding source for Frosh Camp growth.

Another potential benefit to the expansion of Frosh Camp is the potential to increase upperclassmen participation and the development of more mentoring initiatives. Not only would this facilitate the social integration of freshmen

students into the University of Memphis campus community, it would also provide a mechanism to keep upperclassmen connected to the campus community as well.

III. Enhance Collaborative Efforts with Academic Affairs and Faculty

Both qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that collaboration among Student Affairs, faculty and Academic Affairs has great potential to increase first-year students' academic and social development. Qualitative and quantitative findings revealed that students appreciate the independent contributions of these institutional agents. Students' first-year experiences are greatly influenced by their relationships with faculty and staff, suggesting that combined efforts could be very powerful. In response to study question #4, the quantitative survey confirmed the relationship between Student Affairs staff and students' perceptions of the institution's commitment to their welfare. The findings in study question #6 confirmed the role of participation in Student Affairs programming in students' perception of their social integration into the campus community. Survey question #30 stated, "Most faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely interested in students." Of the 195 survey respondents, 87.3% "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" with this statement. It was also notable that in the ranked list of factors that students identified as most influential in their decision to stay at the University of Memphis (study question

#7), relationship with mentor or faculty tied for 10th place with the University Center.

Staff interviews indicated that staff members felt there was minimal collaboration with faculty. However, many staff noticed the effectiveness of collaborative efforts that did exist. Early alert partnerships and faculty involvement in residential life were two examples of promising practices. Exploring more opportunities for formal programming where these units work together may greatly enhance the first-year academic experience. Discovering ways in which Student Affairs expertise can inform classroom instruction may be particularly influential for commuter students.

In our interviews with students, ACAD 1100 was cited several times as a positive experience. An Emerging Leader raved about her ACAD section, but another student decided not to take a general section because his peers said it was pointless. A staff member noted that students in other living-learning programs such as Freshmen First, who were supposed to be grouped together, got placed in separate sections. We concur with staff that collaboration with Academic Affairs to preserve the integrity of the learning community experience and to standardize the ACAD curriculum will be beneficial to student learning and social integration. Quality control will also allow for future studies on the influence of ACAD 1100 on persistence, as the current experience is too inconsistent to make

conclusions about its impact. We recommend that ACAD 1100 become a required course for all freshmen students, the curriculum be standardized to ensure quality and consistency of content and delivery, and that time managements skills training be incorporated into the ACAD 1100 curriculum.

IV. Create a Culture of Inclusion

While it was clear from the interviews that Student Affairs staff members care about creating a welcoming environment for all students, there was no evidence of a focused departmental approach to creating a culture of inclusion.

Students generally saw the existence of multicultural clubs and high enrollment of minorities as a symbol of institutional commitment. However, even when asked about institution's commitment to multiple dimensions of diversity, students tended to equate diversity with race. Many staff members questioned the true commitment to diversity, felt that efforts were compartmentalized, and inclusion seemed to be the "job" of Multicultural Affairs and cultural registered student organizations. Neither students nor staff members were aware of direct institutional or divisional policies aimed at diversity, and staff interviewees noted the lack of a diversity statement.

While creating opportunities for finding affinity groups is important, building a culture of inclusion cannot solely be achieved through perpetuating segregated

programs. While support has been given to the positive impact of culturally specific organizations and programs on social integration (Guiffrida, 2003), institutions should not only turn to grouping minority students together. Tinto (1993) expresses the importance of both tailoring experiences to the needs of students of color and changing the broader institutional culture so that all members of the community embrace diversity. In order to achieve an inclusive culture, Student Affairs should come to a common understanding of diversity and its expanded dimensions beyond race and ethnicity. We recommend 1) creating a division-wide policy and diversity statement, 2) fostering collaborative efforts in the division to create programming that embraces diversity in all its dimensions, and 3) encouraging programming and activities across and between affinity groups and institutional departments.

V. Focusing on Commuter Students

Like other aspects of diversity, students' residential status should be considered in crafting programs and providing resources. While all Student Affairs departments will undoubtedly interact with commuter students, departments should do so strategically. We recommend that departments include improving the commuter experience as a major goal in their strategic plans. As part of the strategic plan, Student Affairs should directly communicate their desire to support commuter students. Commuter interviewees believed customized services showed that the institution cares about them.

