THE SOPHOMORE YEAR AT A FAITH-BASED UNIVERSITY:
EXPLORING CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT
DURING THE SECOND YEAR OF COLLEGE

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the sophomore students who participated in this case study. It is also dedicated to my colleagues in residential life and student affairs throughout the United States.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Sophomore Year at a Faith-Based University: Exploring Curricular and Co-Curricular Development During the Second Year of College
by
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Master of Arts in Education with a Concentration in Educational Leadership
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The purpose of this case study was to determine what characteristics influence second-year college students’ curricular and co-curricular development at a faith-based, liberal arts university in the Western United States. Seventeen individual interviews and a document analysis were conducted as the primary data collection methods for this case study, as students described their sophomore year experiences inside and outside of the classroom. Students reported the importance of a strong connection to faculty and staff at this faith-based university as being paramount to a successful sophomore year. They also spoke of the significance of engaging in the co-curricular and the impact that coping strategies played in their development as young adults. The document analysis produced findings similar to those found in the individual interviews. Coping with heightened levels of anxiety, adjusting to a more rigorous academic schedule, and trying to avoid becoming another attrition number was all data extracted from the document analysis exclusive to the sophomore year. Some conclusions and recommendations from these findings would be to provide more opportunities for sophomores to connect with faculty, staff, and administration on a regular basis, create more initiatives that focus on combating sophomore student attrition rates, and to garner support from major stakeholders on campus in order to develop a sophomore year experience program at this institution. Two potential barriers to implementing a sophomore year experience at this institution would be the lack of time that sophomore year students have during their second-year in college as well as the lack of knowledge from faculty, staff, and administrators on what SYE’s offer and how they impact student development and retention.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

College students today are perpetually in transition. Whether it involves a freshman exchanging goodbyes with her family before she meets her first college roommate, or a graduating senior receiving his diploma at commencement prior to entering corporate America, young adults continually encounter a diverse number of experiences that have the potential to produce either growth or regression (Powers, 2008). However, second-year college students typically encounter more transitional experiences than any other cohort (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). These transitional experiences could include declaring an academic major, changing living environments, scheduling their classes, or choosing their career path (Powers, 2008). Coincidentally, second-year students are often the lowest performing and least engaged student population on college campuses today (Powers, 2008). Gardner, Pattengale, and Schreiner (2000) argue, “the most compelling reason for attending to sophomores is the possibility of students dropping out during or after their second year,” and that “prolonged indecisiveness, poor academic course selection, low levels of academic and co-curricular engagement and integration, behavioral problems, and increased time to degree completion all can manifest themselves in the sophomore year” (Schaller, 2005, p. 13).

My own experience observing this dire developmental reality has included witnessing many second-year students dropping out of college, ending up on academic probation, or even worse, being expelled from their institution because of behavioral infractions. Typically, these unfortunate yet common events stem from a lack of engagement,
investment, and involvement in their college or university (Miller, 2006). This portrayal of the sophomore year begs the question whether there is a viable solution to this developmental dilemma, or is this ominous fate inevitable for these second-year students?

**Problem Statement**

The problem addressed in this thesis is the ubiquitous, developmental issues that second-year college students face inside and outside of the classroom. Sophomores encounter developmental issues that warrant very particular responses (Powers, 2008). These developmental issues include, but are not limited to combating confusion about one’s identity, remaining motivated academically, and avoiding feelings of alienation from their peers, professors, and surrounding environment (Miller, 2006). Second year students also labor at finding a major that “provides sufficient intellectual stimulation and interest,” struggle to integrate into a “meaningful extracurricular activity,” and often experience feelings of apathy, lethargy, and stagnation that often times stem from mediocre dietary practices and infrequent exercising (Miller, 2006).

