Chapter One

Introduction

The number of students pursuing higher education has increased in the last two decades. In 1985, 12.2 million students were enrolled in the higher education system. Between 1990 and 2000, enrollments increased 11%, with 15.3 million students seeking college degrees by 2000. Over the last several years, the number of students attending college has continued to rise, and enrollment for the 2005-2006 academic year is projected to be 16.7 million (Enrollment, n.d., ¶ 1).

Included in this influx of students is the addition of those who were previously underrepresented in the higher education system. For example, the balance between men and women has shifted over the last several decades. In 1976, there were more men than women pursuing degrees (5.8 million v. 5.2 million), but by 1985, women outnumbered men (6.4 million v. 5.8 million). Between 1990 and 2000, women continued to come to college in higher numbers than men. During this decade, the number of women enrolled increased by 14% while the number of men increased by 7% (Enrollment, n.d., ¶ 1). Researchers expect this trend to continue, projecting an enrollment increase of 21% among women and 15% among men between 2000 and 2013 (Gerald & Hussar, 2004).

Another way higher education has become more diverse is in the racial diversity of the student body. In 1976, minority students constituted 15% of the overall student population. Between 1989 and 1996, the number of minority students increased from about 21% to 29% of all students (Horn & Carroll, 2004). This proportion has remained relatively stable through 2000 with 28% of all students self-identifying as being a racial or ethnic minority (Snyder & Hoffman, 2003, Table 206).

A third way that higher education has recently experienced a more diverse population is in the increase of first-generation (FG) students, those who are the first in their immediate families to attend college (Hellman & Herbeck, 1997). Billson and Terry (1982), who reported some of the earliest research on FG students, defined a FG student as one whose parents have no college experience, but siblings may have attended college. Other researchers define FG status as being the first in the extended family to attend college (Rodriguez, 2003) or being the first in the history of the family to attend college (London, 1996). Students in this study are considered FG students if neither their parents nor their siblings attended college. This controls for any influence siblings' experiences with college may have on otherwise FG students. During the 1989-1990 academic year, 43% of first-year students were FG students (Nunez & Carroll, 1998). In the 1995-1996 academic year, FG students constituted between 31% and 34% of those entering four-year institutions (Kojaku & Malizio, 1998; Warburton & Carroll, 2001). The number of FG students has remained relatively stable over the last 10 years, with FG students comprising 29% to 32% of first-year enrollment in 2004 (HERI, 2004).

Despite the gains in diversity among students, administrators in higher education continue to face serious problems with student retention. In fact, the number of students who leave before degree completion has hovered around 50% for over 100 years (Tinto, 1982). Individual institutional retention rates vary widely around this average, from as low as 7% to upwards of 80% in public four-year institutions (Astin, 1975). For the majority of colleges and universities, recent six-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time students ranged from 35% to 70% (Carey, 2004).

Retention issues affect student groups in different ways. Consider the issue of gender. Just as women constitute more than half of students enrolled in higher education, so too do they

complete and earn more than half of bachelor's degrees awarded annually (Freeman, 2004; Horn & Carroll, 2004; Peter, Horn, & Carroll, 2005). Despite these gains, however, women continue to be associated with more risk factors for dropping out than men. For example, while women earned 57% of bachelor's degrees in 2001, they were also more likely to be single parents, low income, and older than traditional aged students (Peter, Horn, & Carroll, 2004). It does not appear that these risk factors have had a substantial impact on retention rates thus far, but those in higher education should continue to study how these factors may influence women as their enrollment numbers continue to increase.

Minority student retention has been more challenging for the higher education system. Racial and ethnic minority students tend to be less likely to stay in school and persist to degree completion than their White peers (Cardoza, 1986; Fleming, 1984). This is particularly true of minority students at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) (Szelenyi, 2001). At least 10 percentage points typically separate African American and White graduation rates, with 7 percentage points usually separating Latino and White graduation rates (Carey, 2004).

Administrators also have a difficult time retaining FG students. As collegiate newcomers, FG students do not have the parental experience with higher education that their non-first-generation (NFG) peers do. In addition, FG students tend to have less social capital and resources to assist them in their transition to college. For these reasons, FG students face more difficulties in persisting to degree completion than do NFG students (Choy, 2001; Duggan, 2001; Ishitani, 2003). In fact, FG students may have as high as a 71% greater risk of dropping out than do their peers whose parents have college experience (Ishitani, 2003).

Since student drop-out behavior continues to be a problem, especially among diverse populations, a number of researchers have investigated ways in which to retain students. Tinto

(1975) suggests that retention is partially a function of students' levels of integration into the social and academic environments of their institutions. Academic integration includes factors such as students' intellectual development and time spent in academic pursuits. Social integration includes relationships with peers as well as involvement in social activities. Students who do not have sufficient levels of academic and social integration are more likely to drop out of the higher education system.

Examining academic and social integration may be of particular importance in understanding retention problems among collegiate newcomers. For example, although women boast higher retention rates than do men, they often perceive the campus to be a "chilly climate," one in which women are negatively stereotyped or discounted (Hall & Sandler, 1982). Those that perceive such a climate may suffer in areas of potential educational gain (Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Nora, & Terenzini, 1999). To build meaningful relationships with faculty, many women establish mentor relationships with professors outside of the classroom. Such relationships have significantly contributed to women's persistence in college (Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996).

Use of campus resources and participation in campus activities also positively influence women's satisfaction with and persistence in college. With the exception of recreational sports and activities pertaining to science, women tend to participate in campus activities more often than do men (Kuh, 2005). In addition, women may benefit more from such participation than males (Brown, 2000).

Minority student retention can also be linked to issues regarding academic and social integration. Since minorities may be less likely to persist to degree completion (Carey, 2004), it is important to facilitate their scholastic self-esteem and abilities. Those who participate in

activities associated with academic integration see improvements in educational gains (DeSousa & Kuh, 1996; Grosset, 1995; MacKay & Kuh, 1994). For example, developing relationships with faculty can foster academic growth (Schexnider, 1992; Vann Lynch, 2002) and improve retention rates among minority students at PWIs (Davis, 1991; Fries-Britt, 1995).

While academic integration is important to minority student retention, social integration often plays a more crucial role in helping minority students persist to degree completion. Studies employing surveys suggest that the most influential factors in minority student retention are students' use of campus facilities and support from the campus community (Mallinckrodt, 1988; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987). Qualitative techniques support these findings, revealing that participation in campus activities and having relationships with other minority students positively influence minority retention (DeSousa & King, 1992; Fries-Britt, 1995; Velasquez, 1998).

Academic and social integration also play a significant role in the retention of FG students. First-generation students enter college with fewer academic resources to help them succeed (Duggan, 2001). However, efforts to improve FG students' academic integration may positively affect their retention. For example, national surveys report that FG students who become involved in academic activities benefit more from the experiences than do their NFG peers (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). Those who use tutoring centers and other academic resource centers tend to be more likely to remain in school than FG students who do not use these resources (Edmonson, Fisher, & Christensen, 2003).

Levels of social integration also significantly influence FG student retention. National surveys suggest that in comparison to their NFG peers, FG students spend less time engaged in campus activities and interacting with others (Duggan, 2001; Ishitani, 2003). However, national

data also reveal that those FG students who do participate in extracurricular activities are more likely to stay in school and work towards degree completion (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Pascarella, et al., 2004).

Despite their increasing numbers in higher education, it appears as if both minority and FG students are less likely to persist to degree completion than are their White and NFG counterparts (Cardoza, 1986; Choy, 2001; Duggan, 2001; Fleming, 1984; Ishitani, 2003; Szelenyi, 2001). This is influenced in part by these students' lower levels of academic and social integration (Duggan, 2001; Strage, 1988). If minority and FG students do not become involved in scholastic and extracurricular activities on campus, then their levels of integration will remain stagnant, and they will be less likely to remain in school.

Although minority and FG students may be at a high risk for dropping out, it is possible for these students to increase their levels of academic and social integration while in college. A number of studies, primarily employing quantitative methods, suggest that developing relationships with faculty and peers (Davis, 1991; Fries-Britt, 1995; Pascarella, et al., 2004; Schexnider, 1992; Vann Lynch, 2002), participating in campus events (DeSousa & King, 1992; Fries-Britt, 1995; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Pascarella, et al., 2004; Velasquez, 1998), and using campus facilities (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Pascarella, et al., 2004; Mallinckrodt, 1988; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987) can positively influence levels of academic and social integration. If minority and FG students take advantage of these opportunities, then they may be more likely to remain in school and earn their college degree.

While researchers have investigated academic and social integration among minority and FG students, their methodologies have largely utilized quantitative techniques (Duggan, 2001; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Ishitani, 2003; Mallinckrodt, 1988; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987;

Pascarella, et al., 2004). It is possible that using a qualitative approach might yield richer details regarding integration among these diverse students. Moreover, researchers have not explored integration and the interaction between race and generational status, despite the parallels between minority and FG students. This study sought to address these gaps by using a qualitative lens to investigate integration among FG students and analyzing differences by race.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore activities associated with academic and social integration. Further, I examined differences in activities associated with integration by race. For purposes of this study, academic activities included those that support academic performance and intellectual development. Social activities included interactions with peers and participation in campus events.

The sample for this study included first-year FG students at a large research institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. For purposes of this study, FG students were defined as being the first in their immediate families to attend college. To explore differences in academic and social integration by race, a purposeful sample of 15 minority and 15 non-minority FG students was sought.

Data consisted of logs that participants kept over a two-week period of time. Respondents logged their daily experiences by answering questions associated with academic and social integration activities.

Research Questions

The present study was designed to explore four research questions:

1) What are the academic behaviors in which FG students engage?

2) Do the academic behaviors in which FG students engage differ by race?

3) What are the social activities in which FG students engage?

4) Do the social activities in which FG students engage differ by race?

Significance of the Study

The present study was significant for several constituencies that might benefit from the results. One such group is the staff members of programs developed specifically for FG students. The results provided in this study may give staff a clearer picture of the academic and social behaviors of FG students. Staff might use this information to assess the effectiveness of their programs.

First-generation students might also benefit from the results of this study. The findings provided students with information regarding academic and social activities in which others engage. First-generation students may use this information to assess their own collegiate activities and involvement.

Parents of FG students may also benefit from data in the present study. The results of this study provided parents with information on academic and social activities in which FG students choose to participate. Parents might use those data to encourage their children to participate in similar activities.

This study also had significance for future research. For example, this study explored differences in academic and social behaviors between minority and non-minority FG students. Future scholars might examine behaviors by specific race (e.g., African American v. Hispanic v. Native American) instead of examining minority students collectively. This type of research might reveal differences not found in the present study.

Future research could also employ a different data collection technique. Participants in the present study kept a log of their daily activities. Instead of keeping a log, students could be

interviewed about their academic and social experiences, recalling their behavior over a select period of time. Such a study might reveal results that differ from the information provided in logs.

The present study only explored activities by race. A third possibility for future research would be for researchers to investigate integration differences between FG men and women. This type of study would expand on the knowledge about FG students' integration behaviors in general.

Finally, the present study had implications for future policy. The results provided faculty and administrators with information regarding FG students' academic behaviors, including their class attendance records for the data collection period. Administrators might use the results to assess current class attendance policies.

This study also held significance for policies regarding funding. The results provided policymakers with information on activities that FG students engage in most frequently. Administrators with authority over funding might use these results to examine policies for funding for FG programs and initiatives.

Third, the present study was significant for policies regarding academic advising. Academic advisors were provided with data regarding academic resources that FG students may use. Advisors might use these results to assess policies and requirements for advising for these students.

<center>Delimitations</center>

As with other studies, the present study was not without some initial delimitations. The first dealt with the data collection method. Participants were required to keep a log of their experiences and to submit that log to me on a daily basis. It is possible that being aware that their

activities would be reviewed and analyzed may have influenced students to pay more attention to their behaviors. If participants altered their typical schedules and activities because they were participating in the study, this may have skewed the results in some unforeseen way.

A second delimitation also dealt with the data collection method. Participants self-reported their daily activities in a log. Due to the nature of self-reported data, it is possible that participants were not completely candid in their responses. If so, this also may have influenced the results in an unpredictable manner.

A third delimitation involved the sampling technique. The present study utilized a purposeful sample. It is possible that the behaviors of the participants in this study differ from typical FG students. The results should be interpreted in that context.

Despite these delimitations, this was a worthwhile study. The study contributed to the body of literature regarding integration and FG students. In addition, using a qualitative technique to examine this topic provided a different way for educators to understand how FG students achieve academic and social integration.

<div align="center">Organization of the Study</div>

The present study is organized around six chapters. Chapter One introduced the topic of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. Chapter Two presents a review of relevant literature to the study. The third chapter describes the qualitative methodology of the study, including techniques used for sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Chapters Four and Five present the results of the study. Last, Chapter Six discusses these results as well as their implications for future practice, research, and policy.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The present study was designed to explore the social and academic integration behaviors of first-generation (FG) students and to analyze differences in those behaviors by race. To investigate this issue, it was necessary to examine two bodies of literature. First, I reviewed the literature on academic integration (AI). Three groups of studies emerged in this review: (a) studies about AI and college students in general, (b) studies about AI and race, and (c) studies about AI and FG students.

The second body of literature included studies about social integration (SI). Again, three groups of studies emerged: (a) studies about SI and students in general, (b) studies about SI and race, and (c) studies about SI and FG students. This literature review is organized around these two major bodies of literature and their respective subtopics.

Academic Integration

Students who are academically integrated into their institutions are more likely to persist to degree completion (Liu & Liu, 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Pike & Simpson, 1997; Strage et al., 2002; Tinto, 1975). However, the ways in which different student populations achieve or benefit from AI varies (Donovan, 1984; DeSousa & King, 1992; Griffin, 1992; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987; Pascarella et al., 2004). This section examines the AI levels and activities of college students in general, student groups by race, and FG students.

Students in General

Few studies examine AI among students in general, but data strongly support the vital role that AI plays in retention. In these studies, researchers appear to rely solely on quantitative

measures of AI to investigate how academic experiences influence students' decisions to remain in school. Self-report data from national and institution-specific surveys and questionnaires highlight specific academic activities and practices that foster AI and positively impact retention (Liu & Liu, 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Pike & Simpson, 1997; Strage et al., 2002).

One of the reasons that AI proves to be so important to retention is that it positively impacts a student's choice to persist both directly and indirectly. First, data from the National Survey for Student Learning suggests that AI exerts a strong, direct influence on retention (Pike & Simpson, 1997). In addition to this direct effect, AI also impacts retention indirectly through its effects on achievement and satisfaction (Liu & Liu, 2000; Pike & Simpson). For example, regardless of race, age, or sex, students who report high levels of AI also feel more satisfied with their college experience and are more likely to remain in school (Liu & Liu). Whether through direct or indirect means, sufficiently high levels of AI seem to powerfully influence student retention.

Students who report high levels of AI tend to be involved in a variety of academic activities, and certain activities appear to be more important in promoting AI than others. Data from a number of surveys suggest that students' interactions with faculty are of particular importance in promoting AI (Pike & Simpson, 1997). For example, students may ask for assistance with course work (Strage et al., 2002), and when students perceive that faculty care about their learning, they may feel more academically integrated (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). In addition to interacting with faculty, students who manage their time effectively in regards to studying and completing course work tend to be more successful and are more likely to remain in school than students who expend less effort towards these pursuits (Strage et al.).

Although there are relatively few studies examining AI among the general student population, findings from various types of survey instruments corroborate one another and emphasize the significance of AI in student retention. All of these studies employ quantitative techniques, however. It would seem that research the employs qualitative techniques is needed to discover richer and more descriptive ways of underscoring the role AI plays in students' college experiences.

Race

Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, most of the studies regarding AI have focused on the differences between students of various racial and ethnic backgrounds. In particular, many researchers have investigated the AI of African American students at PWIs (Donovan, 1984; Fries-Britt, 1995; Grosset, 1995; Vann Lynch, 2002), often comparing these students to Caucasian students (DeSousa & King, 1992; MacKay & Kuh, 1994) or African American students at HBCUs (DeSousa & Kuh, 1996; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002). Findings reveal that AI is very important to the persistence of minority students, and relationships with faculty are particularly beneficial.

Several studies using data from surveys and questionnaires examine the relative importance of AI to minority students and their persistence toward degree completion. Some students enter college less academically prepared than Caucasian students and score lower on measures of AI, which negatively influences their likelihood of remaining in school (LaCounte, 1987; Strage, 1988). However, longitudinal data suggest that AI is the most important factor influencing the persistence of African American students (Donovan, 1984). Therefore, providing academic support services and encouraging participation in academic-related activities may help minority students increase levels of academic integration and reduce their risk of attrition. In

addition, sufficiently high levels of AI may positively affect SI, thus increasing overall integration and likelihood of persistence (Grosset, 1995).

A number of studies use results from the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) to determine the value of academic experiences in contributing to educational gains. Positive academic experiences in college outweigh students' background characteristics that may have put them at risk of attrition prior to entering college (Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Velasquez, 1998). In fact, academic-related activities contribute the most to educational gains for African American students (MacKay & Kuh, 1994), and African American students may use academic resources and services more often than Caucasian students (DeSousa & King, 1992; Griffin, 1992).

While there are a number of ways students can become involved academically, interviews, focus groups, case studies, and several quantitative measures reveal that having relationships with faculty is essential to the AI of minority students. For example, African American students may feel isolated at PWIs, and relationships with faculty, regardless of race, help foster initial integration and persistence (Fries-Britt, 1995). In one mentorship program with cross-race mentor relationships, faculty strongly influenced students' likelihood of persistence, helping to bolster students' study skills and encouraging their academic progress (Vann Lynch, 2002). In addition to mentoring students, faculty help students better understand class material, and students work harder if they feel their professors care (Griffin, 1992).

Although relationships with faculty are important to minority students, both student affairs professionals and faculty members must attend to the quality of these relationships. Having minority faculty is important to minority student retention (Schexnider, 1992), and there may be fewer minority faculty members at a PWI than at an HBCU. African American students

discussed in interviews and focus groups that they perceive less faculty support at PWIs (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002). Faculty-student relationships at PWIs should receive more attention because the quality of these relationships impacts student learning more for minority students than for Caucasian students (Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004).

First-Generation Students

Scholars have used several methodological techniques to investigate AI among FG students. In particular, researchers have reviewed national and institution-specific survey data, conducted interviews, and examined retention rates. Overall, the data from these techniques suggest that FG students have lower levels of AI than their non-first-generation (NFG) peers (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Ishitani, 2003; Pascarella et al., 2004). However, the findings are mixed, and some results suggest that the differences in levels of AI between FG students and NFG students are minor or non-existent (Pratt & Skaggs, 1989; Strage, 1988).

A number of studies have utilized national survey data in their analyses (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Lohfink & Paulsin, 2005; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004; Pratt & Skaggs, 1989). Some use the Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study to explore what factors are most important for predicting success among FG and NFG students. For FG students, college experiences are more important than their pre-college characteristics in shaping educational outcomes (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004). In particular, curricular experiences and interactions with faculty have a significant, positive impact (Lohfink & Paulson, 2005). On the other hand, pre-college characteristics exert the most influence on educational outcomes for NFG students. While both groups benefit from engaging in activities of an academic nature, involvement in these activities has a stronger, positive impact for FG students than for NFG students (Hahs-Vaughn).