We also recommend that efforts be made to identify shared obstacles to student success (i.e. transportation, family, housing, etc.) to better partner with external entities such as the Memphis Transit Authority, city and county government, public school systems, and other public and private organizations to collaboratively develop solutions to mitigate the negative effects of these barriers.

VI. Respond to Economic Concerns & Perception of Value of Education

Students and staff indicated or implied that finances were a first-order priority in students' decision-making during college. Quantitative findings also supported this with affordability/cost being cited as the number one factor influencing students' decisions to stay at the University of Memphis.

Student interviewees expressed enthusiasm for college programs, services and staff that helped them to further define their career. Academic advisors, Student Affairs staff and “Discover Your Major” seemed particularly significant. Although Career Services and career components of formal programming are traditionally offered in junior and senior years, we recommend the creation of a required sophomore level course, ACAD 2100 that would focus on career explorations within the context of the available majors and academic departments at the University of Memphis. The goal of this course would be to bolster retention beyond the first year, demonstrate institutional commitment to career preparation, foster the development of realistic career aspirations in the students,

and keep students focused on their potential outcomes upon completion of their undergraduate education. This would also provide another opportunity for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to work collaboratively.

Staff should also create collective messaging efforts to motivate students to engage in activities that will prepare students for the workforce. Increased communication of the value of adding community service and leadership experiences on professional resumes and developing the attitudes (e.g. teamwork and diversity appreciation) that prepare students for the work environment.

Conclusion

The University of Memphis has a robust offering of Student Affairs services and programming designed to facilitate student success and retention. It is clear from our findings that the University of Memphis' Student Affairs staff, programming and services are positively impacting students' perceptions of the institution's commitment to their welfare, social integration into the campus community, and intent to re-enroll. Retention and persistence to graduation are multi-faceted phenomena that require ongoing study and analysis. We strongly encourage the University of Memphis to utilize this mixed methods study as the foundation for ongoing and longitudinal research to monitor the impact of its Student Affairs programming and services on the student experience, retention, and persistence to graduation. We were constrained by the time limits of our capstone and study questions. However, the multitude of data collected that extends beyond the scope of this study provides rich opportunities for additional analysis from multiple perspectives. The University of Memphis is uniquely positioned to impact the practice and literature on Student Affairs programming and services on the college experience of both residential and commuter students. We hope the University of Memphis seizes this opportunity to establish itself as the gold standard for innovative and insightful Student Affairs programming as demonstrated through the empirical study and publication of its practices.

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Appendix A: Propositions of Student Departure in Commuter Institutions

1. The lower the cost of college attendance incurred by students, the greater their likelihood of persisting in college.
2. The more a student perceives that the institution is committed to the welfare of its students, the lower the likelihood of student departure.
3. The more a student perceives that the institution exhibits institutional integrity, the lower the likelihood of the student's departure.
4. Motivation to graduate from college exerts a positive influence on student persistence. Motivation to make steady progress toward college completion also positively impacts student retention.
5. The greater a student's need for control and order in his or her daily life, the greater the student's likelihood of departure.
6. The stronger a person's belief that s/he can achieve a desired outcome through his or her own efforts, the less likely the student will depart from college.
7. The greater a student's awareness of the effects of his or her decisions and actions on other people, the greater the student's likelihood of departure from college.
8. The greater a student's need for affiliation, the greater the student's likelihood of departure from college.
9. As parents' education level increases, the likelihood of student departure from a commuter college or institution also increases.

10. Support from significant others for college attendance decreases the likelihood of student departure from a commuter college or university.
11. The probability of student departure from a commuter college or university decreases for students who participate in communities of learning.
12. The probability of student departure from a commuter college or university increases for students who engage in anticipatory socialization before entering college.
13. Student entry characteristics affect the level of initial commitment to the institution.
14. The initial level of institutional commitment to the institution affects the subsequent level of commitment to the institution.
15. The greater the degree of academic integration perceived by students, the greater their degree of subsequent commitment to the institution.
16. The greater the degree of subsequent commitment to the institution, the greater the likelihood of student persistence in college.

Source: Braxton, Hirschy, & McLendon (2004)

Appendix B: Student Interview Protocol

Review and signing of all components of the consent forms (i.e. purpose of the study and study questions, procedures to maintain confidentiality, overview of interview procedures, option to withdraw, incentive, etc.). Review of list of Student Affairs programming and services. Opportunity for questions.