This conclusion has compelled student affairs professionals to craft programs specifically for sophomores that identify core objectives and curricular/co-curricular goals, propose primary learning outcomes to foster cognitive development, and challenge participants to work more closely with their peers in various leadership roles. Correspondingly, scholars have cited that activity, specifically, “goal-centered activity,” is the best remedy to prevent the sophomore slump (Miller, 2006). Unfortunately, second-year students are often lost on how to navigate their way towards a goal-centered activity (Miller, 2006). The primary researcher observed this reality at his place of employment as well.
THE SOPHOMORE SLUMP IN CONTEXT

In the fall of 2007, while working in residential life at a private, faith-based institution, the primary researcher came to the grim realization that many of the sophomore students living on campus were not performing well academically and were altogether disengaged with the campus community. It was clear that these second-year students were spiraling downward, and most likely suffering from what student affairs professionals refer to as the “sophomore slump” (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). This “slump” was an observation shared by many university personnel in the office of residential life, so it was clear that this was a collective concern.

Various sources of literature concerning the sophomore year experience were explored. This exploration and research took place in graduate school, attending professional workshops and seminars, and integrating this new knowledge into their own observations of sophomore students. It was concluded that the office of residential life, as well as the university as a whole, was not providing the appropriate co-curricular opportunities that adequately addressed sophomore student issues. Besides offering an event once a semester, which was usually poorly attended and generated minimal learning and developmental outcomes, a program exclusively for second-year students was nonexistent. It was obvious that this institution needed to better accommodate these second-year students through a structured, purposeful co-curricular program that would benefit both their academic and personal development.

In the fall of 2008, one staff person from the office of residential life initiated a pilot program; however, this pilot program attempt was not very successful. Ironically, the few students who responded to this staff person’s recruitment efforts were high-achieving students in the classroom with high GPAs, no student conduct or behavioral issues, and were
moderately involved in the co-curricular already. Altogether the program rested solely in the hand of this one staff person because the program only existed in one residence hall on campus. This initiative was not a shared, collective initiative at this institution, despite clear acknowledgment by several colleagues in this staff person’s department that these sophomore issues were a collective concern. However, after speaking with several faculty and staff, it was concluded that many colleagues were interested in partnering to create a sophomore year experience program, but they were confused about how to launch such an initiative.

Then, in the spring of 2010, the sophomore experience program was resurrected. This was heavily influenced by a series of workshops at the NASPA (National Association for Student Personnel Administrators) annual conference in Chicago, Illinois. These presentations specifically focused on how successful vibrant Sophomore Year Experience programs (SYE programs) challenged and supported their second-year students. The next step to resurrect this program was to determine what sophomores at a faith-based university were saying about their second-year in college and to identify what factors affect their growth and development, as well as what impeded their success. Thus, this study was born.

**Significance of This Study**

This study is significant because it gathered relevant data about college sophomores directly from college sophomores, which in turn highlighted the issues that these specific students faced at their institution. This case study is also highly significant due to the growing popularity of sophomore year experience programs (Powers, 2008). Increasing the number of second-year programs on college campuses is becoming a more common practice today in order to thwart student attrition and promote student involvement and vocational
clarity (Powers, 2008). In fact, many colleges and universities throughout the United States have witnessed productive outcomes from their sophomores through co-curricular programs; outcomes, such as, higher GPA’s, less behavioral infractions, and a greater likelihood to invest in leadership, service, and ministry opportunities (Gardner et al., 2000). Consequently, this study was created to explore these issues about student perceptions during the sophomore year.

**PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The purpose of this study was to determine what social, curricular, and co-curricular characteristics influence second-year college students at a small, liberal arts, faith-based university in order to help students and university personnel understand factors contributing to this developmental regression. A case study with interviews was conducted as the primary method of data collection for this study, as students described their sophomore year experiences inside and outside of the classroom. This study utilized a cohort of currently enrolled, degree seeking sophomore students at one predominantly residential, faith-based, Western university. The proceeding chapters intend to further explore the “sophomore slump,” and will also delineate the findings from both the particular faith-based university under scrutiny, as well as detail findings of current research on sophomore year experience programs at public and private four-year institutions.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The primary research question utilized in this case study was what social, curricular, and co-curricular characteristics influence second-year college students at a specific faith-based university? However, the following questions seek to produce more detailed responses relating to the primary research question:
1. What are sophomores' perceptions with regard to that which contributes to success in the curricular and co-curricular during the second year of college? (Success in the co-curricular is defined as regularly attending and participating in at least one co-curricular opportunity on campus per semester that fostered personal growth in their life.)