Data from the National Study of Student Learning (NSSL) yielded similar results. First-generation students enter college with less cultural and social capital than NFG students, and they tend to engage in academic activities to make up for this deficit. As in the Hahs-Vaughn (2004) study, participating in academic activities proves valuable for FG students because they receive greater benefits from this type of involvement than NFG students. Despite entering college with lower levels of AI, FG students who participate in academic activities can significantly increase their levels of academic integration (Pascarella et al., 2004).

Although findings from the BPS and NSSL studies are similar, research using CIRP data revealed that there are no differences in FG and NFG students in terms of academic integration. While the BPS and NSSL inquire about students' collegiate experiences, CIRP data are collected prior to students' matriculation and serve as a predictor of students' experiences. In an examination of the risk of attrition for freshmen, FG and NFG students did not differ significantly on measures of academic integration. While these findings contradict results from other studies using national survey data, they suggest that FG students are not always an at-risk population (Pratt & Skaggs, 1989).

Just as the findings using national data are mixed, so too do results from studies employing institutional survey techniques vary. At one four-year institution, freshmen completed a survey during orientation. First-generation students had a 71% higher risk of attrition than did NFG students (Ishitani, 2003). Consistent with previous research, the findings from this study suggest that FG students have lower levels of AI than NFG students.

Some studies using institution-specific surveys have found that FG students do not differ from NFG students. For example, 150 students, 25% of whom were FG students, completed the Student Attitudes and Perceptions Survey that includes AI scales. First-generation and NFG

students did not differ on measures relating AI to educational outcomes (Strage, 1988). These results, along with the findings from Pratt and Skaggs (1989), imply that not all FG students report low levels of academic integration.

The previously mentioned studies rely on quantitative techniques and yield mixed results. A review of studies employing qualitative techniques would provide a deeper understanding of AI and FG students, but only one such study (Olenchak & Hebert, 2002) was noted. Olenchak & Hebert conducted a series of in-depth interviews with two FG students, and discussions revealed that these students did not feel supported by the faculty or curriculum. Both of these students had been successful in high school, but experienced difficulties in becoming academically integrated once they entered college. First-generation students, even those that are high-ability, may need additional support as they transition to college and more encouragement to participate in academic activities.

One study investigated such a program designed to support FG students and increase levels of academic integration (Edmonson & Christensen, 2003). At one institution, Project CONNECT introduced FG students to learning resource centers and tutoring services and had a positive influence on participants' levels of AI, retention rates, and overall levels of institutional involvement (Edmonson & Christensen). While FG students may have difficulties in becoming academically integrated, their participation in a variety of activities can increase their levels of integration.

Researchers have employed a number of techniques to study academic integration among FG students. While the results are equivocal, some findings suggest that FG students have lower levels of academic integration than NFG students (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Ishitani, 2003; Pascarella et al., 2004). However, if FG students participate in a variety of academic activities, they may

17

increase their level of academic integration (Edmonson & Christensen, 2003; Lohfink & Paulson, 2005; Pascarella et al.). Of particular significance, involvement in academic activities poses greater benefits for FG students than it does for NFG students (Hahs-Vaughn; Pascarella et al.).

Social Integration

As with AI, students who are socially integrated into their institutions are more likely to persist to degree completion (Berger, 1997; Pike & Simpson, 1997; Tinto, 1975). Participation in campus events and interactions with peers are important for all students. However, the degree to which different variables that contribute to social integration are beneficial varies by type of student (Chew & Ogi, 1987; DeSousa & King, 1992; LaCounte, 1987; Mallinckrodt, 1988; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987; Pascarella et al., 2004; Velasquez, 1998).

Students in General

Just like AI, only a few studies have investigated the relationship between SI and the general student population. In these studies, students report the types of campus activities in which they participate through various surveys and questionnaires. In general, SI positively influences retention, (Pike & Simpson, 1997) but a few circumstances exist in which SI does not play a significant role in students' choice to remain in school (Liu & Liu, 2000; Wolfe, 1993).

As with AI, survey results suggest that SI has both direct and indirect influences on retention. For example, SI positively affects satisfaction, which in turn has a strong effect on retention (Liu & Liu, 2000; Pike & Simpson, 1997). However, SI's effects on satisfaction may also attenuate AI's effects on achievement (Pike & Simpson). While both AI and SI are important to retention, it may be that the activities associated with SI tend to distract students from focusing on their studies and becoming more academically integrated into the institution

(Liu & Liu). Social integration tends to influence retention positively, but it appears that it is also important to understand its potentially negative influence on academic pursuits.

Although there are numerous ways in which students can become socially integrated, the research regarding the general student population tends to highlight the importance of living on campus. For example, first-year students who lived on campus and visited a facility especially designed for freshmen reported higher levels of SI than commuters and students who did not visit the facility (Wolfe, 1993). Living in a residence hall may have a positive impact on SI because it provides students with the opportunity to develop relationships in a small environment within the larger university setting. Those who perceive a strong sense of community within the halls are more likely to report an overall sense of belonging and are more likely to remain in school (Berger, 1997).

While the research on SI and students in general is scarce, data from surveys and questionnaires tend to support the notion that SI positively affects retention. Since SI may also influence AI and its effect on achievement, additional studies utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods are warranted. Such studies may provide new insights and a clearer picture of SI's role in understanding student retention.

Race

As with AI, the majority of research regarding SI has focused on students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. While many studies examine SI for African American students (Brown, 2000; DeSousa & King, 1992; DeSousa & Kuh, 1996; Guiffrida, 2003; MacKay & Kuh, 1994; Mallinckrodt, 1988), a number of studies also include Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American populations (Chew & Ogi, 1987; LaCounte, 1987; Mayo, Murguia, & Padilla, 1995; Murguia, Padilla, & Pavel, 1991). Researchers have used a variety of quantitative and

qualitative methods to investigate what activities and relationships most strongly influence SI and persistence for these students.

Studies using questionnaires and the CSEQ focus on African American students' use of specific facilities at PWIs. Although one study indicated that involvement in extracurricular groups and use of facilities did not significantly benefit African American students (MacKay & Kuh, 1994), others suggest that SI is more important to students' educational development at PWIs (DeSousa & Kuh, 1996). For example, at one PWI, African American students spent more time in the student union and were more involved in clubs and activities than Caucasian students (DeSousa & King, 1992). The use of nonacademic resources may be more important for minority students because engaging in these activities helps them develop a sense of community (Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987).

In addition to involvement in extracurricular activities, quantitative methods highlight the importance of relationships and social support in achieving SI among minority students. For African American students at PWIs, perceived instrumental and emotional social support positively influence satisfaction and persistence (Brown, 2000). In addition, perceived support from the campus community greatly impacts African American students (Mallinckrodt, 1988). Some students find social support, encouragement, and integration by participating in student organizations, such as clubs specific to their race or culture (LaCounte, 1987). Involvement in such groups may introduce students to others like themselves and foster a sense of belonging at the institution (Chew & Ogi, 1987).

Numerous studies employing focus groups, interviews, and case studies investigate the types of organizations in which students are involved, students' reasons for participating, and how these groups benefit students. Supporting findings from quantitative methods (Chew & Ogi,

20

1987; LaCounte, 1987), students may use ethnic groups and student subcultures as a way to become involved on campus. Those who participate in such groups may use these groups as their primary means of integration (Velasquez, 1998), or they may view these small environments as a safe base from which to explore more of the university (Marguia, Padilla, & Pavel, 1991). In addition, involvement in formal organizations may influence academic performance more positively than more informal relationships (Mayo, Murguia, & Padilla, 1995).

In addition to ethnic organizations, African American students at one PWI discussed their involvement with honors, religious, and political groups; student government; and Greek organizations. Students seek out these organizations to interact with faculty, give back to other African Americans, be exposed to African American culture, be around others like themselves, and develop relationships with high achieving African American peers (Fries-Britt, 1995; Guiffrida, 2003). By quality involvement in these organizations and through participation in ethnic clubs, minority students find a sense of belonging at a PWI while increasing levels of SI and their likelihood of remaining in school.

First-Generation Students

Unlike the variety of methodological techniques found in studies regarding SI and race, research investigating SI and FG students tends to rely heavily upon national survey data (Duggan, 2001; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Pascarella et al., 2004; Pratt & Skaggs, 1989). Findings from these studies reveal that FG students have lower levels of SI than their NFG counterparts, but FG students are not necessarily at risk of attrition. If they become involved on campus, they may be more likely to remain in school than FG students who do not participate in extracurricular activities. These studies suggest that FG students differ from their NFG peers, but

other survey results indicate these two groups may not differ on measures of social integration (Pratt & Skaggs, 1989).

Many FG students enter college with lower levels of social capital than NFG students, and this may result in lower levels of SI and persistence rates. In addition, case studies reveal that once FG students enter college, they may experience difficulty balancing peer expectations with those of their parents, and they may not feel supported by their peers (Olenchak & Hebert, 2002). However, participation in campus events, such as those in the fine arts, may help FG students make up for their deficits in social capital and prompt them to remain in school (Duggan, 2001). When FG students are made aware of cultural events and other campus activities, they may be more likely to persist (Edmonson & Christensen, 2003). Furthermore, FG students benefit more from their involvement in extracurricular activities than NFG students (Pascarella et al., 2004), so encouraging these students to participate may help increase levels of SI and persistence rates.

Relatively few studies have investigated SI among FG students, and those that do also examine the AI of FG students (Edmonson & Christensen, 2003; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Pascarella et al., 2004; Pratt & Skaggs, 1989; Olenchak & Hebert, 2002). Future scholars should consider studying SI and FG students exclusively, just as researchers have done with students of various racial and ethnic backgrounds (Guiffrida, 2003; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987; Marguia, Padilla, & Pavel, 1991). In addition, qualitative methods may provide further insights into the SI of FG students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, existing literature suggests that achieving academic and social integration is important to all students, but minority and FG students may have a more difficult time

becoming integrated (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Ishitani, 2003; LaCounte, 1987; Pascarella et al., 2004; Strage, 1988). Understanding AI is important because it influences retention directly as well as indirectly through its effects on achievement and satisfaction (Liu & Liu, 2000; Pike & Simpson, 1997). The majority of literature pertaining to AI focuses on the ways in which AI influences students of various racial and ethnic groups, particularly African American students (DeSousa & Kuh, 1996; Donovan, 1984; Fries-Britt, 1995; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Grosset, 1995; Vann Lynch, 2002). Studies employing surveys, interviews, and focus groups suggest that although minority students may have lower levels of integration than Caucasian students (LaCounte, 1987; Strage, 1988), their participation in academic activities greatly strengthens their AI and positively influences retention (DeSousa & King, 1992; Fries-Britt; Griffin, 1992; Vann Lynch).

As in the literature focusing on African American students, studies pertaining to AI among FG students suggest that FG students may have lower levels of AI than their peers (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Ishitani, 2003; Pascarella et al., 2004). However, self-report data from surveys and questionnaires reveal that FG students who participate in academic activities can significantly increase their levels of academic integration, benefiting more from their involvement than NFG students (Hahs-Vaughn; Lohfink & Paulson, 2005; Pascarella et al., 2004). Unlike the studies regarding AI and race, quantitative methods dominate the FG student literature, and qualitative techniques could give scholars and practitioners a better understanding of AI and FG students.

Just as AI plays a critical role in student retention, so too does SI both directly and indirectly exert influence on students' decisions to remain in school (Liu & Liu, 2000; Pike & Simpson, 1997). Most of the literature about SI examines the various ways African American,

Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American students participate socially on campus (Brown, 2000; Chew & Ogi, 1987; DeSousa & King, 1992; DeSousa & Kuh, 1996; Guiffrida, 2003; LaCounte, 1987; MacKay & Kuh, 1994; Mayo, Murguia, & Padilla, 1995; Mallinckrodt, 1988; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987; Murguia, Padilla, & Pavel, 1991). Studies using quantitative data, interviews, focus groups, and case studies suggest that participation in student organizations, in particular ethnic clubs, facilitates students' SI and positively influences retention (Brown; Chew & Ogi; Fries-Britt, 1995; LaCounte; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek; Marguia, Padilla, & Pavel, 1991; Mayo, Murguia, & Padilla, 1995; Velasquez, 1998).

A very small body of work has investigated SI among FG students, finding similar results to the research regarding AI and FG students (Duggan, 2001; Edmonson & Christensen, 2003; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Pascarella et al., 2004). Although FG students may have lower levels of SI than their NFG peers, participation in campus events and involvement in organizations may foster students' integration and help them remain in school (Duggan; Edmonson & Christensen; Hahs-Vaughn, Pascarella et al.). As with SI and students in general, researchers should further investigate SI among the FG student population, particularly with a variety of qualitative methods to explore the topic in more depth.

Although a number of studies have investigated both AI and SI among a variety of student groups, there is a methodological gap in the literature. The numerous quantitative studies employing surveys and questionnaires rely on recall (Brown, 2000; DeSousa & King, 1992; DeSousa & Kuh, 1996; Duggan, 2001; Grosset, 1995; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Lohfink & Paulsin, 2005; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; MacKay & Kuh, 1994; Mallinckrodt, 1988; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987; Pascarella et al, 2004). Although they tend to report similar results, there are other ways to understand the nature of academic and social integration among diverse

populations and at-risk students. A further investigation of this topic, specifically employing a

qualitative technique, would provide a more detailed analysis. In addition, despite the relatively

parallel findings in the integration research involving minority and FG students, no study has

specifically looked at the interaction between race and FG status. This study was designed to

address these gaps in the literature by using data provided in daily logs to understand how FG

students achieve academic and social integration and to explore any differences by FG students'

race.

Chapter Three

Methods

The purpose of this study was to explore activities of first-generation (FG) students associated with academic and social integration. Participants at a large, public research institution recorded their activities in a daily log for a two-week period of time. This study was designed to gain a better understanding of the academic and social activities in which first-generation students engage and to analyze the differences in what they do by race. Specifically, this study explored the following research questions:

1) What are the academic behaviors in which FG students engage?

2) Do the academic behaviors in which FG students engage differ by race?

3) What are the social activities in which FG students engage?

4) Do the social activities in which FG students engage differ by race?

Researcher's Background

In qualitative research, it is important to understand the researcher's background and experiences and how these may influence the research design or data analysis process. As a FG student, I began college with very limited knowledge of the college experience itself and an uncertainty about what I would need to do to succeed. I had always been a strong student, so I focused my efforts on my coursework and developing relationships with faculty members. Only after seeing strong grades at the end of my first semester did I allow myself to feel more comfortable with being a college student. It took several semesters before I was able to successfully incorporate a number of social activities into my focus on academics.

My personal experiences as a FG student assisted me during the design of the study as well as during the data analysis process. Since I have first-hand knowledge of how it feels to be a FG student, I believe I was able to design a study that could capture more clearly the thoughts

and emotions of my participants. After identifying themes in the data analysis process, I recognized some of my own experiences in those of my participants, and this may have provided me with additional insight when interpreting what the results may mean and their implications for student affairs professionals, future research, and policy. Of course it is also likely that my own FG experiences influenced the design of the study and the interpretation of the findings in other ways as well. All these issues should be considered when reviewing the methodology and results of the study.

Sample Selection

A purposeful sample of 30 FG students was sought for this study. Specifically, I aimed for a sample of 15 Caucasian participants (those classifying themselves as Caucasian) and 15 Multicultural participants (those classifying themselves as African American, Latino, Asian American, Native American, or Biracial). I sought 10 participants for both groups but anticipated some attrition over the course of data collection. Therefore, I selected 15 students from each group to participate in the study. Participants were full-time, traditional-aged (18 or 19 years old), first-year students residing on-campus at the institution where the study was conducted.

In order to participate in this study, respondents had to meet several criteria. First, they had to be first-year, FG students who attended the institution where the study was conducted. They also had to be enrolled full-time and live on campus. Next, students had to be willing to disclose their race and self-identify as Caucasian or Multicultural in order to be placed in one of the two racial groups. To participate in the data collection process, students had to have access to a computer and an active email address. Students also had to be willing to keep a detailed log of their daily activities for a two-week time period. Last, respondents had to be willing to attend an information session that introduced them to and familiarized them with the study.

Traditional-aged, first-year students were defined as students age 18 or 19 who graduated

from high school in the spring of 2005 and subsequently enrolled at the institution where the

study was conducted in the fall of 2005. This ensured that participants were all between the ages

of 18 and 19 at the time data were collected.

For purposes of this study, FG students were defined as those who are the first in their

immediate families (i.e., parents, siblings) to attend college. While FG status can be defined in a

number of ways, participants had to self-identify as being the first in their immediate family to

attend college to be considered for this study.

Full-time, on-campus students were defined as those who were enrolled in at least 12

credits for the fall 2005 semester and lived in a university owned residence hall. Since nearly all

first-year students at the institution where the study was conducted are required to live on-

campus, it was presumed that all first-year, FG students could be potential participants in this

study.

To analyze differences in academic and social integration by race, a purposeful sample of

non-minority and minority students was selected. Students who self-identified as Caucasian

during the participant screening process were included in the non-minority group. Likewise,

those who self-identified as any race or ethnicity other than Caucasian during the participant

screening process were included in the Multicultural group. The researcher included all non-

Caucasian participants in a single minority group because minority students represent a relatively

small percentage of students (approximately 17% of undergraduates) at the institution where the

study was conducted (2004 On-Campus Enrollment Profile, n.d.). Since only a percentage of

minority students were also FG students, selecting FG students from each race (i.e., African

American, Native American) would have been prohibitive. Thus, minority students were considered together as one analytical group.

To fully participate in the data collection process, students had to meet several additional criteria. First, they had to have access to a computer and have an active email address. All students at this institution are required to have computers with online capabilities and are provided with a university affiliated email address. Therefore, it was assumed that all first-year, FG students could potentially participate in this study.

Next, students had to be willing to complete and submit a log of their daily activities for a two-week time period to participate in this study. During the participant screening sessions, the researcher explained the nature of the daily log and asked students if they were willing to devote sufficient time to documenting their activities on a daily basis. Any student who met the aforementioned demographic characteristics and agreed to maintain a log for two weeks was considered for this study.

Last, students had to be willing to attend an orientation session that would familiarize them with the data collection procedures before the two-week log maintenance period commenced. To be flexible with students' schedules, the researcher made accommodations to meet with students individually or in small groups. Only students who were willing to meet with the researcher in one of these two capacities were considered for participation in this study.

Due to the confidential nature of student records, it was not possible to obtain a personal list of FG students from an on-campus office. Therefore, I met with several administrators who work with large numbers of FG students on a daily basis and asked for their assistance in disseminating information about the study to their students. These included the Assistant Provost and Director of Academic Support Services, the Associate Director of the Center for Academic

Enrichment and Excellence, the Director of the University Academic Advising Center, and an

Associate Director of Residence Life. Several steps were involved in the participant recruitment

process.

Each of these administrators offered to share information about the study with their

students via electronic listservs. In addition, some of the administrators also offered to inform

students of the study in a semi-annual newsletter being published before data collection or by

posting a printed copy of the information in their office. I developed a brief written document

about the study for the administrators to distribute (see Appendix A). The document asked

students (a) if they were first-year students age 18 or 19, (b) if they were the first person in their

immediate family to attend college, and (c) if they were willing to maintain a daily log for two

weeks. In addition, the document advertised that participants could receive up to $25 for their

full participation in the study. Students interested in participating were asked to contact the

researcher at a phone number listed in the document.