About the Student

I am first going to ask you a few questions about your decision to come to the University of Memphis.

- Why did you decide to come to University of Memphis?
 - How long has it been since you graduated high school?
 - Did anyone in your family go to college?
- What does your family think about your decision to enroll here? What about your friends, what do they think? Have your friends and family visited the campus?

Student Engagement with Student Affairs

Now I am going to ask you about your involvement with Student Affairs programs and services and your social, academic, and career preparation experiences at the University of Memphis.

- Do you use any of the services or programs offered by Student Affairs?
 - (If yes) How did you learn about them?

Social Integration

- What is the social life like at the University of Memphis?
 - How do you meet people?
 - Do you have a group of people to socialize with on campus?
- In general, do you think there is a sense of community on campus? How do you know?

- Have you gone to social events on campus? Participated in any clubs/programs/fraternities/intramural sports?
 - (If yes) How often? Can you describe what your experience was like?
 - Has your involvement with ... made a difference in your wanting to stay at University of Memphis? In what ways?
- Being a student includes a lot of work (studying, going to class...), is there anything else that makes it difficult to get involved here (family obligations, work, etc.)?
 - Probe re: work hours, on/off campus employment, flexibility of the employer, children, etc.
 - Follow-up: Are there ways in which the University of Memphis helps you manage these responsibilities?
- Do you live on campus?
 - (If yes) Do you connect with other people in your residential hall?
 - (If no) How much time per week do you spend on campus outside of class? Have you used any of the commuter services?

Academic & Intellectual Development

- Do you find the University of Memphis academically challenging?
- Did you expect this level of challenge?
- Have you used any of the academically related student services/programs?
 - (If yes) Can you describe a part of the experience that stands out?
 - (If yes) Have these services made you feel more comfortable with your coursework?

Goal Setting & Career Readiness

- Have you talked with anyone at the University of Memphis or participated in any programs that helped you prepare for life after graduation? (Pick a major, career services, etc.)
 - Can you describe what your experience was like?
- Do you feel like your degree will help you to reach your career goals?

Institutional Commitment to Student Welfare

Finally, I am going to ask you about your overall experiences with the University of Memphis.

- If someone stopped you at a coffee shop and asked you if they should come to the University of Memphis, what would you say? Do you feel like the University of Memphis cares about its students' success? How?
- Do you believe that the University of Memphis makes an effort to welcome diverse students' needs (race, gender, religion, sexual orientation)? Why do you say so?
- Does the University value its students?
- Is the University concerned with the growth and development of its students?

Intent to Re-enroll & Influence of Student Services

- Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience at the University of Memphis? (Explain)
 - Probe: If given another chance, would you enroll here again?
- Do you intend to come back in the fall?
 - Follow-up: What has made you want to stay/leave? (Academically, socially, etc.)

Additional Comments

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with Student Affairs?

Appendix C: Staff Interview Protocol

Review and signing of all components of the consent forms (i.e. purpose of the study and study questions, procedures to maintain confidentiality, overview of interview procedures, option to withdraw, incentive, etc.). Review of list of Student Affairs programming and services. Opportunity for questions.

About the Interviewee

I would first like to get an understanding of your department's function and your role in Student Affairs.

- Can you tell me a little about your department? How are its primary responsibilities and objectives related to the first-year student experience?
- Can you give me a brief description of your role, especially as it relates to interactions with first-year students?
- How do first-year students generally learn about your department's resources/programs?

Role of the Department

Now I am going to ask you specifically about your department's programs and services aimed at the social, academic and career preparation of first-year students. First, I would like to discuss programs and services related to first-year students' social experiences.

Social Integration

- Can you describe the social environment of the University of Memphis?
- What are the greatest needs of the first-year students that come to see you?
 - Are there any barriers to students' ability to connect to campus?
- The Student Affairs Annual Report indicates that one goal of Student Affairs is to help students establish a connection to the University of Memphis.
- Can you tell me about your department's efforts (programs, events, services, etc.) to help first-year students connect to campus (encourage staff to elaborate on how the program is run, the focus of the individual programs/services, how it addresses students' needs)?
 - Why does your department do it this way?