2. What are the important characteristics of a quality sophomore year experience program?

3. How can a quality sophomore year experience program at a faith-based university enhance student growth and development?

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

*Faith-Based University*: As it relates to the context of this case study, a *Faith-Based University* is a four-year, fully accredited, degree granting institution of higher education that fosters a Judeo-Christian ethos, which is manifested in the campus environment. Typically, a *Faith-Based University* requires all faculty, staff, and administrators to profess a Christian faith of some kind. Conversely, students are not always required to be Christian, depending on a number of historical, political, and institutional aspects of a particular school.

*National Association for Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA]*:

Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education is the leading voice for student affairs administration, policy, and practice, and affirms the commitment of the student affairs profession to educating the whole student and integrating student life and learning. With over 11,000 members at 1,400 campuses, and representing 29 countries, NASPA is the foremost professional association for student affairs administrators, faculty, and graduate and undergraduate students. NASPA members are committed to serving college students by embracing the core values of diversity, learning, integrity, collaboration, access, service, fellowship, and the spirit of inquiry. (National Association for Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA], 2010)

*Sophomore Year Experience Programs*: An institutional, departmental, and/or office initiative that provides second-year students with opportunities that engage and link their classroom and co-curricular experiences in order to promote student learning and development.
**Sophomore Slump:** The *sophomore slump* was defined by Lemons and Richmond (1987) as: “a period of developmental confusion that results from a student’s struggle with competence, desiring autonomy, establishing identity, and developing purpose.”

**Transitional Experiences and Issues:** Involves any emotional, psychological, behavioral, or environmental influence/factor that an individual (i.e. a college student) is confronted with during a progression from one developmental stage to another.

**Limitations of the Study**
Due to the primary researcher’s existing bias regarding the need for more sophomore year experience programs at faith-based colleges and universities, this study may not accentuate the negative or neutral characteristics as much as the positive characteristics of sophomore experience programs. Moreover, the primary researcher has an existing relationship with some of the students interviewed for this study, so this could potentially influence subject responses.

**Delimitations of the Study**
A delimitation of this study is that this study was conducted at a single, faith-based university in the Western United States. The university under scrutiny has high academic standards and competitive admissions requirements, which in turn, may influence the primary researcher’s argument to provide more curricular and co-curricular opportunities for second-year students.

**Role of the Researcher**
This particular topic is especially important to me because of its direct connection to my current position in higher education. I currently work with a large number of college sophomores at a local, Western, faith-based university. In addition, it is my intention to
launch a sophomore year experience program at this university in the near future. I also realize that my passion for college sophomores and their very particular curricular and co-curricular experiences may influence my analysis and findings. I am conducting this study to determine what characteristics affect second-year college students at a faith-based university in order to create and implement a program relevant to the issues these students face.

I believe my role, as a researcher is to determine what significant perceptions about their social, curricular, and co-curricular developmental stand out during the sophomore year, at this particular faith-based university. Were second-year college students aware of any developmental regression or did they avoid experiencing the “sophomore slump”? Finally, I am convinced that my role as a researcher is to pinpoint what factors contribute to student attrition, dissatisfaction with the university, and a strong sense of belonging to the campus community.

The following chapter provides data on current research and scholarship about the sophomore year college student through introducing an overview of the second-year college student, relevant student development theories pertaining to the sophomore year, and specific characteristics and examples of quality sophomore year experience programs across the country.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter will explore the various facets of the second-year in college and will delineate what recent scholarship offers for further research and practice. Ancillary sections outlined in this chapter include: an overview of the sophomore year in college, four relevant student development theories, and several characteristics of sophomore year experience programs currently active in the United States.