Interested students who called me were asked a series of questions from a screening

protocol (see Appendix B) to ensure that they met the criteria for the study. I verified that

potential participants had graduated from high school in the spring of 2005, were 18 or 19 years

of age, and had enrolled at the institution in the fall of 2005. I also confirmed that they were

enrolled full-time at the university, resided on campus, and that neither of their parents, nor any

of their siblings had attended any type of non-proprietary college. Callers were also asked to

share the race or ethnicity with which they most strongly identified in order to place them in one

of the two analytical groups (Caucasian, Multicultural). If students met each of these criteria, I

briefly stated the purpose of the study, explained the nature of the log and expectations of

participants, and verified that students had access to a computer and email. Students were then

asked if they were willing to participate in the study and maintain a daily log for the required two-week time period.

Students who answered "No" to any of the screening protocol questions were informed of their ineligibility to participate in the study and were thanked for their time. These students were no longer considered in the sample selection process.

Students who answered "Yes" to all of the screening protocol items were selected to participate in the study. The screening process continued until 15 students in each of the minority and non-minority groups were selected.

Finally, selected participants were asked to arrange individual or small groups sessions with me that would orient them to the study. They were informed that they would receive $5 for attending the session, $10 after submitting 14 logs, and $10 after reviewing all of their logs for accuracy, earning $25 for full participation in the study.

<div align="center">Instrumentation</div>

To collect data on participants' academic and social integration, I developed an activities log specifically for this study (see Appendix C). The log was designed around five sections: Academic Activities, Social Activities, use of Campus Facilities, Work and volunteering, and General Questions. If participants wanted to add information that was not addressed in these five sections, I provided them with an area for "Additional Comments" following each section. The log was entitled "Daily Activities Log," began with a brief set of instructions, and was accompanied by a separate sheet of guidelines (see Appendix D) that described categorical headings for each item.

The Academic Activities section was divided into two subsections pertaining to different components of academic life. The subsections requested information on participants' (a) Classes

and (b) Correspondence, meetings, and discussions with Faculty. Each subsection included space for participants to discuss individual activities pertaining to that component by selecting from a menu of response options or responding to open-ended items.

In the Classes subsection, participants were asked to provide details on each of the courses in which they were enrolled for that day. They responded to items such as whether or not they (a) attended each class, (b) completed assigned readings, and (c) took notes. Participants also completed free responses to items that asked them to describe the quality of their class participation and if they had missed a class for any reason, to discuss why.

The Correspondence, meetings, and discussions with Faculty subsection was designed to elicit information on participants' interactions with professors. Participants were asked to provide information on each contact they had with a faculty member that day, including (a) the method of contact (e.g., email, phone conversation), (b) the purpose of the interaction, and (c) with whom they had the interaction. Furthermore, participants reported what they discussed with each faculty member and how they felt about the interaction. Students were also given the opportunity to describe any intentions they had to meet with faculty and why such meetings did not take place.

The second section of the log was comprised of the Social Activities section and its three subsections. These subsections included (a) Peer interactions, (b) attendance at Meetings, and (c) participation in campus Events. Each of these subsections was designed to explore activities associated with social integration.

In the Peer interaction subsection, participants documented the five most significant interactions they had with individuals or peer groups throughout the day. Specifically, for each interaction participants reported (a) the amount of time spent, (b) the location, (c) the number of

people present, (d) the purpose of spending time together, (e) how they spent their time, and (f) how they felt about the interaction.

Participants discussed their attendance at Meetings in the next subsection. For each meeting they attended, participants shared (a) the type of gathering (club, group project, fraternity, etc.), (b) the group with which the meeting was affiliated (name of the particular club, organization, etc.), (c) purpose of the meeting, and (d) whether or not attendance at the meeting was mandatory. In addition, free response items such as those asking for participants' motivations for attending the meeting, what they took away from the meeting, and their overall perceptions of the meeting were designed to prompt specific information regarding the nature of the meeting.

In the third subsection pertaining to participation in campus Events, participants reported details on individual events they had attended that day. They identified (a) the type of event, (b) its location, and (c) whether or not their participation was mandatory. Participants also answered free response items regarding their motivation for attending campus events.

Following the Academic Activities and Social Activities sections was a third section pertaining to participants' use of Campus Facilities. Since these facilities provide services that may contribute to either academic or social integration, I chose to create a separate section for this topic. Participants were asked to document their use of (a) Academic advising, (b) Athletic/Recreation Centers, (c) Academic Support Services, (d) Career Services, (e) Financial Aid, (f) the campus Library (g) Multicultural Centers, (h) Tutoring, (i) the Writing Center, and (j) Other services not listed on the log. Specifically, participants reported why they visited each facility, what they did there, and their reactions to their visit. Since many of these facilities also have Web sites with online resources, participants could select whether their visit was an in-

person or electronic one. I used these responses to classify the use of each facility as an activity that primarily contributed to academic or social integration.

Work and volunteering, the fourth section of the log, was designed to gather additional information on participants' daily activities. Just as in the section regarding the use of campus facilities, the choice to work or volunteer may contribute to either academic or social integration depending upon the nature of the involvement. I was also interested in the amount of time participants' work and volunteer experiences consumed. Participants were asked to identify (a) for whom they were working or volunteering, (b) the amount of time spent, and (c) the location of the experience. Two free response items pertaining to why participants chose to work or volunteer were included to gather richer detail on their experiences.

The General Questions section of the log posed two free-response questions, which asked participants to describe some aspect of their experiences as a student. Items in this section pertained to experiences that may relate to both academic and social activities. For example, participants were asked to discuss their day in general in terms of its highlights, to talk about their most important relationships, and to share their most difficult challenges as a student. Two questions were selected from a pre-determined list (see Appendix E) to appear on the log each day, with each question appearing at least once during data collection.

The log was designed as an electronic document that could be emailed to participants daily. At the end of each day, participants could then use their computers to complete the log and submit it to me via an attachment to an email message. Maintaining the log electronically meant less paperwork for participants and more efficient data collection and analysis for the researcher.

Before data collection commenced, a panel of experts with knowledge of behaviors associated with academic and social integration reviewed the log format. The experts included

the Assistant Provost and Director of Academic Support Services, an Associate Professor in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department, and the Director of Student Development for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. They assessed whether items on the log would provide the type of data required to answer the research questions posed in the study. In addition, the expert review yielded feedback on the clarity of items and instructions. I utilized this feedback to make any necessary corrections to the log prior to data collection.

In addition to expert review, I also piloted the log among a small group of student volunteers prior to data collection. Volunteers maintained daily logs for three days and provided feedback on the clarity of instructions, time required to complete each log, and perceived ease of maintaining such a log for a two-week time period. This feedback was used to correct any difficulties with using the log before data collection began.

Data Collection Procedures

Before data collection commenced, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) at the institution where data were collected. Once approval had been granted (see Appendix F) by the IRB and participants were selected, the data collection process occurred in three stages. First, participants were introduced to the study and instructed on how to complete the daily log. Next, I collected data from participants each day for a two-week time period. Last, I compiled the data and participants reviewed their logs to confirm that the responses they provided accurately reflected their experiences during the course of the study.

In the first stage of data collection, participants attended individual or small-group information sessions scheduled between October 10 and October 28, 2005, in which the study and data collection procedures were explained. During the sample selection screening process, I

asked participants to provide me with available times in which to meet. To accommodate participants' schedules and give them more personal attention, I scheduled sessions at our earliest, mutual convenience.

Participants were greeted upon arrival at the sessions. I began the one-hour session by explaining the nature of the study and passing out packets to participants. Participants were instructed to open their packets and confirm that the packets included (a) two copies of the Informed Consent form, (b) a blank hard copy of the daily log form, (c) a completed sample of one daily log, (d) a set of instructions detailing how to complete each item on the log, and (e) a brightly colored "Reminder Card" that participants could place near their computers to remind them to submit their logs each night.

After participants reviewed their packets, I described each section of the log in detail and reviewed instructions on how to complete each item. Participants were instructed to complete only items that pertained to their activities on that particular day. I noted that ample writing space had been provided for each item. Furthermore, I told the participants that I would send an electronic version of the log to them every morning. Participants were informed that they should submit their completed log to me by 11:30 pm each night electronically via email.

I wanted to ensure participants felt comfortable and confident in their abilities to complete the log. Therefore, I asked them to review a completed sample of one day's log during the session. This activity allowed participants to understand how their logs might look before data collection began. Participants were encouraged to use this time to ask questions so that I could clarify any confusing items.

Once participants had reviewed the sample log, I explained the daily requirements of the study. First, participants would complete the log as fully as possible each night and submit it to

me as an attachment to an email by 11:30 pm. Then, they would check their email the following

morning to ensure that I had received their log. If I was unclear on any of their responses or if

required fields on the log were blank, then participants would receive a copy of their log with a

request to edit the ambiguous entry or add the missing information. At the end of the two-week

time period, participants would have the opportunity to review all of their logs for accuracy.

I then answered any remaining questions the participants had. Participants were told they

would receive an email from me each day with the log for that particular day as an attachment.

They were asked to report any difficulties in accessing the log and to begin their two-week

commitment the following day. At the end of the information session, participants received $5 to

thank them for their time.

During the second stage of data collection, participants completed and submitted logs of

their daily activities every night by 11:30 pm. I checked off participants' names from a list upon

receiving their log and sent an email to participants confirming receipt of their log. Reminder

emails were sent to those participants whose logs had not been received by midnight. If the logs

had not been received by the following morning, I followed up with a phone call or email to the

participants.

As each log was received, I reviewed it for clarity and returned any logs with missing or

unclear information to participants for revisions. This process ensured that participants

understood my expectations as well as directions for completing the log. At the end of the two-

week period, those participants who had submitted a log to me every night received $10 for their

time. Participants arranged a time to meet with me to pick up their payment.

The final stage of data collection occurred at the end of the two-week log maintenance

period. I compiled each participant's logs into one document and emailed that to participants for

review. Participants had three days to review their logs and make changes to any data that were inaccurately reported. This gave participants the opportunity to ensure that their activities were accurately recorded in their logs. If participants made changes, they simply sent the revised document back to me as an attachment to an email. Those who did not make changes emailed me and noted that the logs were accurate as sent.

Once I received an email from participants regarding the review process, I emailed them with dates and times to stop by my office to pick up the remaining $10 of incentive money. Participants were thanked for their time and commitment to the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

To understand how FG students behave academically and socially, I analyzed the data provided by participants in their daily activity logs. The log was comprised of five sections requesting information on participants' (a) Academic Activities, (b) Social Activities, (c) use of Campus Facilities, (d) Work and Volunteer commitments and (e) General Questions. The items within these five sections provided data that were both quantifiable and qualitative. Therefore, I analyzed the data in two phases. First, I calculated percentages for numerical and categorical responses. Second, I assigned responses from open-ended items to themes that emerged during the data analysis process.

The first research question examined academic behaviors in which FG students. To address this question I reviewed responses within the Academic Activities section of the log for all participants. First, I analyzed data in the Class subsection. Participants noted details for each class they were registered to attend that day. They reported the course title (prefix and number) and whether or not they attended class, read assigned texts, completed scheduled assignments, took notes, and participated in class discussion. To answer these items, participants used a drop-

down menu to respond "Yes," "No," "Some," or "N/A." I analyzed responses by calculating the frequency of each type of response. For example, I determined the number of times that participants read all of their assigned readings ("Yes"), some of their assigned readings ("Some"), none of the assigned readings ("No") or did not have a reading assignment to complete for that day ("N/A"). I then calculated the percent of each response option given the total number of responses.

Participants also answered three free-response items per class regarding their perceptions of their experience with the course. Each day participants noted their instructors' methods of teaching and what they liked and did not like about class that particular day. They also responded to an additional item about their experiences with peers, participation, or degree of comfort in the course. The additional item changed every few days so that participants answered each item at least once per course over the two-week data collection period. I analyzed the responses to these items by identifying keywords or phrases that constituted prevalent themes found through triangulation of the data. Triangulation has been used in qualitative research to gather and analyze data from multiple sources (Snow & Anderson, 1991). Respondent validation or "data-source triangulation involves the comparison of data relating to the same phenomenon but deriving from…the accounts of different participants…involved in the setting" (Hammersly & Atkinson, 1983, p. 198). In analyzing the logs, triangulation occurred when at least three participants responded to an item in a similar fashion such that a theme representing their responses could be created. In the item that asks how comfortable participants feel participating in class, one theme that might emerge is that of High Comfort. Participants may note that they tend to be one of the first students to volunteer answers, that they feel knowledgeable enough to make a positive contribution, and that classmates look to them for insight. Language such as this

could be characteristic of a High Comfort in participating theme. After I identified all of the themes, I determined the frequency with which each theme was mentioned and then used comments from participants to illustrate the themes.

The second Academic Activities subsection pertained to participants' interactions with faculty. Participants identified faculty with whom they had met and the method of communication used. To analyze these responses, I calculated the frequency of each type of response and the percentage that the response contributed to that particular item. For example, I identified the number of times that all participants mentioned using face-to-face, phone, and e-mail methods to interact with faculty and then calculated the percentage of times each method was used given the total number of contacts with faculty that participants had.

In addition, participants also responded to open-ended questions regarding their interactions with faculty. Participants documented the purpose for the meeting or correspondence, the topics they discussed with each faculty member, and how they felt about the interaction overall. These responses were analyzed for keywords and phrases and subsequently were assigned themes that emerged from triangulation of the data. For the item asking for topics discussed with faculty, one theme that might emerge is that of Study Habits. For example, participants may have said that they discussed course review sessions, how best to study for the class, and the availability of peer tutors. Such language could constitute a Study Habits theme. Once all themes had been identified, I calculated the frequency with which each theme was mentioned and used quotations from participants to illustrate each theme and paint a richer picture of their interactions with faculty.

The second research question explored the social activities in which FG students participate. To investigate this question I analyzed responses to items in the Social Activities

section. This section was comprised of three subsections, the first of which pertained to participants' interactions with Peers. Participants documented time spent in each peer interaction, how many people they were with, and the location of the interaction. For time spent and number of people, responses for all participants were grouped into ranges (e.g., < 15 minutes, 16-30 minutes, etc., or 1 person, 2, 3-4, etc.) and percentages for each range were calculated. For location of interaction, I calculated the number of times participants reported various locales (e.g., residence hall, dining facility, walking across campus, etc.) and determined percentages for each type of location.

Participants also stated the purpose of the interaction, what they discussed with their peers, and how they felt about the interaction. I analyzed these responses by noting keywords or phrases and then assigning responses to themes that emerged within each category. One theme that might emerge for the item pertaining to the purpose of the interaction is that of Discussing Personal Problems or Issues. For example, participants may say that they sought out a peer to talk about a fight with their roommate, conflict with their parents, or a recent break-up with their partner. Such language could be characteristic of a theme regarding personal issues. Once I identified all of the themes, I calculated the frequency with which they occurred in the logs. Then, I used quotations from the logs to illuminate those themes.

The next subsection in the Social Activities section included items about participants' involvement in on-campus meetings. I asked participants to document the type of meeting they attended, the group with which the meeting was affiliated, and whether or not the meeting was mandatory. Based on the responses to type of meeting and group affiliation, I calculated the frequency with which various responses appeared and assigned responses to categories if appropriate. For example, participants who reported specific club or organization names for

group affiliation were also assigned to a more general "Club" or "Organization" category. Other affiliations might include Sports Team meetings or study group meetings. To analyze responses to the item asking if meetings were mandatory, I counted the number of "Yes" and "No" responses and reported the findings in terms of frequencies and percentages.

In addition to these items, I also asked participants to describe the purpose of the meeting, what they did there, and how they felt overall about the meeting. Responses to these items were analyzed by noting prevalent keywords and phrases that were then assigned to common themes that emerged across numerous participants' logs. One theme that might arise in the item asking participants about their general feelings regarding a meeting is that of Inclusion. Participants may report that other attendees greeted them warmly upon arrival, that their opinions were sought during group discussion, and that they felt respected among the others. Descriptions and responses such as these could be categorized as an Inclusion theme. I identified other themes that emerged in this subsection and used the descriptions provided by respondents to more fully illustrate each theme.

The final subsection in the Social Activities section asked participants to document their attendance and experiences at campus Events. Items in this subsection pertained to the type of event and its location on campus, and whether or not participants' attendance was mandatory. As with responses in the Meetings subsection, I determined the frequency with which various types and locales of events occurred and created categories where appropriate. For example, events taking place in a variety of locations in the student center on campus became part of a general "Student Center" response. Once I identified all of the types and locations of events, I calculated the frequency and percentage with which each response occurred. In addition, I analyzed

responses to the mandatory attendance item by counting the number of "Yes" and "No"

responses and reporting frequencies and percentages.

To gather additional data on participants' experiences with campus events, I asked them

to document their motivations for attending events and their overall perceptions of these events. I

noted common keywords and phrases and assigned them to themes that appeared in multiple

logs. Peer Influence might be a theme that could emerge regarding participants' motivations for

attending events. For example, participants may report that they attended because their residence

hall peers were going, that friends in a club or organization asked them to go, or that friends had

made positive comments upon hearing about the event. Language similar to this could be

characteristic of a Social Influence theme. Upon identifying all of the themes, I determined the

number of times each theme occurred and employed quotations from participants' logs to paint a

picture of that theme.

The next section of the log investigated participants' use of a variety of Campus

Facilities. Participants discussed their visits to offices on campus that might tend to serve FG

students, and they had the opportunity to note visits to other offices not explicitly listed on the

log form. Items asked whether participants visited the facility in person or online, the amount of

time they spent visiting the facility or Web site, and the purpose of the visit. I calculated the

number of times participants visited each facility personally or electronically and reported the

findings in terms of frequencies and percentages. To analyze the amount of time participants

devoted to visiting these facilities, I grouped responses into ranges (e.g., 15 minutes or less, 16 –

30 minutes, etc.) and noted the frequency and percent of each range. For the purpose of the visit,

I placed responses into appropriate categories (e.g., to get assistance on an assignment, to meet

with like-minded peers, to seek advice concerning the future, etc.). Once responses were in their respective categories, I calculated the frequency and percent of each type of response.

To give richer details about their use of campus facilities, participants were asked to describe what they did during their visit and how they felt about the overall visit and any interactions they had with staff or peers. One theme that might arise is that of Discussion of Study Skills. Participants might report that they visited a variety of facilities to discuss their current academic concerns with a course, ask for suggestions on what to do differently, or make a plan to improve their level of academic achievement. Descriptions similar to these could constitute a Study Skills theme.

Participants could also respond in ways suggesting that their use of campus facilities is primarily related to social issues. For example, participants might note that they used the various facilities in a way that implies a Developing Social Network theme. Responses might reveal that they wanted to meet peers with the same interests, discuss shared struggles with peers, or help each other succeed. Words and phrases like these could comprise a theme of Developing Social Networks. Once I had identified all of the themes, I determined how often participants used campus facilities for largely academic or social purposes. The findings were reported in terms of frequencies and percentages for each theme.

The next section of the log asked participants to document their work and volunteer experiences. As with the Campus Facilities section, the Work and volunteering section may elicit responses that suggest academic or social behaviors. For this reason, data in this section may address either the first or second research question.

Participants first identified the type of work with which they were involved, for whom they were working, the location of the worksite, and how many hours they worked that day. To

analyze these responses, I calculated the frequency of each type of response and the percentage that the response contributed to that particular item. For example, I identified ranges of hours that participants worked (e.g., less than one hour, one to two hours, etc.) and determined the frequency with which each range appeared and the percentage of times each range was given.

I also asked participants to describe what they did that day at their work or volunteer site and why they chose to work or volunteer. I analyzed responses to these items by identifying keywords and phrases and subsequently assigning them to themes that appeared through triangulation of the data. One theme that could emerge that pertains to academic life is that of Developing Relationships with Faculty. Participants might say that they chose to work in an academic office or lab on campus to get to know a faculty member more, to discuss academic decisions with faculty, and to learn about a faculty member's research project. Responses like these might suggest a Developing Relationships with Faculty theme.