- What results have you seen from these efforts?
- Do you think your department meets the needs of your intended audience? If no, what services/programs would you like to see to achieve this goal?
- How does your position play into this larger goal? Can you give me an example?
- Overall, do you think the efforts by Student Affairs collectively address the social needs of first-year students at the University of Memphis? What services and programs in other Student Affairs departments seem to be particularly effective?

Academic & Intellectual Development

I also would like to learn more about first-year students' academic experiences. The next few questions seek to understand the role of Student Affairs in first-year students' academic experiences.

- What would you say are the primary academic concerns first-year students face at the University of Memphis?
- Are there any common barriers to students' academic success?
- How does your department address first-year students' academic needs (programs, services, events, etc.)?
- Why does your department do it this way?
- What results have you seen from these efforts?
- Do you think your department meets the academic needs of your intended audience? If no, what services/programs would you like to see to achieve this goal?
- How does your position play into this larger goal? Can you give me an example?
- Overall, do you think the efforts by Student Affairs collectively address the academic needs of first-year students at the University of Memphis? What services and programs in other Student Affairs departments seem to be particularly effective?

Goal Setting & Career Readiness

The Annual Report also indicates that “succeeding as a professional” is a central component of the vision of Student Affairs. The following questions address the role of Student Affairs in preparing students for life after college.

- When thinking about your typical first-year student, what steps do they need to prepare for a career?
- How does your department equip students to succeed after graduation?
- What results have you seen from these efforts?
- Do you think your department meets its success goals?
- What is your role within this larger goal? Can you give me an example?
- Overall, do you think the efforts by Student Affairs collectively address the professional development needs of first-year students at the University of Memphis? What services and programs in other Student Affairs departments seem to be particularly effective?

Institutional Commitment to Student Welfare

I would like to move away from Student Affairs-specific activities to get a better picture of the University of Memphis as a whole. The following questions seek to understand institutional policies, practices and resources.

- Thinking about the first-year student experience holistically, does the University of Memphis have the resources to meet the needs of first-year students? (Refer back to aforementioned needs if helpful)
- If the university received a large donation allocated for improving first-year student retention, how should it spend its money?
- What steps has the university taken to address the needs of a diverse student body? That is, how do university policies and practices meet the needs of students of different races, religions, sexual orientations, ages, etc.?
- Are students highly valued at this university? How do you know?
- Does the university display a concern for the growth and development of its students?

Student Persistence

I noticed in the annual report that a central goal of Student Affairs at the University of Memphis is to increase student retention & graduation. I am now going to ask you some questions regarding retention efforts in your department. I would specifically like to learn about efforts to increase retention of first-year students.

- Can you describe these efforts as they relate to your department? What types of programs and services specifically target first-year student retention? What kinds of results have you seen from the departmental efforts?
- What does this look like in your daily activities?
- Are there any other challenges your first-year students face as they try to complete their degree?
- If a student communicated the desire to leave school, what would you do?

Additional Comments

- Is there anything else that you would like to share about Student Affairs, first-year students, or first-year student persistence?

Appendix D: Characteristics of Student Interviewees

Comparison of Student Interview Sample to Total First-Year Population by Demographic Characteristics					
		Sample Count	Population Count	% Sample	% Population
Race	Black	9	774	42.8%	35.5%
	White	10	1150	47.6%	52.8%
	2 Races	2	-	9.5%	-
Gender	Male	9	962	42.8%	44.1%
	Female	12	1218	57.1%	55.9%
Age	18	10	1748	47.6%	80.2%
	19	10	216	47.6%	9.9%
	20	1	76	4.8%	3.5%
First-generation	Yes	8	809	38.1%	37.1%
	No	13	1268	62.0%	58.2%
Disability Status	Yes	2	-	9.5%	-
	No	19	-	90.5%	-
Residential Status	Commuter	4	1124	19.0%	52.6%
	On-campus	17	1056	81.0%	48.4%
Graduated May 2012	Yes	20	-	95.2%	-
	No	1	-	4.8%	-

Note. Sample data was obtained via Student Affairs and interviewee self-report. Population data was obtained through the Office of Institutional Research (OIR).

- OIR data includes students under the age of 18.
- OIR race classifications include races not present in sample (Asian, Hispanic and non-residential students) and do not include biracial students.
- OIR does not share disability status or graduation year.