In addition, participants may select their work experiences for reasons that relate more to social issues. For example, one theme that might emerge in this section is Meeting New Peers. Participants could identify that they volunteer to meet other students who care about a similar cause, to develop relationships with others that will help them reach their goals, or to meet other students with similar experiences. Phrases such as these could be characteristic of a Meeting New Peers theme.

In the final section of the log, I asked participants to describe their experiences as a student more broadly than in previous sections. Participants discussed the highlights or challenges of their day, how they felt about their role as a student, their most significant relationships with faculty and peers, and the activities and choices they make that they value most. Responses could be academic, social, or personal in nature and therefore could answer

either the first or second research question. To analyze responses to these items I identified keywords and phrases and then placed them into themes that appeared through responses from multiple participants. When discussing the highlight of their day, participants might respond in ways that imply Feelings of Inclusion theme, which would reflect a social issue. For example, participants may say that they were invited to play sports with members of their residence hall, that a friend from class invited them to an event that weekend, or that members of a student group greeted them warmly at a meeting. Descriptions like these may constitute a Feelings of Inclusion theme.

Participants could also discuss highlights related more directly to academic issues, such as in a theme of Success in the Classroom. For example, participants might say that they received a better score than usual on a test, that the instructor acknowledged their contributions in class, or that they felt positively about a group presentation they had given. Such responses could be characteristic of a Success in the Classroom theme.

The third research question investigated differences in academic behaviors between minority and non-minority FG students. To address this question I separated the logs into two categories: those from Caucasian and those from Multicultural participants. Then, I reviewed the academic themes that emerged when answering the first research question. I compared the types of themes that emerged for both racial groups and how frequently these themes appeared. Differences between groups existed if a theme appeared for only one of the groups, if a theme was mentioned more frequently in one group than the other, or if the quality and intensity of the responses varied by group.

The fourth research question examined differences in social activities in which minority and non-minority FG students engage. As with the third research question, I divided the logs into

Caucasian and Multicultural participant groups. Next, I examined the social themes that appeared when addressing the second research question. Again, I compared the types of themes and how frequently they appeared between racial groups. If minority and non-minority participants mentioned different themes or documented the same themes with varying frequencies then I noted that this was a difference between groups.

Accuracy of the Data

It is necessary to assess the accuracy of qualitative data during the data collection and analysis processes. The researcher must assure readers that measures were taken to ensure consistent data collection and relatively bias-free and reasonable data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Specifically, qualitative researchers are responsible for enhancing the authenticity and trustworthiness of the data.

Authenticity pertains to the consistency of data collection, the value of the data in addressing the research questions, and the credibility of the study and its findings. Enhancing authenticity helps ensure that the data are relevant and believable (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I sought to promote authenticity in two ways.

First, I employed a process known as expert review. A panel of experts who were knowledgeable about academic and social integration reviewed the log format and provided feedback on its utility in soliciting data that would address the research questions. I revised the log based on their suggestions. Having experts review the log was one way to enhance the accuracy of the data.

Second, I piloted the log before data collection began. Piloting involves the process of asking a small group of people to complete the instrument and provide feedback on the clarity of directions and ease of use. I asked several students to complete the log and used their feedback to

make any improvements to help ensure that participants would complete the log accurately. Thus, piloting the log was a method of enhancing authenticity.

Trustworthiness is defined as the truthfulness of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I employed two methods to enhance the trustworthiness of the data. First, I used a technique known as member checking. In member checking, participants review the data they provided to affirm that they information they offered is truthful and accurately depicts their experiences. Participants in the current study reviewed their logs upon the completion of data collection and returned them to me, noting any necessary changes. Therefore, participants had the opportunity to ensure the truthfulness of the data representing their daily experiences.

Second, I used a method known triangulation of the data. One way of using triangulation is to consult multiple sources when seeking information. For example, to establish the existence of a theme in qualitative research, the potential theme must appear in at least three places to be considered a theme for purposes of data analysis and reporting. Keywords and phrases suggesting the emergence of a theme had to appear in at least three participant's logs before I established the theme as one that arose from the data. Requiring that a theme must be apparent through several participants helps enhance the truthfulness of the theme's existence.

In conclusion, this study was designed to investigate how FG students achieve academic and social integration. Participants maintained a log of their daily activities for a two-week time period in which they documented their participation in academic and social activities. From the data provided by participants, it was possible to calculate the frequency with which they engaged in certain activities. In addition, I analyzed participants' responses to a number of free response items and assigned them to prevalent themes. These data enabled me to address the four research questions posed in the study.

Chapter Four

Academic Behaviors of First Generation Students

To explore the academic behaviors and social activities in which FG students engage, participants maintained a log for 14 consecutive days, documenting the level and quality of their involvement in a variety of activities. Results from the data collection are described in two chapters, one to address the research questions pertaining to academic behaviors and a second to answer the research questions regarding social activities. The academic results chapter is comprised of five sections. The first section describes changes made in the sample selection procedures. The second section provides a description of the sample. The third section describes how logs were analyzed. The fourth section provides results from the log analysis that describe FG students' academic behaviors and notes differences in behaviors by race. The final section paints a picture of academic life for FG students in general and for Caucasian and Multicultural FG students.

Changes in Sample Selection Procedures

Two changes were made to the sample selection procedures outlined in Chapter Three. Originally, students were only eligible to participate if neither their parents nor their siblings had any type of college experience. However, three students expressed interest in participating whose family members had very limited prior college experience including (a) one sibling who attended one semester of community college, (b) one sibling who attended community college part-time, and (c) one parent who had two years of community college experience but had not been a part of the student's life. I accepted these three students as participants in the study and noted their family's previous college experiences.

The second change pertained to the number of participants in both analytical groups. Students from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds comprise a relatively small part of the student body at the institution where the study was conducted. Due to this fact, it was difficult to recruit participants for the Multicultural group who were also FG students. For this reason, there were fewer students in the Multicultural group than originally planned.

Description of the Sample

With the exception of the changes noted above, I solicited participation for the study according to the procedures outlined in Chapter Three. Twenty-three students originally agreed to participate in the study, 14 in the Caucasian group and 9 in the Multicultural group. However, within the first few days of data collection, five students opted not to participate further. Of the 18 students who participated fully in the study, 12 were in the Caucasian group (6 men and 6 women), and 6 were in the Multicultural group (4 men and 2 women). Of the 12 participants in the Caucasian group, 8 were in the University Studies department (for students who have not declared a major), 2 were in the College of Science, 1 was in the College of Engineering, and 1 was in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies. In regards to the nine Multicultural participants, three were in the University Studies department, and three were in the College of Engineering. All of the participants were between 18 and 19 years of age at the time the study was conducted. The characteristics of the sample are reported in Table 1.

Log Analysis Results for Academic Behaviors

This section describes participants' responses to items appearing in two sections of the log. The first is the Academic Activities section of the log, which is comprised of items pertaining to students' Classes and interactions with Faculty. The second section includes items from the General Questions section that ask respondents about relationships with professors,

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 18)

Characteristics	Caucasian		Multicultural		All	
	n	%n	n	% n	N	%N
Sex						
Male	6	50.0	4	66.7	10	55.6
Female	6	50.0	2	33.3	8	44.4
College						
College of Architecture and Urban Studies	1	8.3			1	5.6
College of Engineering	1	8.3	3	50.0	4	22.2
College of Science	2	16.7			2	11.1
University Studies	8	66.7	3	50.0	11	61.1

study habits, and other topics that yield responses discussing academic behaviors. Twenty-nine themes emerged in the data analysis of the Academic Activities section to describe participants' academic behaviors, and 28 themes emerged within the General Questions section. Results for items in these two sections include (a) themes that emerged for each item requiring qualitative responses, (b) words or phrases that describe each theme, (c) quotations, where appropriate, to illustrate the themes and add richness and depth, and (d) differences in academic behaviors between students in the Caucasian and Multicultural groups. Due to the relatively small number of participants in the study, I will report the number of participants whose comments support each theme to provide a clearer picture of the relative significance and weight of each theme.

Academic Activities

The Academic Activities data address issues of classes and faculty contact. I reviewed participants' responses to find similar words, phrases, or ideas for each item. A theme was created when at least three students made comments that could be assigned to a common category. Fifty-seven themes emerged in the analysis of the Academic data. Due to the number of themes, Table 2 lists each theme and whether that theme was reported by Caucasian students only (i.e., three or more students in the Caucasian group mentioned the theme, but fewer than three Multicultural students mentioned it), Multicultural participants only (i.e., three or more Multicultural students, but fewer than three Caucasian mentioned the theme), both groups (i.e., at least three participants from each group mentioned the theme), or students in general (i.e., at least three participants mentioned the theme, but neither group had three students mention the theme).

Table 2

Themes Related to Academic Behaviors by Section and Item

Themes by Section and Item	Caucasian	Multicultural	Both	General
Class				
Talk in class				
No, the class is too big			X	
No, the class is too boring		X		
Yes, regarding an assignment			X	
Yes, class discussion			X	
Yes, group work			X	
Yes, chat with classmates	X			
Likes about class				
Quality of professor			X	
Quality of material			X	
Dislikes about class				
Quality of professor	X			
Quality of material			X	
Too early				X
Comfort with classmates				
Work together on academics			X	
Non-academic, social reasons			X	
Comfortable atmosphere	X			
Not comfortable	X			
Comfort with contributions				
Knowing the material			X	
Opportunity to contribute	X			
Not comfortable, subject matter	X			
Not comfortable, class too big	X			
Additional comments				
Class cancellations			X	

Table 2 (continued)

Themes by Section and Item	Caucasian	Multicultural	Both	General
Missed class			X	
Nature of a course				X
Faculty				
Purpose of interaction				
Related to the course			X	
Non-curricular discussions	X			
Feelings regarding interaction				
Positive, getting a better grade	X			
Positive, quality of the professor	X			
Positive, personal outcome				X
Negative, quality of the professor				X
Additional comments				
Missed a professor's office hours	X			
General Questions				
Questions about professors				
Most important aspect of relationship				
Help with class			X	
Recommendations and references	X			
Motivation for relationship				
Help with class	X			
Recommendations and references	X			
Most valued professor				
Personable	X			

Table 2 (continued)

Themes by Section and Item	Caucasian	Multicultural	Both	General
Helpful with class			X	
Description of relationship				
Positive out-of-class	X			
Do not have relationship				X
Encourage relationship				
Office hours			X	
Discourage relationship				
Quality of professors	X			
Questions about work habits				
Preparing for classes				
To-do list of assignments				X
Study, read, work			X	
Did not prepare	X			
Study location				
Dorm			X	
Library				X
Study Skills				
Good	X			
Average	X			
Poor			X	
Work ahead or last minute				
Work ahead	X			
Work at the last minute	X			
Depends on the situation	X			

Table 2 (continued)

Themes by Section and Item	Caucasian	Multicultural	Both	General
Questions about personal experiences				
Highlight of day				
Academic in nature			X	
Challenge of day				
Academic in nature			X	
Role as student				
Positive feelings	X			
Negative feelings			X	
Neutral/normal feelings	X			
Important thing for self				
Do a lot of work				X
Prioritize activities				
Academic in nature	X			

Classes

In the Classes subsection of the Academic Activities section, participants described each class they were scheduled to attend each day. I asked them to note whether or not they attended each class and completed their assignments and to describe participation, comfort level, and impressions of each class. Overall, participants attended 365 of the 413 classes they were scheduled to attend, or 88% of their class sessions. There was only a slight difference between groups, with Caucasian students attending 89% and Multicultural students attending 86% of their classes. Nine of the Caucasian students attended 90% or more of their classes, and five of these nine had perfect attendance. Of the Multicultural students, four attended 90% or more of their classes, with one participant achieving perfect attendance.

Participants were asked to record the number of readings and assignments they successfully completed, as well as the number of readings and assignments that they did not complete or that they did not begin at all. It was not clear until data analysis that several participants had not fully understood the directions for this item. Therefore, some data from this item are not available. However, participants did accurately report the number of readings and assignments that they successfully completed. During the course of the study, participants completed an average of 7.6 readings. Over the 14 days, Caucasian participants completed an average of 5.6 readings. Multicultural participants fully completed an average of 11.3 readings. In regards to their assignments (e.g., papers, projects, presentations), participants completed an average of 8.6 assignments. Students in the Caucasian group completed an average of 6.9 assignments. Over the 14 days, Multicultural participants successfully completed an average of 11.8 assignments.

I also asked participants to report the frequency with which they took notes in class. During the course of the study, participants stated that they took notes in an average of 13.2 classes. Students in the Caucasian group reported taking notes in 58.8% of the classes they attended, taking notes in as few as 3 classes to as many as 21 over the course of the study. Those in the Multicultural group reported taking notes in 76.4% of their classes, taking notes in as few as 15 classes and as many as 20 over the 14 days.

Next, participants described their participation in each class by indicating whether or not they spoke, and if so, what about. Six themes emerged in the analysis of students' responses, two of which related to participants not speaking in class and four of which pertained to students participating in class. Students who did not speak in class shared that they did not because "The class is too big" (6 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) or "The class is too boring," (2 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural). When participants did participate in class, they did so (a) "To ask the instructor a question regarding an assignment" (6 Caucasian, 4 Multicultural), (b) "To answer a question or participate in class discussion" (9 Caucasian, 4 Multicultural), (c) "To speak with classmates during group work" (6 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural), or (d) "To have informal discussions with classmates" (4 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural).

When participants described what they liked best about a particular course, two themes emerged. The "Quality of the professor" constituted one theme (5 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) and included responses describing the instructor's teaching ability, a positive personality trait, or an understanding demeanor. For example, one female Caucasian participant remarked that, "I like the teacher and the way he is about to teach with such enthusiasm everyday [sic]." Another participant, a male Multicultural student, stated, "I like how she relates everything to a real life situation. I can understand it when she does it like that." The second theme "Quality of the

Material" emerged from comments (11 Caucasian, 5 Multicultural) that described course material as interesting, fun, enjoyable, or helpful. Describing what he learned in class that day, a Caucasian student said, "I really liked the essay, and picking it apart showed me parts where I would not normally look. It helped me analyze the essay better, which is good since I might base my next essay on it."

In addition to discussing what they most liked about class, participants also described what they disliked. Again, "Quality of the professor" and "Quality of the material" emerged as themes, with "Class too early" (e.g., 8 a.m. class) constituting a third theme. Five Caucasian participants discussed the "Quality of the professor," commenting on the instructor not being prepared, talking too fast, not reviewing problems, and being boring. Disliking the "Quality of the material" was described by 12 participants (8 Caucasian, 4 Multicultural), including statements pertaining to the material being boring or not personally relevant. Only three students (2 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) mentioned that their least favorite thing about the class was that it was too early.

Next, participants described how comfortable they felt with their classmates. Participants tended to feel quite comfortable with their classmates, and their positive responses were assigned to one of three themes: (a) "Can work together on academics," (b) "Comfortable for non-academic, social reasons," and (c) the class offers a "Comfortable atmosphere." Seven participants (4 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) mentioned feeling comfortable with their classmates because they have worked together as lab partners or in a study group. A Caucasian participant shared that, "I feel comfortable talking to them during class because…we have a group project where we have gotten together, so I have gotten to know a few of the people in my class." Seventeen participants (12 Caucasian, 5 Multicultural) acknowledged feeling comfortable with

classmates because of social reasons, including having casual discussions before class, feeling that other students were good people, and thinking that their peers shared their interests and had similar characteristics. One Multicultural student felt, "Fairly comfortable because most of them are freshmen and they probably are going through the same things I'm [going] through." Five students (3 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) felt comfortable because of the classroom environment itself, and a Caucasian student expressed that, "I feel comfortable with the people in this class. It is a large class, so I don't know everyone, but I feel comfortable because I am in a comfortable atmosphere."

Despite the overall comfort participants expressed regarding their peers, three participants shared they at they were "Not comfortable" in some of their courses. Items that were assigned to this theme included responses describing classmates as having dissimilar interests, having a dissimilar personality, or being annoying. This theme was only present for Caucasian participants.

In addition to describing comfort levels with their peers, participants also discussed how comfortable they were with their ability to contribute to their courses. A number of participants expressed comfort in at least one class, and two themes describe students' comfort with contributing to class. The first theme, found in the comments of 10 individuals (6 Caucasian, 4 Multicultural), pertains to participants' "Knowing the material," including comments expressing prior experience with the material or an interest in and understanding of the subject matter. One Caucasian participant shared, "I'm pretty comfortable with my ability to contribute – the plays are interesting, in general, once one gets past the language, and I feel like I have a good grasp of the material." The second theme emerged from nine participants (8 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) who reported that they were comfortable because they had the "Opportunity to contribute." A

Caucasian student felt comfortable because, "It's an interactive class so it's easy to discuss things."

Some students did not feel comfortable with their ability to contribute to at least one of their classes. Seven participants (5 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) mentioned that they were "Not comfortable because of the subject matter." Items assigned to this theme included responses indicating no interest in the subject or feeling lost in class due to a failure to understand the material. Six students (4 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) expressed a level of discomfort in contributing to class because the "Class is too big or lecture style."

In addition to addressing required items on the log, participants could also discuss class-related issues in the "Additional Comments" item. Nine students (5 Caucasian, 4 Multicultural) talked about "Class cancellations" due to a football game, the instructor being ill or out of town, or to give students an opportunity to work on group projects. Of the students who did not have perfect attendance over the course of the study, nine participants (5 Caucasian, 4 Multicultural) shared that they "Missed class," to get more sleep, because they were ill, or because they were bored with the course. Additionally, three students (2 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) used this item to talk about the "Nature of a course." One Multicultural student expressed his frustration, sharing, ""I really dislike this class due to the fact that it doesn't stimulate my mind the way I think it should."

Faculty

In the Faculty subsection of the Academic Activities section of the log, I asked participants to document their interactions with faculty members, including who they met with, what they talked about, and how they felt about the interaction. Over the course of the study, participants had a total of 31 interactions with faculty members, and 21 of those interactions

were with a current professor. The remaining 10 interactions were with Teaching Assistants, advisors, and through chance meetings. Of the 31 interactions, 23 took place in person, 6 occurred via email, and the respondents who engaged in the remaining two did not document how they occurred.

Exploring differences by group, 23 of the overall 31 interactions can be attributed to the 12 Caucasian participants, while the remaining 8 are attributed to the 6 Multicultural participants. Nine of the 12 Caucasian participants and 5 of the 6 Multicultural participants reported interacting with faculty members. During the course of the study, Caucasian students had an average of 1.91 interactions and a range from 1-6 interactions. Multicultural participants had an average of 1.3 interactions and a range of 1-2 interactions. Both groups spoke to current professors more than others (TAs, advisors) and in person more than through other methods of communication.

When participants stated the reasons they interacted with faculty members, two themes emerged. Twelve participants (9 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) mentioned that the purpose of an interaction was "Related to the course." Items that were assigned to this theme included discussing course grades, requesting clarification or assistance with an assignment, or talking about the role of the student. Examples of specific comments assigned to the "Related to the course" theme include, "To discuss my grades and midterm report," "To explain why I was very late for class," and "I wanted her to review my essay before I turned it in." Four participants (3 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) made comments comprising the second theme, "Non-curricular discussions." Items assigned to this theme included talking before class about events on campus and discussing an upcoming football game and purchasing tickets.