Note 2. In collapsing students 20 years and older, OIR data suggests that students age 18 and 19 are traditional age. This was true of those in the sample: 18 and 19 year olds graduated May 2012. Though percentages differ greatly, the sample and population percentages are most likely comparable.

Comparison of Student Interview Sample to Total Program Population* by Program Participation			
Department	Program	Sample Count	Program Count
Residential Life	Total Residential	17	1356
	LLC: Engineering	1	5
	LLC: Honors	6	176
	LLC: Emerging Leaders	1	49
	Richardson: First Scholars	2	19
	Richardson: Freshmen First	3	97
	Richardson: Non LLC**	2	-
	Carpenter**	1	-
	South**	1	-
Student Success	TRIO	1	73***
	First Scholars	2	
Greek Affairs	Sorority	4	134
	Fraternity	1	115
Adult &Commuter Services	Yes	3	69
Multicultural Affairs		4	113
Frosh Camp		12	703
<p>* "Program population" was obtained from Student Affairs attendance records and does not represent the entire first-year student population.</p> <p>** Program population data did not specify dorms for students who are not in a Living-learning Community</p> <p>*** Student Success Program data did not specify whether a student was in TRIO or First Scholars</p>			

The Influence of Student Affairs Programming and Services on First-Year Students' Intent to Re-enroll at the University of Memphis

My colleague and I are doctoral students in the Higher Education Leadership and Policy program at Vanderbilt University - Peabody College. The University of Memphis engaged Vanderbilt's Peabody College to conduct a research study on "The Influence of Student Affairs Programming and Services on First-Year Students' Intent to Re-enroll at the University of Memphis." The purpose of this survey is to assess your usage of, and perceptions on, the influence of Student Affairs programming at the University of Memphis on your intention to re-enroll next year. Student Affairs is a division of the University that provides a variety of programs and services designed to ensure you have a positive enrollment experience, meet your college goals, expectations, and needs, and help you to be successful academically, socially, physically, and emotionally.

All first-year, first-time undergraduate students at the University of Memphis are being asked to complete the survey. And while it is our goal to maximize response rates, your participation is completely voluntary, and there is no penalty if you choose not to participate.

The survey you are about to take contains statements and questions relating to your usage of Student Affairs programming and services, your perceptions on the influence of those programs and services on your intent to re-enroll, your perceptions of the University of Memphis' commitment to your welfare, and some individual demographic characteristics.

Please note you will be asked to provide your UUID# for three purposes: 1) by submission of your survey response, you are acknowledging you have read, understood, and agree to the informed consent information provided at the beginning of the survey, 2) your University of Memphis UUID# will be used to match with additional demographic information stored in the University of Memphis student information system such as race, gender, etc., and 3) to enter you in a drawing for one of eight (8) \$25.00 Flex Buck dining gift cards. Your University of Memphis UUID# and any personally identifiable information will not be shared or published.

Please complete the survey honestly. The survey is straightforward and fast-paced and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. We strongly encourage you to complete it in one session, but should you need to leave it before finishing it, you can save your answers and return to it at a later time. However, you must record the validation code in order to re-enter the survey later. Thank you for your time and participation.

Karen A. Lewis, M.S. karen.a.lewis@vanderbilt.edu

Denise Miller, M.Ed. denise.d.miller@vanderbilt.edu

Click on the link below to read the Informed Consent form. Please note that by submitting your survey responses, you are acknowledging that you have read the Informed Consent form.

[Attachment: "Quantitative Informed Consent.pdf"]

USAGE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMING & SERVICES
1. How often do you access the following Student Affairs services?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Unaware of Service	N/A
Commuter Services (Commuter Student Assoc., commuter lounge/computer lab)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult Services (Adult student/commuter lounge, quiet study area, adult-oriented programming)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career Services (Resume writing, interview skills, career fairs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counseling Center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational Support/Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation & Intramurals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On Campus Dining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Health Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
University Center - Tech Hub/Computer Lab	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

USAGE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMING & SERVICES
2. How involved are you in the following Student Affairs programs?

	No involvement	Only a little	Involved	Very Involved	Unaware of program	N/A
Fraternities/Sororities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Government Association (SGA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multicultural Programs & Services (minority student organizations, multicultural festival, Stonewall Tigers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Success Programs (TRIO, First Scholars)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registered Student Organizations (RSO) - Religious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registered Student Organizations (RSO) - Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registered Student Organizations (RSO) - Cultural	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registered Student Organizations (RSO) - Honorary/Academic/Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registered Student Organizations (RSO) - Political	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registered Student Organizations (RSO) - Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports & Recreation Clubs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Activities Council (SAC) Events (movie nights, comedy shows, luaus, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Residential Life Programs & Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Did you participate in....