In addition to asking students what their purpose was for each faculty interaction, I also asked them to document what they discussed during the interaction because I anticipated that additional topics would arise during the interaction. However, participants spoke with faculty members about their intended purposes. The item asking what students discussed with faculty, yielded the same themes as those described above.

Next, participants described how they felt about their interactions with faculty members. From the responses revealing positive feelings about an interaction, three themes emerged including, (a) "Getting a better grade," (b) a "Quality of the professor," and (c) a "Personal, positive outcome." Five students (4 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) enjoy interacting with faculty to improve their grades, as one Caucasian participant illustrates saying, "I am always happy with going to her office hours because it helps me tremendously on my homework grades and I understand the material better (from 78 avg. hw to 97)." Of the nine students (7 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) who described a "Quality of the professor," another Caucasian student, shared that, "I always feel comfortable talking to [name] about any questions that I have.…She really makes me feel comfortable and, unlike most teachers I have had, human and outgoing." Finally, three participants (2 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) felt positively about the interaction because they received some "Personal, positive outcome." For example, a Caucasian student said her professor, "Gave me some great advice and helped me with some problems I've been having, so I feel really good about going and talking with him." In addition, one Multicultural student shared, "I felt comfortable discussing my opinions and concerns with her."

Three participants (2 Caucasian and 1 Multicultural) reported feeling negatively about an interaction because of "Quality of the professor." Comments assigned to this theme included those indicating that the instructor was not helpful or confused the student. One Multicultural

student felt that his professor, "Probably won't answer it [email] because he claims he is always busy. He makes me mad [be]cause he isn't personal enough to help us."

At the end of the Faculty subsection, participants had an opportunity to further discuss their interactions in the "Additional Comments" item. The only theme for this item emerged from comments of three Caucasian students. In this theme, "Missed a professor's office hours," participants reported that either they missed an instructor's office hours or that the instructor was not present during scheduled office hours.

General Questions

In addition to the items in the Academic Activities section, 16 items in the General Questions section yielded 28 themes related to participants' academic behaviors and are listed in Table 2. Of these 16 items, 11 explicitly inquired about academic behaviors, with 6 items asking participants to describe their perceptions of professors and 5 items asking them to discuss their work and study habits. Themes related to academic behaviors also emerged in five additional items that solicited information pertaining to participants' personal experiences on that particular day (e.g. the highlight and most challenging part of their day, how they felt as a student that day).

In this section, I discuss results for the three subsections of items in General Questions yielding themes related to academic behaviors (i.e., Questions about Professors, Questions about Work Habits, Questions about Personal Experiences). Results for items in these three subsections include (a) themes that emerged for each item, (b) words or phrases that describe each theme, (c) quotations, where appropriate, to illustrate the themes and add richness and depth, and (d) differences in academic behaviors between students in the Caucasian and Multicultural groups.

Questions about Professors. Over the course of the study, participants responded to six items asking them to discuss their perceptions of professors. The first item asked them to share

what they feel is the most important aspect of having a positive relationship with a professor. Responses were assigned to one of two themes, "Help with class" and "Recommendations and references." Seventeen participants (12 Caucasian, 5 Multicultural) made comments illustrative of the "Help with class" theme, discussing how professors can help them understand the material more clearly and earn better grades. For example, one Caucasian student said:

> It is good to have a positive relationship with all of your professors because they can really help when it comes to class work or tests. It doesn't have to be a great or strong relationship, but just a positive one so that they know that you are serious about your work and they are there to help you.

A Multicultural participant shared, "I think it is important to have a relationship with a professor because they can help you when you don't understand the work. That relationship could also be the difference from you getting a A- or A+."

Five participants (3 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) made comments constituting the "Recommendations and references theme." This theme was only present in responses in which participants also mentioned the "Help with class" theme. In other words, participants never discussed seeking recommendations and references as the sole, or most important aspect of having a relationship with a professor.

Next participants responded to a very similar question, discussing their primary motivation for seeking out relationships with professors. Once again, "Help with class" and "Recommendations and references" emerged as the two themes. However, for this item, only five participants (3 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) mentioned "Help with class" while seven (6 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) discussed the importance of "Recommendations and references." In addition, participants who mentioned wanting recommendations and references did not do so in the context of also wanting help with coursework. For example, one Caucasian student shared:

(I can) make sure that the teacher knows me by name and I am able to create a sort of understanding of what kind of person I am just in case I may need a recommendation or something happens and they can react quickly because they know what kind of person I am.

Next, participants discussed which of the professors with whom they had interacted they valued the most and why. Participants valued professors they perceive to be "Personable or easy to relate to" or "Helpful with class-related topics." The "Personable or easy to relate to" theme emerged from the comments of four students (3 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural). A Caucasian participant valued a particular instructor because, "He listens to students and cares how we are doing. He is also funny and you can joke with him." Eight participants (5 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) remarked that they most valued a professor who was "Helpful with class-related topics." One Multicultural participant remarked, "I value the way [name] goes over my paper and tells me if I am on track with the topic or not. I have gotten good grades on all my papers so far."

The fourth item pertaining to perceptions of professors asked participants to describe their relationships with their professors, and two themes emerged from the responses. Six participants (5 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) indicated they had "Positive out-of-class interactions." A Caucasian student remarked:

My relationships with my professors [are] good. I think most of them know me and I know them. I made sure in the beginning of the year to let them know who I am but I know they have lots of students and it is hard to recognize all their students. I feel that if I needed to ask a question to any of my professors, I would not be afraid.

Three participants (2 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) revealed that they "Do not have relationships" with professors. Sharing why he has not established such a relationship, one Multicultural participant said, "I have a non-existing relationship because I haven't taken the time to seek one

out. I think that as time goes by I will get better at approaching professors because I will be more comfortable with the school."

The final two items regarding participants' perceptions of professors asked students to describe what faculty members have done to encourage students to get to know them and conversely, what faculty members have done to cause students to avoid getting to know them. Only one theme emerged for each question. Of the 18 participants, 13 (8 Caucasian, 5 Multicultural) mentioned that professors encourage students to get to know them by "Announcing office hours." Four participants (3 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) mentioned that some "Personal quality of the professor" had discouraged them from getting to know an instructor. A comment by a Caucasian participants assigned to this theme explains, "Some [professors] have been very mean and acted like they don't care about their students. Sometimes they act like they hate their jobs and that makes us not want to talk to them."

Questions about Work Habits. Participants discussed their work and study habits in five items over the course of the study. In the first two of these items, participants described how they spent their weekend time preparing for the next week's classes. Two themes pertaining to academic behaviors emerged. Three participants (2 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) shared that they "Made a to-do list of assignments" for the upcoming week, assigning importance to assignments based on their due dates. Of the 18 participants, 17 (11 Caucasian, 6 Multicultural) mentioned they prepared for classes by "Studying, reading, or completing work." In this theme, students documented various tests for which they were studying, books or chapters they were reading for class, or papers and projects on which they were working. In addition to these two themes pertaining to academic behaviors, four Caucasian students also reported that they "Did not prepare" for next week's classes because they did not have much to do or they wanted to relax.

To gain a clearer picture of how participants prepared for classes during the weekend, I also asked them to share where they studied and worked on assignments and how much time they spent in preparation. Fourteen participants (9 Caucasian, 5 Multicultural) said that they worked "In the dorm" and three participants (2 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) mentioned working in the "Library." Although participants worked for time periods of various lengths, five participants (four Caucasian and one Multicultural) stated they worked for one hour, and three Caucasian students mentioned they worked for two hours.

Next, I asked participants to describe how they would rate their study skills. Responses were assigned to one of three themes, including (a) "Good," (b) "Average," and (c) "Poor." Five participants (4 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) described having "Good" study skills because they get good grades or manage their time wisely. One Caucasian student said:

> I would rate my study skills as high because I know how to prioritize my work and I don't procrastinate on getting work done. I study the material throughout the semester and don't wait until the day before the exam so that I have to cram all of the studying in, in a couple of hours.

Four participants (3 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) felt their study skills were "Average." A Caucasian participant shared, "I would rate my study skills (on scale of 1-10) at a five. When I do study, I tend to retain the information well, but it's difficult to be motivated to study more than a day in advance." Finally, six participants (3 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) described their study skills as "Poor," as illustrated in a comment by one Caucasian participant who said, "I have very low study skills because I have never really studied and I still don't."

The final item pertaining to participants' work habits asked them to discuss whether they tend to work ahead of due dates or if they tend to complete work just before it is due. Responses were assigned to one of three themes, including (a) "Work ahead," (b) "Work at the last minute," and (c) "Depends on the situation." Eight participants (6 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) mentioned

that they work ahead to get better grades or to schedule free time. One Caucasian student

illustrates this theme saying:

> I tend to do work ahead of when it is due. I do this because it gives me more time to do things I want to do later and I just feel more prepared when I do my work like this. I tend to start on Monday and try to plan on what I want to get done and when I want to do it. I think this process helps me a lot. It helps me not only by scheduling my week but also planning out my free time with friends.

Five participants (4 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) reported that they tend to "Work at the last

minute" because they have poor self-discipline or they perform better under pressure. A

Multicultural participant shared, "I tend to do work right before it is due because it is when I can

focus the best." Finally, five participants (3 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) said that their tendencies

to work ahead or at the last minute vary based on individual classes and situations. For example,

a Caucasian student said, "It depends on the class. Some professors grade harder than others and

I spend more time on work for harder professors. Sometimes I do work the day it is due because

I procrastinate a lot."

Questions about Personal Experiences. Over the course of the study, participants

responded to 10 questions asking them to discuss their personal experiences on a particular day.

Of these 10 items, 5 yielded results constituting themes related to academic behaviors. In the first

of these items, participants described the highlight of their day. Nine participants (4 Caucasian, 5

Multicultural) shared that the highlight of their day was "Academic in nature," mentioning such

things as finishing a paper, getting a good grade, and attending every class. One Multicultural

student said:

> Today the highlight of my [day] was when I found out that I had received a 100 on my Math Emporium class. When I first started doing work at Tech I didn't take my Math Emporium class seriously because I didn't have to report to class and I didn't have a teacher. I had too much freedom and not enough discipline to get the work done. I hope that I come out of the class with a good grade.

Additionally, a Caucasian student reported:

> The highlight of my day was getting a 100 on my math quiz mostly because that's the class that has been really beating me down and when I went to take this quiz I was only there for like 10 min because I knew it so well.

In addition to discussing the highlight of their day, participants also described the most challenging aspect of their day. Twelve participants (9 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) shared that the most difficult part of their day was "Academic in nature," commenting on assignments or poor grades. For instance, one Caucasian student said, "The most challenging part of my day was studying for Linear Algebra. It's towards the end of the year and the material is getting rather tough." A Multicultural participant felt the most challenging part of the day was:

> Trying to read 140 pages that I am behind on for a test that I have next Tuesday. I messed up pretty bad on the last test but it can be dropped if I get a higher score on this test.

The next item asked participants to describe how they felt about their role as a student on a particular day. Three themes emerged from responses, including (a) "Positive feelings" (b) "Negative feelings," and (c) "Neutral/Normal feelings." Eight participants (7 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) described feeling positively about their role as a student because they felt accomplished, they participated in class, or they were active in academic pursuits. One Caucasian student noted:

> I felt good about my role as a student today – I managed to attend the early morning philosophy recitation, and I was able to contribute in the political science class. I feel like I enhanced my knowledge of the material in both political science and philosophy, and put solid effort into my note taking.

On the other hand, six participants (3 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) felt negatively about their role as a student because they felt lazy, tired, behind in coursework, or not prepared for class. A Multicultural student shared:

I didn't feel too good because I was not prepared at all for my exams today. Furthermore I did not do too well on either of them. I don't think that I fulfilled my role as a student too well.

Five participants (3 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) expressed that they had a normal day as a student and did not feel positively or negatively about their role as a student. A comment by a Multicultural student illustrating this theme included, "My role as a student today was normal. I attended all my classes and I had all my homework done."

When asked to describe the most important or valuable thing participants did for themselves on a particular day, three participants (2 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) responded that "Doing a lot of work," was most important to them. For example, a Caucasian student shared that, "I finished a ton of homework today. I did my chemistry lab report, chemistry pre-lab write-up, Calc. Homework, engineering homework and this assignment."

The final item related to personal experiences that yielded themes related to academic behavior asked participants to describe how they prioritized their activities on a particular day. Eight participants (6 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) discussed prioritizing their day around activities that are "Academic in nature," such as looking at due dates for homework and assignments and making a list of what needs to be accomplished. For instance, one Caucasian said, "I prioritized my day by what needs to get done now for what needs to get done at a later time as far as deadlines for papers and homework."

<center>Academic Life for Participants</center>

Fifty-seven themes emerged from the data analysis (29 within Academic Activities, 28 within General Questions) to describe participants' academic behaviors. With this number of themes, it is difficult to understand students' whole experience at a glance. To paint a clearer

picture of the academic experiences of FG students, this section provides a brief portrait of academic life for FG students in general and for Caucasian and Multicultural participants.

In regards to classes, FG students attended most of their classes on a day-to-day basis. They felt comfortable participating in class discussions and activities and reported that they enjoyed a class if they liked the professor or found the material to be fun and engaging. Furthermore, FG students developed a sense of comfort with their classmates when they spent time talking to them before and after class and perceived that their peers shared similar interests or experiences. Despite these overall positive feelings, students reported that at times a large class or uninteresting material negatively influenced their participation in or enjoyment of a course.

In examining FG students' relationships with faculty members, most students visited one of their professors at least once to speak about class-related issues. They strongly felt that the most important reason to develop a relationship with a professor was to seek help with coursework and earn better grades. Students tended to seek this assistance in-person during instructors' office hours.

First-generation students revealed that they have both positive and negative work and study habits and general academic experiences. Although they spent time studying and reading in their dorm rooms during the weekend to prepare for the upcoming week, both Caucasian and Multicultural students felt that they had poor study skills. When they did not earn a good grade on an assignment or they missed a class, FG students felt poorly about their role as a student and shared that academics presented the biggest challenge to their day. However, when students earned a good grade on a test or performed well in class, the accomplishment merited the highlight of a student's day.

Caucasian FG students share some of the characteristics of FG students in general, but many of the traits and themes identified in the study were unique to their group. For instance, while Caucasian students attended class slightly more often than Multicultural students, they completed fewer readings and assignments and took notes in class less often. While both groups utilized peers as an academic resource, only Caucasian students mentioned informal, social conversations with classmates when discussing class participation. These conversations helped participants feel comfortable with their classmates, but only Caucasian students also discussed not feeling comfortable with their classmates at times. In addition, while reporting that they had opportunities to contribute to class discussion, only Caucasian students shared that barriers sometimes discouraged them from participating. In expressing some low levels of comfort, perhaps Caucasian students felt less comfortable than Multicultural students in class, or maybe they were more comfortable expressing negative opinions and impressions.

Although most participants met with a faculty member during the course of the study, Caucasian students reported nearly 75% of all interactions. Both groups spoke with professors about class-related issues, but only Caucasian FG students enjoyed having discussions with their instructors about personal and social topics. They expressed positive feelings about interactions and appreciation for the personable quality of some instructors, sharing that they felt they were developing positive out-of-class relationships. While Caucasian students hoped these interactions would lead to better grades, they also hoped that professors would get to know them so they could seek strong recommendations and references in the future. These themes and traits seem to indicate that overall, Caucasian students felt comfortable with their instructors. However, just as the data regarding comfort level with peers revealed, Caucasian participants were also the only ones who reported that they were sometimes dissatisfied with professors.

The work and study habits of Caucasian participants varied. Depending on the situation, they spent their weekend time relaxing or working ahead for their classes. Their study skills ranged from good to poor, and their tendency to work ahead or at the last minute varied. Although Caucasian participants were more likely than Multicultural students to share that the most challenging aspect of their day was academic in nature, only Caucasian students reported having positive feelings about their role as a student and that they prioritized their days around academic activities.

Painting an academic portrait of Multicultural participants may be relatively more difficult due to the small sample size. Nevertheless, a number of important differences between Caucasian and Multicultural participants emerged from the data. For example, Multicultural students attended class only slightly less often than Caucasian students, but they completed almost twice the number of readings and assignments for class and took notes more often. Perhaps Multicultural students simply had more work to complete during the course of the study, or maybe they spent more time preparing for class than Caucasian students because they felt they had to in order to succeed. During class, Multicultural students felt that they could contribute to class discussions when they knew the material, but they did not report feeling comfortable with opportunities to do so. In addition, while Multicultural students did not mention speaking to peers socially in class, they did attribute feeling comfortable with their peers to social reasons.

Although more Multicultural students documented at least one interaction with a faculty member, only 25% of all interactions with instructors were reported by this group. They shared that they met with faculty for class-related issues only, not mentioning personal reasons or the desire to establish a long-term relationship for future letters of recommendation. Furthermore, they did not report positive or negative feelings about interactions with instructors. In looking at

the data for items related to both peers and professors, Multicultural students' themes seem to relate more to factual information (e.g., what they did in class, which professor they talked to), with few to no themes expressed regarding feelings or opinions about personal interactions. Perhaps Multicultural students were less comfortable sharing their feelings with me, as a Caucasian woman, especially those pertaining to experiencing discomfort.

The work and study habits of Multicultural students were not as varied as those of Caucasian students. Although Multicultural participants spent weekend time preparing for upcoming classes and relaxed less often than Caucasian students, they reported that they had poor study skills. Likewise, although Multicultural students were much more likely to share that the highlight of their day was academic in nature, they reported having negative feelings about their role as a student. It may be that Multicultural students are more concerned with their academic performance for some reason. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the data about study habits is that Multicultural participants expressed their feelings, especially negative ones. This differs from their responses pertaining to class and faculty-related items, in which Multicultural students rarely discussed positive or negative opinions.

The academic life of FG students described in this chapter is only part of students' collegiate experience. Understanding participants' social activities is crucial in painting a clear picture of the life of a FG student. The next chapter reports findings about students' social activities, identifying themes and differences by group.

Chapter Five

Log Analysis Results for Social Activities

This chapter describes results that address the two research questions pertaining to students' social activities. It is comprised of five sections, four of which correspond to a section of the log. The first describes results from the Social Activities section of the log, which is comprised of items pertaining to participants' interactions with Peers and attendance and participation at Meetings and Events. The second section documents respondents' Use of various Campus Facilities. The next section describes participants' experiences with Working and Volunteering while being a full-time student. The fourth section provides results from items in the General Questions section of the log that ask participants to discuss the nature of their relationships with peers and other topics that yield responses related to social activities. Finally, the fifth section provides an overview of the social activities of Caucasian and Multicultural students. As in the preceding chapter, results for items in the four sections from the log include (a) themes that emerged for each item requiring qualitative responses, (b) words or phrases that describe each theme, (c) quotations, where appropriate, to illustrate the themes and add richness and depth, and (d) differences in social activities between students in the Caucasian and Multicultural groups. In the data analysis of these four sections, 77 (45 in Activities, 2 in Campus Facilities, 0 in Working/Volunteering, and 30 in General Questions) themes emerged.

Social Activities

The Social Activities data address participants' daily interactions with their peers, as well as their participation in various types of meetings and events on campus. Forty-five themes emerged in the data analysis of this section of the log. Due to the number of themes, Table 3 lists

Table 3

Themes Related to Social Activities by Section and Item

Themes by Section and Item	Caucasian	Multicultural	Both	General
Peers				
Location				
Dorms			X	
Academic buildings	X			
Dining facilities			X	
Recreational facilities	X			
On-campus	X			
Phone or instant messenger			X	
Off-campus and local			X	
Off-campus and home	X			
Purpose				
Hang out and chat casually			X	
Serious conversations	X			
Academic			X	
To share a meal			X	
Joint activity and chat			X	
What was talked about				
Casual topics			X	
Casual topics and joint activity			X	
Serious topic			X	
Academic matters			X	
Catch up with friends from home	X			
Feelings about interaction				
Enjoy spending time together	X			
Helpful or informative			X	
Express thoughts or feelings	X			
Additional comments				
Busy day	X			

Table 3 (continued)

Themes by Section and Item	Caucasian	Multicultural	Both	General
Laziness or solitude	X			
Meetings				
Type				
Academic	X			
Club or organization	X			
Informational	X			
Reason for attending				
Prepare for upcoming assignments	X			
Be informed	X			
Personal interest	X			
Mandatory	X			
Events				
Type				
Football games	X			
Social events	X			
Seminars, lectures, educational	X			
Academic	X			
Fairs	X			
Location				
Off-campus				X
Social or recreational facility			X	
Academic buildings	X			
Reason for attending				
Obtain information	X			
Have fun and enjoy self	X			
Mandatory	X			
Thoughts about event				

Table 3 (continued)

Themes by Section and Item	Caucasian	Multicultural	Both	General
Negatively	X			
Positive, spend time with friends	X			
Positive, interesting and enjoyable			X	
Positive, educational	X			
Use of Campus Facilities				
Thoughts on visit				
Liked the staff	X			
Dislike facility	X			
General Questions				
Questions about peers				
Peer spent most time with				
Roommate	X			
Long-term friend	X			
Similar interests and personality			X	
Most valued peer				
Roommate	X			
Long-term friend			X	
Similar interests and personality				X
Setting for strong relationships				
While eating				X
Dorms	X			
Social settings		X		
Questions about personal experiences				
Highlight of day				
Social in nature	X			

Table 3 (continued)

Themes by Section and Item	Caucasian	Multicultural	Both	General
Most enjoyed activity				
Spending time with friends	X			
Athletic activities		X		
Important thing for self				
Exercising	X			
Taking a nap	X			
Prioritize activities				
Relaxing	X			
Off-campus trips				
Shopping trips	X			
Home			X	
Reason to go home				
To see friends	X			
To see family	X			
Questions about family communication				
Who spoke with				
Immediate family			X	
Extended family	X			
Frequency of communication				
Everyday or almost everyday			X	
Several times a week	X			
Once or twice	X			

Table 3 (continued)

Themes by Section and Item	Caucasian	Multicultural	Both	General
Method of communication				
Phone			X	
Email or instant messenger	X			
In person	X			
Reason for communicating				
Stay in touch			X	
Feelings about conversation				
Positively			X	
Negatively		X		

each theme and indicates whether the theme was found for Caucasian students only,

Multicultural students only, both groups, or students in general.

Peers

In the Peers subsection of the Social Activities section, I asked participants to describe

the most significant interactions they had with peers each day, noting where the interaction took

place, what occurred during the interaction, and how they felt about the interaction. Caucasian

participants had an average of 32.6 interactions over 14 days, with a median of 29 interactions.

Three Caucasian students reported fewer than 20 interactions, 5 discussed between 20 and 40

interactions, and 4 described over 40, with a high of 70 interactions. Multicultural students had

an average of 22.8 interactions over 14 days, with a median of 24.5 interactions. Five

Multicultural participants reported between 20-30 interactions, while 1 discussed only 9

interactions over the course of the study. Both Caucasian and Multicultural participants most

often discussed only one or two interactions per day, although a few did report between three and

five per day. The two groups differed in the amount of time they spent with peers. Multicultural

participants were slightly more likely than Caucasian students to spend an hour or less in each

interaction, while Caucasian participants spent 30 minutes or less of their time with peers as

often as they spent between one and five hours with their friends.

Participants reported the location of each of their interactions, and nine themes emerged

in their descriptions. Some of these locations included on-campus facilities such as (a) "Dorms"

(11 Caucasian, 6 Multicultural), (b) "Academic buildings" (8 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural), (c)

"Dining facilities" (10 Caucasian, 4 Multicultural), (d) "Recreational facilities" such as the gym

or football stadium (4 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural), and (e) "Student Centers" (4 Caucasian, 2

Multicultural). Other locations were also "On-campus," but took place outdoors or in transit

between buildings (11 Caucasian, 6 Multicultural). A few interactions took place without direct

peer contact, via the "Phone or Instant Messenger" (4 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural). Finally, some interactions took place off-campus, either "Off-campus and local," (9 Caucasian, 5 Multicultural) in places such as the grocery store, restaurants, or the mall, or "Off-campus and home," where participants described interactions with friends when they went home for the weekend (5 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural).

In addition to reporting the location of their peer interactions, participants also reported the purpose of each interaction. Five themes emerged from the descriptions. Some participants spent time with peers to "Hang out and chat casually" (10 Caucasian, 5 Multicultural), while others met for more "Serious conversations" (5 Caucasian, 0 Multicultural), involving such topics as relationship troubles, personal problems, or seeking and sharing advice. Most participants spent time with peers with an "Academic" purpose in mind (11 Caucasian, 6 Multicultural), such as studying for a test or seeking help with homework. Participants also reported interactions with a casual purpose, with 10 Caucasian and 5 Multicultural students revealing they wanted "To share a meal" with their friends. Finally, all but one participant discussed spending time with friends to engage in a "Joint activity and chat," noting activities such as exercising, watching TV or movies, playing video games, going to a party, or attending a function with a religious affiliation.

When participants discussed what they did during the interaction and what they talked about with their peers, five themes emerged from their responses. "Casual topics" constituted one theme (12 Caucasian, 6 Multicultural) and included responses describing students' thoughts about their day, weekend plans, sports, and musical tastes. The second theme also involved casual interactions and was mentioned in conjunction with a "Joint activity" (11 Caucasian, 6 Multicultural). For instance, a Multicultural student shared:

> Tuesday night is movie night! I have a friend who lives in the dorm nearby and we both enjoy watching Asian series/movies. So, every Tuesday, after I get back from tutoring and she gets back from class, we meet up to have dinner together and then head in for movie night. If we don't have much work, we usually watch about 2-3 episodes of a series. When we have a lot of work (like tonight) we only do one episode. I love movie night because we always try to choose comedic/action movies so for an hr [hour] every Tuesday we can forget all about the work we have to do for a little bit.

In addition to the casual interactions, 14 participants (10 Caucasian, 4 Multicultural) reported discussing "Serious topics," such as personal problems, relationship troubles, opinions on literature, and religious viewpoints. For example, one Caucasian student said:

> A friend at Virginia Tech is preparing a presentation on the effect of the media on children, and wanted to present some arguments to me. Although we have similar viewpoints, I felt good to be able to offer constructive criticism for his presentation.

Discussions about "Academic matters," such as talking about assignments and majors (11 Caucasian, 6 Multicultural), constituted the fourth theme. One Multicultural student said she spent time with a peer because:

> I needed someone to proof read my paper before I turned it in, so they read it and we discussed it. They made suggestions as well as corrections. I felt good about the interaction before I left with some good ideas that made my paper better.

Finally, 10 participants (8 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) reported spending time "Catching up with friends from home."

Finally, I asked participants to describe how they felt about each interaction. While all participants discussed what they talked about in each interaction, a few did not report how they felt about their interactions. For those that did talk about their feelings, responses were assigned to one of four themes. Three themes related to students feeling positively and comfortable about their interactions because they (a) "Enjoy spending time" with the peer (10 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural), (b) found the interaction "Helpful or informative," (6 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) or (c) had an opportunity to "Express their thoughts and feelings" (6 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural).

Items that were assigned to the "Enjoy spending time" category included participants discussing positive feeling because they enjoy talking to the peer, they have fun with their friend, or they feel their peer is a great person. Participants who described their interactions as "Helpful or informative" reported feeling positive about time spent with peers in academic group work or studying together. Responses assigned to the theme regarding sharing thoughts and feelings included ones in which participants valued opportunities to voice their opinions, have meaningful discussions, and express both positive and negative emotions. Finally, a few participants (3 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) described feeling "Negatively" about an interaction with their peers. Items that were assigned to this category included feeling awkward about a discussion, experiencing stress with the peer, feeling confused about the interaction, and being upset by not knowing how to help friend in need.

In addition to describing their interactions with peers, participants also documented why they sometimes did not interact with their friends in the "Additional Comments" item. Two themes emerged in the responses. Four participants (3 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) reported having minimal interactions with peers because they had a "Busy day." On the other hand, five participants (4 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) shared that they did not interact with many peers on a particular day because they needed a day of "Laziness or solitude."

Meetings

In the Meetings subsection of the log, I asked participants to describe the types of meetings they attended during the course of the study, why they attended, and how they felt about the meetings. Overall, participants attended 39 meetings, and attendance at 17 of those meetings was mandatory. Caucasian students attended an average of 2.3 meetings over the 14 days, with a median of 2 meetings, and a range from 0 to 5. Multicultural participants attended

an average of 1.8 meetings during the course of the study, with a median of 1.5 meetings, and a range from 0 to 6.

In discussing their involvement with meetings, participants first reported the types of meetings they attended. Descriptions were assigned to one of three themes, including (a) "Academic" meetings (5 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural), (b) "Club or organization" meetings (3 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural), and (c) "Informational" meetings (4 Caucasian, 0 Multicultural). Items there were assigned to the "Academic" meetings category included preparing for an English presentation, attending a study session for a test, and meeting with a mentor. Examples of meetings in the "Club or organization" theme consisted of those related to leadership, religious, volunteer, or academic organizations such as the Student Government Association, Christian fellowship groups, Circle K, and the Astronomy Club. Finally, the "Informational" meetings category was comprised of meetings such as a career night, an RA application meeting, and a health education discussion.

Next, I asked participants to describe what they did at each meeting and how they felt about the meeting. In their responses, participants also tended to report why they chose to attend, and four themes emerged from the data. First, participants described attending meetings to "Prepare for upcoming assignments" (5 Caucasian, 0 Multicultural). For example, a Caucasian student shared, "I attended the meeting because it helped me a lot [to] study for our big test on Thursday. I felt the meeting was very helpful and that I learned a lot of new stuff that I needed to know." The second theme related to students' desire to "Be informed" (5 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) on issues such as health education, career options, and general topics of interest. One Caucasian student said, "I attended to listen to people who are actually in the field discuss their jobs and help me decide what I want to do. It was very informative and strengthened my

resolve towards my career plans." Four participants (3 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) described

attending meetings due to a "Personal interest." Items assigned to this category included

religious services/meetings, discussions and activities about a topic of interest, and athletic

meetings with peers. One Multicultural student who attended meetings to prepare for flag

football games shared:

> I attend this because I like doing anything related to football. This activity is a way to make new friends and get ready for spring tryouts. I want to play football at the collegiate level so I take this serious[ly].

Finally, five participants (3 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) reported they attended meetings because

they were "Mandatory," including meetings for work, clubs and organizations, and group

projects.

Events

In the Events subsection of the Social Activities section, I asked participants to document

the types of events they attended during the course of the study, as well as their reasons for

attending and their thoughts on the events. Over 14 days, students discussed 44 events (36

Caucasian, 8 Multicultural), 13 of which required a participant's attendance. Caucasian

participants had a median attendance of two events, with a range from 0 to 10, and Multicultural

participants had a median attendance of one event, with a range of 0 to 4 events.

I first asked participants to report the types of events they attended, and five themes

emerged from their responses. The first theme pertained to seven students (5 Caucasian, 2

Multicultural) attending university "Football games." Five students (3 Caucasian, 2

Multicultural) reported attending "Social events," such as parties, pep rallies, fireworks on

campus, flag football games, and card playing tournaments. The third theme emerged from three

Caucasian students documenting their attendance at "Seminars, lectures, and educational

events," including discussions on books and social issues. Three Caucasian students also

discussed attending "Academic events," including class movies and assignments taking place

outside of scheduled class time. Finally, four participants (3 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) talked

about their experience with on-campus "Fairs," such as a Majors Fair, Leadership Fair, and Off-

campus Housing Fair.

Next, participants reported the location of each of the events they attended, and their

responses yielded three themes. First, three participants (2 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) attended

"Off-campus" events, both for class-related assignments and for more social events. Second,

students attended events in "Social or recreational facilities" (8 Caucasian, 4 Multicultural) for

pep rallies, football games, and fairs. The final theme consisted of events taking place in

"Academic buildings" (5 Caucasian, 0 Multicultural) for seminars or academic activities.

When asked to discuss why they attended each event, participants provided very brief

descriptions. The three themes that emerged from the responses related closely to the themes

already reported for items in the Events subsection. Participants attended events (a) to "Obtain

information" on majors and housing options (4 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural), (b) to "Have fun and

enjoy themselves" by spending time with friends (6 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural), and (c) because

attendance was "Mandatory" (4 Caucasian, 0 Multicultural).

In the last item, I asked participants to describe what they thought about each event.

Responses were assigned to one of four themes. In the first theme, four participants (4

Caucasian, 0 Multicultural) reported feeling "Negatively" about the event because they were

already familiar with the information, they felt the discussion was boring, or they disagreed with

presenter. On the other hand, the remaining three themes emerged because students felt

positively about the event. For example, five Caucasian students were glad they had an

opportunity to "Spend time with friends" and bond with classmates. Seven participants (4

Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) gave positive responses because they found the event to be

"Interesting and enjoyable." Four students (3 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) liked an event because

it was "Educational" and provided them with valuable information.

Use of Campus Facilities

In the Use of Campus Facilities section of the log, I asked participants to describe their

use of various on-campus facilities that first-year students might be likely to visit. I also provided

room for students to discuss additional facilities, and a number of students used this space to talk

about their visits to the Math Emporium, an off-campus facility for math-related instruction.

Over the course of the study, participants made 76 visits to campus facilities and the Math

Emporium, with Caucasian students reporting 44 of these visits and Multicultural participants

reporting the remaining 32 visits. Caucasian participants documented an average of 3.7 visits,

with a range from 0 to 15. Multicultural participants discussed an average of 5.3 visits, with a

range from 2 to 12. The more frequently visited facilities included Athletic and Recreational

facilities (18 Caucasian visits, 15 Multicultural visits), the Math Emporium (12 Caucasian visits,

8 Multicultural visits), and the Library (8 Caucasian visits, 3 Multicultural visits). Multicultural

students reported three visits to a tutoring center, and all other facilities had no more than two

visits per group.

Participants' responses to items in this section yielded only two themes (see Table 3),

both pertaining to the item asking them to describe how they felt about their visit or their

interactions with staff. Both themes relate to participants' thoughts on the Math Emporium, the

only off-campus facility discussed. Three Caucasian students shared that they "Liked the staff" at

the Math Emporium. One student said, "Everyone is really polite and if you have questions while

you are working there is always someone to answer your questions…I was able to get my

questions answered fast and without hesitation." Four students (3 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural)

described "Not liking the Math Emporium" itself. For example, the Multicultural participant shared, "I don't like the Math Emporium and therefore always dread going there. I've never liked the way it feels so impersonal as everyone's hutched [sic] over their own computer typing furiously away…I don't like the environment."

Work and Volunteering

In the Work and Volunteering section of the log, participants documented their experiences with part-time jobs and volunteer opportunities. I asked participants to report where they worked or volunteered, how many hours they spent on each shift, and why they chose to work or volunteer. During the course of the study, five students (3 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) discussed their part-time jobs, and two Caucasian students described their volunteer experiences. The 5 Caucasian students worked or volunteered 15 shifts overall, with an individual range of 1 to 7 experiences over the 14 days. The two Multicultural participants worked nine shifts overall, one working four shifts and the second working five shifts. Participants who worked spent more time at their part-time jobs (range of 8 to 26 hours) during the course of the study than those who volunteered (range of 3.5 to 4.25 hours).

General Questions

In addition to the items in the Social Activities, Use of Campus Facilities, and Work and Volunteering sections, 10 items in the General Questions section yielded 30 themes related to participants' social activities and are noted in Table 3. Of these 10 items, 3 inquired about students' relationships with peers, 6 solicited information pertaining to participants' personal experiences, and 1 item asked participants to describe communication they had with their family members. In this section, I discuss results for the three subsections of items in General Questions yielding themes related to social activities (i.e., Questions about Peers, Questions about Personal Experiences, and Questions about Communication with Family).

Questions about Peers

To supplement the data provided in the Peers subsection of the log, participants also described their relationships with peers in three items of the General Questions section. The first item asked them to talk about their relationship with the peer they spent the most amount of time with on a particular day. Responses were assigned to one of three themes, (a) "Roommates" (4 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural), (b) "Long-term friends" (3 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural), and (c) "Friends with similar interests or personalities" (3 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural). Descriptions assigned to the "Roommates" category included ones in which participants described their roommate as a friend of varying degrees of closeness. Informants often spent time in their rooms and therefore spent a significant amount of time with their roommate. Participants who reported spending most of their time with "Long-term friends" referred to friends from their hometowns or romantic partners. In describing her friend with "Similar interests or personalities," one Caucasian student shared, "I have a great relationship with my peer. We are very similar and have similar beliefs so we are able to keep each other on track and are always able to make each other laugh." A Multicultural participant revealed:

> The peer that I spent the most time with today is like a brother to me. We both are going to try out for the football team in the spring. We like being in engineering and we both are on the phone with are [our] girlfriends all the time.

Next, participants described their relationship with the peer who was most important to them that they spent time with on a particular day. Responses were assigned to the same three themes that emerged in participants' descriptions of peers they spent the most time with (i.e., "Roommates," "Long-term friends", and "Friends with similar interests and personalities"). Three Caucasian students shared that they valued their roommates. One participant appreciated his roommate, "Mostly because we get along really well and him and I have been through a lot together even though I have only known him about 8 weeks. We both respect each other and just

about like…all the same things." Eight students (5 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) discussed their

relationship with friends they had known for many years. For example, a Caucasian participant

shared:

> The person I spent most time with today is my friend who I grew up with. We were best friends for a long time, but I moved when I was in high school and we became friends with different people. Now we live right down the hall from each other and spend a lot of time together. It is important to me to be friends with her again because we grew up together and she was my first best friend when I was little. We did everything together and our families always considered each other family. I guess I have a lot of friends, but not a lot of best friends, or people that I have been friends with for a long time so it is really important to me to restore what we had.

Finally, four participants (2 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) talked about their friendship with peers

who share similar interests. Describing her close friend, one Multicultural student said:

> Among the girls in our group, she's the one I'm closest to since we jog together in the morning, go to yoga classes together as well as the usual weekend get-togethers and the lunches/dinners. She and I are the only non-international ones of the group and therefore she understands some of my more "American" ways than the others do. Because we spent so much time together, our conversations (or sometimes even the silence as we walk) are always casual and comfortable. We never stay on one topic for very long and it seems we jump between just about every topic of conversation.

The final item pertaining to peer relationships asked participants to describe the setting in

which they find themselves developing their strongest relationships. Descriptions were assigned

to one of three themes. For the first theme, four students (2 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) felt that

they strengthened their bonds with peers "While eating" because of the relaxed atmosphere and

the opportunity to spend time with friends. Six participants (5 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) felt

their strongest relationships developed in the "Dorms." One Caucasian student shared:

> I see myself developing my stronger peer relationships within the confines of my dorm because this is where I feel most at home and is where I spend most of my time. Therefore I easily become more acquainted with the individual's [sic] lives in my hall.

For the final theme, four participants (1 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) reported they develop strong

relationships with peers in "Social settings," such as clubs, events, and athletic matches.