	Yes	No
Frosh Camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emerging Leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tiger Leadership Institute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Service Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

-
-
4. Do you live in on-campus housing? Yes
 No
5. Please specify in which residence hall you reside. N/A
 Living Learning Complex (LLC)
 Carpenter Complex
 Richardson Towers
 Rawls Hall
 Smith Hall
 South Hall
 Oxley Commons
 Mynders Hall
6. Did you participate in a living learning community? (Freshman First, Honors Floors, Architecture & Design House, Emerging Leaders, Music Scholars, or ROTC) Yes
 No
7. Do you feel there is a sense of community in your residence hall? Yes
 No
8. How close do you live to campus? Within walking distance (1-2 miles)
 Within 3-5 miles
 Within 6-10 miles
 Greater than 10 miles
9. How much time per week do you spend on campus outside of class? I do not spend time on campus. I only take courses online.
 I only come to campus for class.
 1-5 hours
 6-10 hours
 11 or more hours

INFLUENCE TO STAY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

10. Have you thought about leaving the University of Memphis?

- Yes
 No

11. To what extent have the following Student Affairs programs and services positively influenced your decision to stay at the University of Memphis?

	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	N/A
Adult Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commuter Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation/Intramurals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counseling Center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational Support/Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multicultural Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Residence Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On Campus Dining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frosh Camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sororities/Fraternities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Activities Council (SAC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Organizations (RSO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Disability Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Government Association (SGA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Health Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Success Services (TRIO Programs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
University Center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of Teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordability/Cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Received Scholarships/Grants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationship with faculty/mentor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family/peer support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location/Convenience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-campus Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ACAD 1100 Course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MOST INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

12. Please check what two factors most influenced your decision to stay. (Only check two)

- Adult Services
- Career Services
- Child Care
- Commuter Services
- Recreation/Intramurals
- Counseling Center
- Educational Support/Tutoring
- Multicultural Affairs
- Residence Life
- On Campus Dining
- Community Service
- Frosh Camp
- Sororities/Fraternities
- Leadership Programs
- Student Activities Council
- Student Organizations
- Student Disability Services
- Student Government Association
- Student Health Services
- Student Success Services (TRIO Programs)
- University Center
- Quality of Teaching
- Affordability/Cost
- Rec'd Scholarship/Grants
- Relationship with faculty/mentor
- Family/peer Support
- Academic Programming
- Location/Convenience
- On-Campus Employment
- ACAD 1100 Course

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

13. Please provide your University of Memphis ID# (This is your UUID#. This information will be used when we analyze the data to match your responses to demographic variables. Your individual responses to the survey are confidential and will not be shared with anyone. Once the match has been completed, personally identifiable information will be removed from the data to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Data analysis will be performed and reported on group, not individual, data.

14. Do you work?

-
- No
 - Yes, full-time, on campus
 - Yes, part-time, on campus
 - Yes, full-time, off campus
 - Yes, part-time, off campus

15. Do you have children?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer Not to Respond

16. What is the highest level of education completed by either of your parents (or those who raised you)?

- Did not finish high school
- High school diploma or GED
- Some college
- Associate's Degree (2-year college)
- Bachelor's Degree or beyond
- I don't know

17. What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married/domestic partnership
- Separated/divorced
- Widowed
- Prefer Not to Respond

18. Which of the following describes your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual
- Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer (LGBTQ)
- Questioning/Unsure
- Prefer Not to Respond

19. Do you have a diagnosed disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer Not to Respond

20. If you earned a high school diploma, did you enroll in college the summer or fall immediately after you graduated from high school?

- Yes
- No

21. When you applied to college, was the University of Memphis....

- Your 1st Choice
- Your 2nd or 3rd Choice
- Your 4th Choice or more

22. Prior to coming to the University of Memphis, how confident were you that you would complete your degree at the University of Memphis?

- Not at all confident
- Somewhat confident
- Confident
- Very Confident

23. Prior to coming to college, how did your family and friends from home feel about you attending the University of Memphis?