Questions about Personal Experiences

Over the course of the study, participants responded to questions asking them to discuss their personal experiences on a particular day. Six of these items yielded responses related to students' social activities. In the first of these items, participants described the highlight of their day. Nine students (7 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) reported that the highlight of their day was "Social in nature," mentioning such things as talking to their boyfriend, attending a university football game, or simply spending time with friends. For example, one Caucasian participant shared:

> Today [name] and I went outside and layed [sic] in the sun on a blanket and just talked. We talked about…how happy we were at that moment and how we can't wait to Thanksgiving. I think this is the highlight of my day because I got to spend a bit of time just relaxing and talking with the person I love and trust the most.

Next, participants discussed the activity in which they most enjoy regularly participating, and two themes emerged in the responses. Five Caucasian students reported enjoying "Spending time with friends." A Caucasian participant said:

> I like being able to hang out in their room or go to football games or go shopping. I know it seems like a basic thing to enjoy spending time with my friends, but I don't have time during the week to see my friends, so when the weekend comes I am ready to just chill out.

Five participants (2 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) mentioned enjoying "Athletic activities" the most. For example, a Multicultural student said he enjoys "playing flag football because it is a way to relieve stress caused by classes."

When asked to describe the most important thing they did for themselves on a particular day, five students (4 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) felt that "Exercising" was of most value to them. A Caucasian participant said, "Lifting was the most important thing for me today because I had a hard day and it releaved [sic] stress while providing a better self image." Additionally,

three Caucasian students reported that "Taking a nap" was the most important thing they did for themselves.

Participants next described how they prioritized their weekend activities. For students who did not focus on coursework, they reported that "Relaxing" was their top priority. Six participants (5 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) felt that relaxing was an important way to spend their weekends and a way to unwind from the previous week and to prepare for the upcoming week.

Since the weekends provide more time for students to travel away from campus, I asked participants to talk about any off-campus trips they took. Seven students (5 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural) left campus for "Shopping trips," either at the local mall or another store. In addition, 10 participants (7 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) went home for one or both of the weekends during the 14 days of data collection.

When asked why they went home on each particular trip, participants responded that they primarily went "To see friends" (6 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) or "To see family" (3 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural). One Caucasian student enjoyed returning home to see friends from high school. She also observed, "A lot of people have changed since we were in high school already, and that was interesting to see."

Questions about Communication with Family

Each day I asked participants to describe any communication they had with family members. Participants reported who they spoke with, their method of communication, and how they felt about the conversations. Over the course of the study, all 18 participants spoke with their immediate family, and 4 students (3 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural) reported speaking with extended family members, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. During data collection, participants communicated with their family (a) "Everyday or almost everyday (3

Caucasian, 3 Multicultural), (b) "Several times a week" (3 Caucasian, 1 Multicultural), or (c) "Once or twice" (6 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural). Students spoke with their family members via (a) "Phone" (9 Caucasian, 6 Multicultural), (b) "Email or Instant Messenger" (4 Caucasian, 0 Multicultural), or (c) "In person" (8 Caucasian, 2 Multicultural).

When discussing individual conversations, almost all participants (11 Caucasian, 6 Multicultural) shared that they communicated with family members simply to "Stay in touch." Participants told their family about their college experiences, while family members shared stories from home. Most students felt "Positively" about the conversations (9 Caucasian, 4 Multicultural) because they have a good relationship with their parents and enjoy speaking with them. Several participants felt "Negatively" (1 Caucasian, 3 Multicultural) about their conversations with parents because they do not speak to or see their parents often, did not have a positive conversation, or do not enjoy speaking with one of their parents.

<div align="center">Social Life for Participants</div>

Seventy-seven themes emerged from the data analysis (45 within Social Activities, 2 within Use of Campus Facilities, 30 within General Questions) to describe participants' social activities and experiences outside of the classroom. As with the data on academic behaviors, the number of themes pertaining to students' social life presents a challenge to understanding the typical student's experiences during the course of the study. To provide a clearer picture of participants' social experiences, this section describes the social life of FG students in general as well as Caucasian and Multicultural students.

First-generation students described time spent with peers, and they tended to describe one or two interactions per day. Whether it was in the dorms, at dining facilities, at stores or restaurants in town, or through the use of a computer, FG students communicated with their

peers. They talked about academic matters in social settings with one another as often as they enjoyed discussing casual topics and "hanging out." Most students mentioned serious conversations they had with peers with similar interests and long-term friends, discussing relationships, personal feelings, politics, and religion.

While most FG students attended a meeting or event during the course of the study, only a couple of themes emerged for all participants. For instance, students attended events at social and recreational facilities or off-campus locations. In addition, students made use of campus facilities, such as athletic and recreational centers, the library, and the Math Emporium. The remainder of the themes that emerged in these sections were found only for Caucasian students.

When they were not spending social time with peers, FG students shared that they spoke with members of their immediate family, either in person, at home, or on the phone. Students tended to enjoy keeping in touch with their parents, with some doing so nearly every day.

Caucasian participants share the activities discussed in the portrait of FG students in general, but they also participated in many activities unique to them. For example, Caucasian students spent time with peers almost anywhere, including academic settings, recreational facilities, various on-campus locations, and their homes. While they enjoyed discussing casual topics with friends, they also shared that they spoke with friends to talk about serious topics. In comparison to Multicultural students, Caucasian participants spent more time with roommates and placed more value on these relationships. Perhaps this is because only Caucasian students also reported that they develop strong peer relationships within the dorms. Similar to the results mentioned in the previous chapter, Caucasian students expressed both positive and negative opinions about their interactions with friends.

When describing participation at meetings and events, all but 3 of the 22 themes were unique to Caucasian students. The types of meetings and events they attended were as varied as their reasons for attending. Despite their diverse activities, most Caucasian students enjoyed going to meetings and events because they were interesting, educational, and provided an opportunity to spend time with friends. The students were willing to discuss negative impressions of their experiences.

Although Caucasian students did not visit campus facilities as often as Multicultural students, the only two themes to emerge in this section of the log came from their responses. Participants described their experiences at the Math Emporium. Again, Caucasian students expressed both positive and negative feelings.

Caucasian students most enjoyed spending time with their friends and often described a social event as the highlight of their day. When they were not with friends, however, they took time to themselves to exercise, take a nap, or simply relax. Other times, they went home to see their family and friends, and they expressed only positive feelings about their communication with family members.

As with academic behaviors, providing a portrait of Multicultural participants' social activities may be more challenging due to the small sample size. Of the 77 themes that emerged related to social activities and time spent out of the classroom, only 3 were unique to Multicultural FG students. However, many traits of Multicultural participants are interesting to note.

In regards to relationships with peers, Multicultural students reported spending time with peers in fewer locations than Caucasian students. The locations they discussed, the dorms, dining facilities, and walking around campus, are all locations where students must travel throughout

the day. While Multicultural students spent time with friends in the dorms and at dining facilities, they did not indicate that they develop strong friendships in these settings. Rather, they shared that they developed such relationships in social settings, such as clubs and events. Their most valued friends were those they had known for many years.

Multicultural students tended to engage in social activities with their peers and have casual conversation. Although they also discussed more serious topics with their friends, they did not share that the intended purpose of an interaction was to talk about serious issues. In addition, Multicultural participants expressed only one positive opinion regarding interactions with peers, appreciating interactions that were beneficial for academic reasons. Again, Multicultural students revealed very little about their feelings and perceptions.

Although Multicultural students reported developing strong relationships with peers through clubs and at events, they did not discuss these relationships in the Meetings and Events sections of the log. No themes emerged for these students in the Meetings section, and only two themes in the Events section emerged from the responses of Multicultural students. It seems that participants enjoyed events, but they did not describe their experiences. The lack of themes for these two sections is particularly interesting because Multicultural students place value on social settings.

Multicultural students visited campus facilities more often than Caucasian students, including the Math Emporium, tutoring centers, the library, and athletic and recreational centers. In fact, participants indicated that they most enjoyed athletic activities. However, Multicultural students did not provide further details regarding their experiences with these facilities.

Like Caucasian students, Multicultural students communicated with family members during the course of the study, although they did so more frequently. A couple of students went

home to visit their family, but everyone else used the phone as their sole means of contact. Departing from perhaps a previous pattern of results, Multicultural students expressed both positive and negative feelings towards conversations with their family, and they were the only group to describe negative experiences.

Results presented in this chapter and the preceding one describe the academic behaviors and social activities of FG students. Understanding the academic and social experiences of these students may provide clues to their emerging levels of AI and SI as they approach the end of their first semester of college. Implications of these results are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the academic and social integration behaviors of FG students and to analyze differences in those behaviors by race. Data were collected in the form of daily logs, in which participants documented their participation in academic and social activities for two consecutive weeks. In discussing how they spent their time, participants described their attendance at various activities, the behaviors in which they engaged, the quality of their involvement, and how they felt about their experiences.

This chapter discusses the results of the study and is organized around five sections. The first section discusses the results and addresses how they answer the four research questions posed in the study. The second section describes the results in relation to findings from prior research. Implications of the results for future practice, research, and policy are noted in the third section. In the fourth section, limitations of the study are discussed. Finally, general conclusions about the study are presented.

Discussion

The first research question posed in this study explored the academic behaviors and activities in which FG students engage. To learn about students' academic lives, I asked participants to document and describe their experiences in the classroom, interactions with faculty members, work and study habits, and perceptions about their role as a student. In describing their time spent in the classroom, students generally felt comfortable with their classmates and enjoyed attending class and participating in discussions. From time to time, boring material or a large class size made the classroom experience less enjoyable. These seemingly simple results pose interesting implications for FG students. First, it appears as if these students felt the same way a NFG student may feel. Class was generally a positive

experience in which students participated, got to know one another, and were understandably dissatisfied with uninteresting material or lecture courses that were too large to allow for active learning.

Second, since FG students felt comfortable discussing their opinions in class and speaking with classmates, perhaps they attended most of their classes because they provided an enjoyable and "safe" place. Describing class experiences in a typical way and expressing comfort and enjoyment in the classroom suggests that perhaps FG students are not as at-risk academically as we previously thought they were. On the other hand, it may be that participants in this study represent high-ability FG students, as their entering first-year class had an average high school GPA of 3.76 and an average SAT score of 1232 (The Class of 2009, 2005, ¶ 3).

In regards to interactions with faculty members, most participants visited a professor at least once during office hours to receive assistance with assignments in hopes of earning higher grades. While many professors encourage students to visit them, students do not always take advantage of this opportunity. Many first-year students are encouraged during their college orientation to meet their professors, but this appears to be one college success tip students do not often take. It is interesting that over a relatively short period of time, most of the first-year, FG students in the study made the effort to speak with a professor. Perhaps they did so because they were more concerned with their academic performance than a NFG student because they had no college predecessor in their family. Alternatively, maybe FG students are strongly motivated to excel and prove that they are capable of succeeding at the college level. Additionally, 11 of the 18 participants were in the University Studies department. University Studies advisors strongly encourage advisees to speak with professors for academic assistance and to develop relationships. This may have influenced the degree to which participants chose to interact with

faculty members. Even in an age of computer technology, FG students chose to visit their professors in person nearly four times as often as they emailed their instructors for help. Seeking help from faculty members face-to-face suggests that FG students are focused on and value academics.

First-generation students described both positive and negative perceptions of their work and study habits and day-to-day experiences as a student. For example, even when participants spent time completing assignments and studying for class, some still expressed that they have poor study skills. This suggests that while academics may be important to FG students, they may be working diligently to make up for a deficit in study skills. On the other hand, it is important to note that the study was conducted in the participants' first semester in college. They had not yet received any grade reports. Perhaps students have satisfactory skills but are too critical of themselves and are less self-confident until they consistently earn high marks to prove to themselves that they are capable of academic success.

Grades are seemingly important to all students, but they may take on extra significance for FG students. Participants often described a high grade as the best part of their entire day, while a low score marked the most difficult part of the day. Most students would feel badly about a poor grade, but FG students seemed to allow it to really affect their day. Perhaps this is because FG students care deeply about their academic performance and feel that they have something to prove. They may feel that they are not only representing themselves but also their family members and that they want to make everyone proud. The fact that one grade could so strongly shape students' entire opinion of a day is both interesting and powerful.

In addressing the first research question, it appears as if FG students participate regularly and actively in class and feel comfortable doing so. They seek guidance from their professors

and spend some of their weekend time preparing for upcoming assignments. These behaviors suggest that FG students may not experience lower levels of AI when compared to their NFG counterparts. However, FG students did not always express great confidence in their abilities, and may be focused on academics in hopes of proving that they can achieve quality performance and success.

The second research question posed in this study asked if the academic behaviors in which FG students engage differ by race. To explore this question, I examined themes that were unique to either Caucasian or Multicultural participants in addition to looking at the relative number of students whose responses contributed to each theme. First, I will discuss the results for Caucasian students and note interesting implications. Next, I will discuss the findings for Multicultural students and describe what these findings may suggest. Finally, I will highlight the most significant differences between the two groups.

In discussing their experiences in the classroom, Caucasian FG students shared both positive and negative perceptions. For example, in describing their comfort level both with their classmates and their ability to contribute to class, Caucasian students tended to respond positively. However, they also shared that they did not feel comfortable participating in discussions or speaking with peers in certain classes. These findings are interesting because they may take on one of several meanings. First, experiencing barriers in communication or academic challenges are normal for any student. Admitting and discussing both positive and negative opinions may mean that Caucasian FG students can see the "big picture" of their daily experiences. Second, since Caucasian students discussed negative emotions and opinions more frequently than Multicultural students, it appears as if Caucasian students either experienced more negative situations or were more comfortable sharing negative thoughts. It is more likely

that Caucasian students were comfortable discussing their feelings, as their responses for most items on the log included both positive and negative aspects. This possibility leads to another interesting option. The institution where the study was conducted is a PWI, and perhaps Caucasian students may have been more comfortable sharing both positive and negative perceptions because they felt more comfortable as members of the majority in their environment.

In addition to describing their comfort level with class, participants also documented their preparation for each class. Although Caucasian participants attended a majority of their courses, they completed significantly fewer assignments than Multicultural students. It could be that Caucasian students simply had fewer assignments to complete during the course of the study. Alternatively, perhaps Caucasian students did not feel as pressured or compelled to complete assignments or lacked the self-motivation to do so.

While most participants reported interacting with at least one of their professors to seek assistance with coursework, only Caucasian students sought to get to know their instructors on a more personal level. In addition, only Caucasian students shared that they hoped relationships with professors would lead to recommendations and references in the future. These findings are noteworthy for several reasons. First, it appears as if Caucasian FG students enjoy being able to relate to others, as seen in their comfort with classmates and personal relationships with professors. Perhaps Caucasian students need or want some sort of relationship to help them achieve academic success. Second, Caucasian students seem to be very intentional and forward thinking in developing relationships with professors. Not only are they being proactive and visiting faculty members, something many students, particularly first-year students, do not do, but they seem to recognize both the short-term and long-term benefits of such relationships. Finally, it is important to consider why Caucasian, and not Multicultural students, felt

comfortable talking to professors about non-class related matters. Caucasian students may have been more comfortable expressing themselves in general, or perhaps they were more comfortable in the PWI environment.

The relative strength of work and study habits varied among Caucasian FG students, as it would for NFG students. While both Caucasian and Multicultural participants spent time preparing for upcoming classes during the weekend, only Caucasian students reported taking ample time to relax as well. Maybe Caucasian students felt that they could relax and still get enough work completed, or perhaps they adjusted to the time demands of school more quickly than Multicultural students. In addition, although Caucasian students were more likely to identify an academic problem as the biggest challenge to their day, they were also the only ones to express positive feelings about their role as a student. Perhaps students who felt that they possessed strong study skills and spent time seeking assistance from peers and professors were able to "bounce back" from bad grades or late assignments and still feel positive about their overall efforts.

In examining the academic experiences of Multicultural participants, they seemed to be doing a number of things to increase the likelihood of success. For example, Multicultural students attended class almost as frequently as Caucasian students, and they completed nearly twice the number of reading and homework assignments. Perhaps Multicultural students had more assignments to complete during the course of the study, maybe they felt like they had to work harder to succeed, or it might have been that they were more motivated to excel in the classroom. It is interesting to note that since Multicultural students spent more time working on class assignments, they may have had less time to devote to completing the log. This may have influenced the type or quality of information students shared. Although students reported that

they did their work and felt prepared to contribute to class, they did not always feel that they had the opportunity to do so. It is possible that these students happened to be more shy when it comes to speaking in class, or may be that they did not feel as comfortable actively participating in the PWI environment.

When describing their interactions with faculty members, Multicultural participants tended to describe their professors as an academic resource who could help them improve their grades. Seeking assistance directly from instructors suggests that Multicultural students felt comfortable in asking for help or knew that they needed extra guidance in order to succeed. Since many students, particularly first-year students, do not always take advantage of the opportunity to speak with professors, Multicultural students may have demonstrated initiative and dedication to ensuring satisfactory or excellent performance. Beyond describing professors as academic resources, Multicultural students did not discuss their perceptions, whether positive or negative, about their interactions. This might have been true for several reasons. First, perhaps students did not have a strong opinion to share about their meetings with faculty members. Second, and as suggested before, perhaps Multicultural students did not feel as comfortable in the PWI environment. Last, as I am a Caucasian woman, some students may not have felt comfortable discussing some of their personal opinions and thoughts with me.

It is interesting to note that Multicultural students did not discuss talking to their professors about personal matters or that they hoped their instructors would write recommendations for them in the future. It might be that Multicultural students are focused on their current academic performance and may wait until they feel more secure to further develop their relationships with professors. In their first semester as a college student, it appears as if

Multicultural students may take somewhat of a "business-like" approach in their interactions with faculty members.

Although Multicultural students spent time studying and reading for class and, they tended to feel that they had poor study skills, and they sometimes expressed feeling negatively about their role as a student. However, Multicultural students were also more likely to share that earning a high grade or performing well in class marked the highlight of their day. These mixed feelings suggest interesting implications. First, Multicultural participants may have had less confidence in their abilities and felt that they needed proof of academic success before they could characterize their study habits and performance as strong or positive. Second, it is natural for first-year students to struggle with the academic rigors of college and other transitional issues they face. Multicultural students may internalize these struggles more and attribute them to poor skills instead of a natural part of the college transition process.

Perhaps most noteworthy about these findings is that Multicultural students expressed negative opinions for the first time in describing part of their academic lives. However, these opinions and emotions described how they felt about themselves. Perhaps participants felt comfortable sharing their negative impressions here since the subject was strictly personal (i.e., themselves), and they did not have to express negative perceptions about other people (i.e., professors and classmates).

To answer the second research question, it seems as if both Caucasian and Multicultural students enjoy class and speak with professors for academic assistance, but the similarities seem to end here. Caucasian students seem to be more comfortable working with their peers in an academic setting, as well as interacting with their professors. In addition, they appear to have an overall positive perception of their daily experiences as a student. Caucasian students seem to be

doing the "right things" to help them succeed, and feel comfortable describing their successes and their struggles. While Multicultural students also do many of the "right things" to help ensure success, they seem to be more focused on achievement and results and less focused on developing more personal relationships with those from whom they seek assistance. Multicultural participants may have been as involved as Caucasian students, but perhaps they were not as comfortable sharing their experiences or opinions with me.