- They did not want me to attend U of M.
- They felt OK, but wished I had attended somewhere else.
- They were supportive.
- They were very supportive/excited.

24. Prior to coming to the University of Memphis.....

No

Yes

Were you worried about making friends?

Were you worried about your ability to do well academically?

25. Prior to coming to the University of Memphis, did you know what you wanted to do after college?

 Yes No

INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF ITS STUDENTS**(Following is a list of statements assessing the institution's efforts on behalf of its students.)**

26. Student Affairs programming or services helped me to clarify my goals for the future (choose a major, career path).
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
27. Student Affairs programming or services helped me to feel that the University of Memphis is a good fit for me.
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
28. Most Student Affairs staff I have had contact with are genuinely interested in students.
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
29. Most other college/university staff (e.g., registrar, student accounts, financial aid, etc.) I have had contact with are genuinely interested in students.
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
30. Most faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely interested in students.
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
31. I have experienced negative interactions with Student Affairs staff.
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
32. In general, faculty members treat students with respect.
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
33. In general, other college/university staff treat students with respect.
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
34. In general, Student Affairs staff treat students with respect.
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
35. I am confident I made the right decision in choosing to attend this institution.
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
36. Student Affairs staff are committed to the well-being of the students.
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
37. The values of the institution are communicated clearly to the campus community.
- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

38. I feel there is a general atmosphere of prejudice among the campus community.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

39. The University of Memphis encourages unity across diverse campus groups.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

40. The actions of the administration are consistent with the stated mission of this institution.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

For each of the questions below, please use the following satisfaction categories when formulating your responses. When compared to how satisfied I thought I would be when I decided to attend this college or university, my satisfaction is now:

	Much worse than I thought	Worse than I thought	About as much as I thought	Better than I thought	Much better than I thought
41. Overall, how Student Affairs staff treat students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. Overall, how faculty at the college/university treat students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. Overall, how other staff at the college/university treat students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ACADEMIC & SOCIAL LIFE

(Following is a list of statements characterizing various aspects of academic and social life at your college or university. Please indicate the level of your agreement or disagreement with each statement, as it applies to your experiences.)

44. Student Affairs programming or services helped me to find a community or group with similar interests or backgrounds.

- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

45. Student Affairs programming or services helped me to meet people in college.

- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

46. Student Affairs helped me to feel more confident that I can succeed academically at the University of Memphis.

- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

47. My first semester in college was more challenging than I expected.

- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

48. Since coming to this institution, I have developed close personal relationships with other students.

- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

49. It has been difficult for me to meet and make friends with other students.

- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

50. The student friendships I have developed here have been personally satisfying.

- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

51. Student Affairs designs programs and services with a diverse student body in mind.

- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

52. My family approves of my attending this college/university.

- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

53. My family encourages me to continue attending this institution.

- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

54. Most faculty are genuinely interested in helping students succeed academically.

- Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

55. Few of the faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely outstanding or superior teachers.

- Strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

56. I have encountered racism while attending this institution.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

57. The University of Memphis makes a strong effort to welcome my family on campus.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

INTENT TO RE-ENROLL

58. How confident are you that you will complete college?

- Not at all Confident
- Somewhat Confident
- Confident
- Very Confident

59. What do you think you will be doing in Fall 2013?

- Attending the University of Memphis
- Attending another college or university
- Not attending any college or university
- Not sure/undecided

Appendix F

Mean and Count of Utilization of Student Affairs Programs and Services (Complete List)						
Student Affairs Program/Service	Mean	SD	Never, N/A, unaware	Rarely/ a little	Some	High
On-campus Dining	2.69	0.696	8	2	33	152
UC -Tech Hub	2.03	1.067	24	36	46	89
Recreation/ Intramurals	1.35	1.219	73	30	43	49
Commuter Services	0.91	1.202	113	24	21	37
Student Health Services	0.84	0.936	91	56	36	12
Educational Support (ESP)	0.75	1.002	112	36	31	16
Student Activity Council	0.73	0.936	106	47	30	12
Res. Life (Programs)	0.70	0.923	109	48	26	12
Career Services	0.57	0.855	124	38	26	7
Adult Services	0.55	0.914	132	30	21	12
Multicultural Affairs	0.43	0.873	148	23	11	13
RSO- Honors/Academic	0.43	0.824	147	20	21	7
Counseling Center	0.41	0.822	151	16	21	7
Greek Life	0.41	0.906	155	16	8	16
RSO - Religious	0.38	0.794	151	20	17	7
RSO - Sports	0.37	0.785	150	26	10	9
RSO - Service	0.29	0.696	162	14	15	4
Student Success Programs	0.43	0.824	178	6	1	10
RSO - Cultural	0.17	0.581	176	10	4	5
RSO - Arts	0.16	0.575	179	5	7	4
Disability Services	0.11	0.491	184	5	2	4
Student Government	0.09	0.440	186	4	2	3

Appendix G: Independent Variables for Study Question #5

Independent Variable	Codes/Values/Measures	Source	Question Text
Frosh Camp Participants*	0=No, 1=Yes	Survey #3	Did you participate in...?
Emerging Leaders*	0=No, 1=Yes	Survey #3	Did you participate in...?
On-Campus Housing*	0=No, 1=Yes	Survey #4	Do you live in on-campus housing?
Gender*	0=Male, 1=Female	Banner Data	
Race**	0=White, 1=Black,	Banner Data	
	2=Hispanic/Asian/Biracial		
	3=No or missing value		
EFC***	0=\$0	Banner Data	
	1=\$1-\$9,999		
	2=\$10,000 - \$19,999		
	3=\$20,000 - \$29,999		
	4=\$30,000 - \$39,999		
	5=\$40,000 - \$49,999		
	6=\$50,000 and up		
7=no or missing value			
First-generation Student*	0=No, 1=Yes	Banner Data	
High School GPA***	0=No or missing Value	Banner Data	
	1=2.00-2.49		
	2=2.50-2.99		
	3=3.00-3.49		
	4=3.50-4.00		
University of Memphis GPA***	0=No or missing value	Banner Data	
	1=2.00-2.49		
	2=2.50-2.99		
	3=3.00-3.49		
	4=3.50-4.00		
ACT Scores***	0=No or missing Value	Banner Data	
	1=16-20		
	2=21-25		
	3=26-30		
	4=31-34		
SA Involvement Scale* (Recoded to binary)	Recoded Binary Values 0=No participation 1=Participated	Survey #1 & 2	How often do you access the following Student Affairs services?
	Original Coding: 0=No participation, N/A or Unaware 1=A little or rarely 2=Some 3=A lot of Often		How involved are you in the following Student Affairs programs?
* Dummy Variables		** Categorical converted to dummy	*** Ordinal variables

Appendix H: Multi-collinearity Test Results for Study Question #5

Coefficients ^a			
Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Recoded Race for LG	.919	1.088
	Frosh Camp	.836	1.197
	Emerging Leaders	.911	1.098
	4. Do you live in on-campus housing?	.834	1.199
	Gender	.964	1.037
	EFC	.865	1.156
	High School GPA	.664	1.506
	ACT scores	.712	1.405
	University of Memphis GPA	.849	1.178
	First-generation	.888	1.126
a. Dependent Variable: Student Affairs Involvement for Logistic Regression			

Appendix I: Multi-collinearity Test Results for Study Question #6

Coefficients ^a			
Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Recoded Race for LG	.919	1.088
	Frosh Camp	.834	1.199
	Emerging Leaders	.911	1.098
	4. Do you live in on-campus housing?	.817	1.224
	Gender	.963	1.038
	EFC	.857	1.167
	High School GPA	.664	1.506
	ACT scores	.712	1.405
	University of Memphis GPA	.820	1.220
	First-generation	.888	1.126
	Student Affairs Involvement for Logistic Regression	.922	1.085
	a. Dependent Variable: Perception of Social Integration		

Appendix J: Multi-collinearity Test Results for Study Question #7

Coefficients ^a			
Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Recoded Race for LG	.919	1.088
	Frosh Camp	.834	1.199
	Emerging Leaders	.911	1.098
	4. Do you live in on-campus housing?	.817	1.224
	Gender	.963	1.038
	EFC	.857	1.167
	High School GPA	.664	1.506
	ACT scores	.712	1.405
	University of Memphis GPA	.820	1.220
	First-generation	.888	1.126
	Student Affairs Involvement for Logistic Regression	.922	1.085
	a. Dependent Variable: Intent to Re-enroll at University of Memphis RC		

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- Denise and Karen