The third research question explored the social activities in which FG students engaged. To answer this question, I asked participants to document and describe time spent with peers, involvement in various meetings and events, visits to campus facilities, experiences working or volunteering, and communication with family members. To learn about time spent with peers, I asked and encouraged participants to talk about five conversations or interactions each day, no matter how brief or casual they may have seemed. It is interesting to note then that a number of students only discussed one or two interactions with peers per day. For some students, this may have accurately represented the number of friends they conversed with that day. For others, they may not have felt that brief interactions merited any attention. Whatever the reason may be, perhaps FG students reported relatively few interactions with peers because they were more focused on academics, did not feel comfortable with some of their peers, or were not comfortable discussing certain interactions with me.

When participants did describe their interactions, they mentioned spending time with peers to work on academic assignments and to casually "hang out." These findings suggest that outside of class, FG students are still turning to their peers as an academic resource. They also take some time to relax and develop more personal relationships with peers when not completing school work. For the most part, FG students spent time with peers they felt comfortable with,

either because they had developed a long-term trust with one another or they shared similar interests and values.

If FG students attended meetings or events, they did so in social, athletic, or recreational facilities. Perhaps these venues provided students with an opportunity to better socialize with their peers (e.g., football games) or to enjoy some personal time (e.g., exercising at the gym). Whether athletic activities were a spectator event or one in which students participated, it seems as if athletics established a common bond both among FG students and with their NFG peers. This may be because the football team at the institution where the study was conducted is a strong, nationally ranked program and data were collected during the football season. In addition, perhaps some quality of attending sporting events or participating in sports provides students in general with an important outlet for socialization. Finally, it could be that attending sporting events is a bonding ritual for university students. That is, regardless of their social, academic or socioeconomic status, sporting events provide an arena in which students can bond with one another and establish a commitment to the institution.

When students were not spending time with friends or involved in other social activities on campus, they took some time to speak with family members, in person or on the phone. Family is important to most students, and frequent communication with parents may be somewhat attributed to the typical characteristics of the Millennial generation. It would be interesting to know how FG and NFG students currently compare with frequency and quality of communication with parents.

Overall, it seems that FG students did develop some friendships during their first semester, and they were able to speak with these friends about a variety of topics. While they spoke about their participation in formal social settings in very limited terms, it seems as if they

did find some opportunities to take a break from coursework to relax and spend time with peers. First-generation students documented their daily participation in social activities, but it seems as if they spent more of their time and energy engaged in academic pursuits.

The fourth research question posed in this study explored any differences in social activities between Caucasian and Multicultural students. To explore these differences, I examined the themes that were unique to each group, as well as noting differences in how many students shared answers illustrative of each theme. I will discuss the findings regarding Caucasian students and then discuss the results for Multicultural students. Then, I will highlight the most important differences between groups.

In describing their interactions and relationships with peers, Caucasian FG students reported spending time with friends in more settings than Multicultural students. Perhaps Caucasian students are more comfortable on campus, or maybe they have more friends or more free time than Multicultural students. In addition, only Caucasian students shared that they valued their relationship with their roommates and developed strong friendships in their residence halls. This finding is encouraging because it is important to feel comfortable and safe at one's "home." It may be that Caucasian students were able to develop a sense of community in their dorms, where friends could provide one another with encouragement and support. Similar to their dealings with faculty and classes, Caucasian FG students described relationships with peers in both positive and negative terms.

Almost all of the themes describing participation at meetings and events can be attributed to Caucasian students. Participants attended a variety of activities, suggesting that their interests may be as diverse as typical NFG students. While students attended some educational events, they also were involved in activities to spend additional time with friends, perhaps suggesting a

"work hard, play hard" mentality. Whether describing their experiences in class, daily conversations with peers, or involvement in clubs and social activities, Caucasian FG students described how much they enjoy spending time with peers. Most students do value their friendships, but maybe friends constitute an invaluable support system for Caucasian FG students – both in and out of the classroom.

In describing their daily experiences as a student, Caucasian FG students again discussed how much they value their friends, often identifying a social event as the best part of their day. Finding ways to help Caucasian students develop and strengthen relationships with peers may be a way to foster satisfaction with the college experience and academic access. When participants were not spending time with peers, they took care of themselves by spending time alone to take a nap, relax, or exercise. It appears as if students were learning how to manage their time well and schedule time for studying, friends, and themselves. Finally, Caucasian students also felt positively about their communication with family members. It appears as if relationships both on campus (i.e., professors and peers) and off campus (i.e., family members) seem to be important to Caucasian FG students.

When Multicultural students described time spent with peers, they tended to mention that interactions took place in settings where students must travel throughout the day (e.g., dorms, dining facilities). Perhaps Multicultural students did not feel as comfortable on campus at a PWI, or maybe they were more focused on academics and had less time to socialize. Interesting to note, Multicultural students did not describe their peer interactions at meetings or events, yet they shared that they develop their strongest friendships in these more formal settings. Perhaps participants were not comfortable discussing these relationships with me, but they did use formal

settings as a way to develop friendships with peers who share common interests, values, and goals.

In describing their relationships with peers, Multicultural students tended not to reveal their feelings, which is similar to previous results. Participants talked about both casual and serious topics with their friends, and Multicultural students particularly highlighted that they appreciated spending time with friends for academic reasons. This finding supports the results from the first two research questions that suggest that Multicultural FG students may be very focused on academic matters. Perhaps Multicultural students need to establish a positive academic track record and credibility before allowing themselves to feel more comfortable with the social aspects of college. The fact that they had not received any grade reports at the time data were collected might have underscored this need.

Although Multicultural students did not describe their involvement in formal social settings, such as meetings as events, they did indicate that such settings provide them with opportunities to develop strong relationships. Based on findings discussed previously, it should not be surprising that Multicultural students did not discuss their perceptions or impressions of the events. Since Multicultural students tended not to describe positive or negative feelings about their peers or professors, it may be that they did not wish to discuss how they felt about their experiences. However, participants did document their attendance at events, and this has interesting potential implications. It may be that Multicultural students prefer meaningful social activities based on a specific purpose rather than spending time relaxing in the dorms. If Multicultural students do prefer to spend their time outside of class in purposeful social activities, then staff who work with these students need to ensure that such opportunities are provided.

Multicultural FG students also documented visiting various campus facilities without describing their perceptions of these visits. It appears that campus facilities and formal social settings might be important to Multicultural students as a way to be involved on campus. Their responses did not reveal how or why these avenues may be important to their daily lives, but it seems as if they do not spend all of their time outside of classes studying.

When Multicultural students were not with peers or spending time at events, they kept in close touch with their parents and extended family members. It is interesting to note that Multicultural participants described conversations with their parents in both positive and negative terms. The only other item regarding people about which Multicultural students expressed negative opinions was in describing themselves. Perhaps Multicultural students are so close with their family members that they felt comfortable expressing some negative opinions, as many students experience both positive and negative aspects in their relationships with their parents.

In examining the differences between Caucasian and Multicultural FG students, it seems as if Caucasian students feel more comfortable on campus and are more willing to describe how they felt about time spent outside of the classroom. Multicultural students also spent time with peers and at formal social activities, but they tended not to describe what they did or how they felt about these interactions and activities. These differences suggest several interesting implications. First, as previously mentioned, perhaps Caucasian students are more comfortable on the PWI campus than Multicultural students and therefore they felt more comfortable describing their experiences. Second, it may be that Multicultural students had strong feelings about their experiences, but they did not feel completely comfortable sharing them with me, a Caucasian woman. Finally, perhaps Caucasian students felt that they could relax more and enjoy

the more social aspects of relationships with their peers and professors, while Multicultural students felt that they needed to lay an academic foundation before pursuing social opportunities.

<center>Relationship of the Findings to Prior Research</center>

It is important to examine the findings of this study in comparison with findings from prior research. This section will first discuss how results from this study support those from some previous studies. Then I present a discussion of those studies that the findings contradict. Overall, the findings of this study support previous research regarding AI and FG students and race, as well as research pertaining to SI and FG status. The results tended to contradict findings from previous studies pertaining to SI and race.

Much of the research regarding AI and FG students highlights the importance of relationships with faculty members in promoting AI and positively influencing educational outcomes (Lohfink & Paulson, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Strage et al., 2002). In the present study, both Caucasian and Multicultural students met with professors to seek assistance with coursework and gain a better understanding of the material. If students start developing these relationships as early as their first semester, then perhaps faculty members will be an important agent in fostering FG students' levels of AI. Although FG students are often painted as a group that is at risk of attrition, they appear to engage in helpful academic behaviors and may not be as at-risk as many may think (Pratt & Skaggs, 1989).

In terms of AI and race, previous studies also tend to emphasize the importance of quality relationships with professors. In particular, relationships with faculty members, regardless of race, may foster students' study skills, academic progress, levels of AI, and persistence (Fries-Britt, 1995; Lundbert & Schreiner, 2004; Vann-Lynch, 2002). Multicultural participants in this study, conducted at a PWI, reported talking to their instructors to seek help with class material

<center>114</center>

and assignments. It would seem likely that in time, these relationships could continue to have a positive and profound impact on students' lives. The one question that remains to be answered is whether students experienced quality relationships with their professors. Since Multicultural students revealed very little about their impressions, it is unclear how valuable their interactions may have been. It is also important to understand Multicultural students' perceptions of faculty members as previous research has suggested that some African American students perceive less faculty support at PWIs (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002).

In examining the characteristics of successful students in general, Strage et al. (2002) found that students who read before class, take notes, and seek help from their instructors tend to succeed. Multicultural students seemed to engage in these activities more so than Caucasian students. Other the other hand, Strage et al. also found that Caucasian students tend to have better rapport with their professors. This seems to be supported by the present study in that only Caucasian students shared that they enjoy speaking with faculty members both for academic assistance and about personal matters.

Overall, Multicultural students' involvement in academic activities was much stronger than their participation in social activities. This may have important implications for their persistence, as AI might be the most important factor influencing the persistence of African American students (Donovan, 1984). If Multicultural FG students continue to attend class, complete their work, and seek academic assistance, then they will continue to develop their levels of AI and positively influence their desire to persist to degree completion.

A number of findings from studies regarding SI and FG status were also supported by the results of the present study. First, Berger (1997) suggests that living in a residence hall has important implication for the SI of students, as the hall provides a more intimate setting for

developing relationships. This seems to be supported by the Caucasian students in the present study. In describing relationships with their peers, Caucasian students shared that they valued the amount of time they spent with their roommates and that they developed strong relationships within their halls.

The relative lack of participants' involvement in social activities compared to academic pursuits may reflect and support previous findings describing the relationship between SI and AI. Pursuing activities associated with SI may leave less time for behaviors associated with AI and may come at the price of achievement (Liu & Liu, 2000; Pike & Simpson, 1997). Perhaps Multicultural students did not seem to be as involved in the social aspect of college life because they wanted to focus on academics, especially their first semester.

Finally, results from this study may support findings from a study that examined the involvement of African American students at PWIs. MacKay and Kuh (1994) found that participating in social activities and using campus facilities did not significantly benefit participants. Since Multicultural students in my study seemed to be more focused on engaging in academic behaviors than participating in social activities, perhaps their choice will not lead to a great SI detriment.

Although the findings of this study tend to support those of prior research, some results contradict what previous researchers have found. For example, Grosset (1995) suggested that sufficiently high levels of AI may positively influence students' levels of SI. While this contradicts the previously mentioned findings of Pike and Simpson (1997), it also may be in opposition to the experiences of FG students in the present study. Both Caucasian and Multicultural students seemed to be rather involved in academic pursuits, but the quality of Multicultural students' social experiences is unclear. It makes sense that academic achievement

116

may encourage students to enjoy other aspects of college life as well, but this was not strongly supported by my findings.

In regards to academic pursuits outside of the classroom, prior research suggests that African American students may use academic resources and services more often than Caucasian students (DeSousa & King, 1992; Griffin, 1992). With the exception of visiting the tutoring center, it appears as if Caucasian students in my study utilized the same resources that Multicultural students did. While my results contradicted prior research, Multicultural students did appear to take advantage of a number of resources to support their academic endeavors.

As previously noted, Berger (1997) found that living in a residence hall benefited students through the opportunity it affords to develop strong relationships. However, in my study Multicultural students rarely mentioned their roommates and did not describe them as being among their closest friends. It appears as if Multicultural students develop their friendships in formal social situations outside of the residence hall.

Most of the previous research that was contradicted by my findings pertained to SI and race. For example, DeSousa and Kuh (1996) suggest that SI is more crucial to students' educational development at PWIs. However, Multicultural students were significantly more involved in activities related to AI in the present study.

Next, several studies have discussed the importance of clubs specific to one's race and nonacademic resources as a way to find a sense of belonging on campus and as the primary way to develop integration (Chew & Ogi, 1987; LaCounte, 1987; Mallinckcrodt & Sedlacek, 1987; Marguia, Padilla, & Pavel, 1991; Velasquez, 1998). In the present study, Multicultural students did not discuss participating in organizations specific to their race or ethnicity. Involvement in

academic activities, not clubs, seemed to be the way that students found "safety" and defined their first semester.

Finally, Brown (2000) suggests that African American students' perceptions of the emotional support they receive at PWIs is important. While this intuitively makes sense, Multicultural students in my study did not discuss their impressions of the emotional or social support they receive from others on campus. As previously speculated, perhaps Multicultural students felt some negative emotions that they did not feel comfortable discussing with me. This finding merits further attention.

<p style="text-align:center">Implications for Future Practice, Research, and Policy</p>

The findings of this study have implications for those who work with FG students, as well as those who continue to conduct research with this unique population. First, the results may influence several constituencies who work closely with FG students. One such group includes staff members who work in Multicultural programming and student activities. Since Multicultural participants did not describe their experiences at meetings, events, and other social activities, it is not clear how they perceive such events on campus. Staff members may wish to conduct assessments with Multicultural students who attend, and perhaps do not attend, their events to see how they can better serve this population.

The results of this study also have implications for the way faculty members and counseling staff interact with FG students. Both groups should have an understanding of the unique issues FG students may face, particularly those of Multicultural students at a PWI. The quality of students' relationships with their professors is crucial, so faculty and staff may use this information to make their best effort to develop a sense of trust with students who take the

initiative to visit them. Professors may wish to initiate conversations about students' plans for the future, as well as more personal topics to further develop the faculty-student relationship.

In addition, the results of this study may assist parents in working with and understanding their children. Since FG students tended to speak with their parents frequently, it would be beneficial for student affairs professionals to educate parents about the transitions FG students face and how FG students spend their time. If student affairs professionals use these findings to assist with parent programming, then they can help parents have a clearer understanding of the experiences of FG students in general, which may help parents provide additional encouragement and support to their child.

The findings of the present study also had implications for future research. This study was conducted at a PWI, and the sample size of the Multicultural group was half the size of the Caucasian group. A future researcher may wish to replicate this study at a more culturally diverse institution with greater numbers of Multicultural FG students. In addition, it may be possible to examine differences for specific racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Latinos, Native Americans, African Americans) if the institution had a large, diverse student body. Such a study would provide an even richer understanding of the differences between Caucasian and Multicultural FG students.

The body of literature pertaining to FG students could also be expanded by a study focusing on students' social relationships. The present study explored both academic and social activities and found that participants, particularly Multicultural students, tended to be more involved in academic activities than social ones. A future study could focus solely on the social aspects of students' experiences and investigate the quality of relationships of Multicultural

students. This type of study would add to existing knowledge by exploring a critical aspect of students' SI and investigating how comfortable students feel with others.

Finally, a future study could employ a different data collection technique. I explored students' experiences by asking them to complete a daily log for two weeks. While students answered items requiring short answers, not all participants fully described their impressions and perceptions. A study using interviews to ask students about their academic and social experiences may uncover additional and more in-depth information about FG students' experiences. Another qualitative study, employing a different technique, would add additional richness and depth to the existing body of FG literature.

In addition to having significance for practice and research, the findings of the present study also have implications for future policy. For example, Multicultural students shared that they visited faculty members to speak about academic matters and not more personal topics. Previous research has indicated, however, that quality relationships with professors are crucial for Multicultural students (Fries-Britt, 1995; Griffin, 1992; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Vann Lynch, 2002). Perhaps administrators who influence academic services for students can improve existing or fund additional mentor programs. These programs could match students and professors based on a common interest to help develop the student-faculty relationship beyond academic discussions.

Findings from this study may also influence policy by encouraging administrators to allot additional funding to formal social activities. Multicultural students shared that they develop their strongest relationships in social settings and events as opposed to more informal settings such as their dorms. Since the results suggest that Multicultural students need to develop their

levels of SI, having a variety of quality programs and events to attend may provide opportunities to get to know new people while fostering levels of SI.

<div align="center">Limitations of the Study</div>

While this was a worthwhile study with interesting results and implications, it was not without its limitations. The first limitation involved the sample size. Only 6 Multicultural students participated in the study compared to 12 Caucasian students. Since there were fewer Multicultural students, a greater percentage of students from this group had to share a common experience or impression in order for the response to constitute a theme. It may be that some of the themes that emerged only for Caucasian students would also have existed for Multicultural students if their group had been larger. This could have had many implications for the results, as well as the suggestions that have been offered.

A second limitation to the study pertains to the data collection technique. When I met with students during the information session, several of them seemed rather shy. If students did not have much to share in their initial logs, I encouraged them to add additional information, asking them specific questions and providing examples of where they could elaborate. Perhaps students who are more reserved by nature did not describe their experiences as fully as they could. This may have influenced the quality of types of themes that emerged during data analysis.

Finally, Multicultural students did not always describe their personal feelings, and this may have presented a limitation in the study. I used a qualitative technique to gather a rich data set that was missing from the FG student literature. While Multicultural students provided sufficient answers, it is not clear why they did not express their perceptions, impressions, and emotions as clearly as Caucasian students. If they had, the results of the study might have been different. Despite the limitations posed in the study, this was a worthwhile study to conduct.

The present study departed from most of the prior FG student research by utilizing a qualitative technique to further explore FG students' experiences. The literature often paints FG students as a population at risk, and researchers rarely study and highlight behaviors and activities that FG students do appropriately to help themselves persist to degree completion. With this study, I hoped to learn more about the positive types of activities FG students participate in as early as their first semester. The results suggest that even though they are the first in their immediate families to attend college, FG students find a number of ways to succeed in the classroom and develop friendships outside of the classroom.

Overall, FG students responded in many ways that are typical of their NFG counterparts. They frequently attended class, completed assignments, and participated in class discussions. Perhaps somewhat surprising for first-year students, most participants visited faculty members face-to-face to seek additional help with class material. When students were not spending time in academic pursuits, they spent time with friends, attended campus events, and spent time talking with family members.

While these findings are generally positive, a few results are noteworthy and deserving of further attention. First, Multicultural students did not have the same quality of experience that Caucasian students seemed to have. Their relationships with professors were based on seeking assistance with coursework, and they did not seem as comfortable with their skills and abilities as Caucasian students. Furthermore, Multicultural students attended campus events and described time spent with friends, but they did not share the rich details that Caucasian students tended to share. It is not clear whether these findings indicate potential challenges and struggles for Multicultural students or whether they were not as comfortable at the institution or with the researcher. These findings may have serious implications and merit additional attention.

Years of research have indicated that attrition is highest after the first year in college, so knowing how FG students are getting involved, or not getting involved, early on is crucial in helping these students persist to degree completion. While the results do not represent exact measures of AI and SI, participants' descriptions of their activities serve as clues to their integration into the academic and social environments of the institution.

Overall, the picture of the FG student experience painted in this study is not as dismal as previous portraits have suggested. Student affairs practitioners, higher education administrators, and researchers can utilize these clues to help foster students' future integration and help them be the first in their family to earn a college degree.