The notion that significant populations of college students experience a developmental decline during their sophomore year is no new concept. This notion first surfaced in student development literature during the 1950’s and persists as a considerable developmental problem on college campuses today (Freedman, 1956). This developmental decline came to be widely known as the proverbial “sophomore slump” (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). More recently, this second year developmental decline has also been referred to as the “lost year” (Powers, 2008). However, some scholars contend that the phrase “lost year” is a misnomer, and should really be described as “a year in transition” (Powers, 2008). Overall, these second-year college student characterizations amalgamate both the curricular and co-curricular developmental decline experienced by many sophomores today.

Nonetheless, the “sophomore slump,” “lost year,” or “a year in transition” has also become widely recognized as a personal identity crisis of sorts that can affect all aspects of a college student’s maturation. Student affairs personnel researched and reported that sophomores were the least satisfied cohort’s in college (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). Second-year students were also more prone to feel ineffective and dissatisfied without
recognition than any other cohort (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). Moreover, sophomores were no longer satisfied with standards of competence achieved during their inaugural year in college (Lemons & Richmond, 1987).

Current research cites several reasons why this developmental regression occurs so frequently in second-year students. These include, but are not limited to: dissatisfaction with the institution as a whole, lack of support from faculty and staff, increased worry about finances, guilt for placing the burden to pay for college on parents, and pressure to develop one’s relationship with the world (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006). Gahagan and Hunter (2006) refer to sophomore students as “the academy’s middle children,” emphasizing the severity of issues that these students face after the great deal of support they received as freshmen ceases, whereby they are left in the “middle” (p. 17). This unfortunate depiction encapsulates the reality that sophomore students are often the most overlooked and neglected cohorts on college and university campuses today (Powers, 2008).

These overlooked and neglected students will be less likely to develop and maintain essential character traits, values, and morals, than students from another cohort (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006). This can affect second-year students’ abilities to develop solid interpersonal and intrapersonal skills necessary for success inside and outside of the classroom (Gahagan & Hunter, 2006). This crucial piece of information should at the very least be a cause for concern for all higher education administrators, staff, and faculty, since it has the potential to affect student retention, and because students typically would not remain enrolled in an institution that overlooks and neglects them. An overview of the second-year in college follows.
OVERVIEW OF THE SOPHOMORE YEAR IN COLLEGE

As stated in the previous chapter, second year college students are confronted with numerous transitional issues during their sophomore year (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). However, these transitional issues actually begin to unfold at the conclusion of the first year of college (Kramer, 2000). This process involves first year students attempting to gain control over various external factors and influences prior to entering their second year (Kramer, 2000). These external factors and influences typically include: trying to fulfill parental expectations, effectively coping with potential financial pressures at home, and managing stress and anxiety that stems from societal expectations related to gender, diversity, and/or socioeconomic status (Kramer, 2000).

Ideally, this attempt to gain control over external factors and influences is intended to successfully prepare them for their sophomore year before individuals “slump” (Kramer, 2000). Loevinger (1976) views this transitional process as a shift from prescribing and conforming to a specific set of rules (first year) onto a more conscientious stage where young adults become more “self-evaluative, self-critical, responsible, and differentiated (Kramer, 2000).

Robert Miller (2006), author of Campus Confidential, expounds on the sophomore year, at least those potential “slumpers”: “For many of you, by the time you reach sophomore year, the thrill of being ‘away’ at college and the newness of the experience have faded, leaving in their place a sense of growing urgency about deciding on a major, choosing a career path, and finding a group of friends or a romantic interest” ( p. 349). Miller (2006) continues his discourse on the sophomore year by stating that it “is often characterized by confusion, soul-searching, motivational problems, and, occasionally, flat-out rebellion against parents, professors, or friends. You may find yourself feeling depressed and
alienated, and studying listlessly or skipping classes because you feel that your coursework has no meaning for you. Welcome to the Sophomore Slump” (p. 349). This state of alienation, confusion, and apathy directly impacts the development of relationships and self.

**IDENTITY, RELATIONSHIPS, AND COMMUNITY**

As described in the previous depiction of the sophomore year, the second year of college is often plagued with a variety of experiences that impact students’ identity (Miller, 2006). Young adults develop their identity through many meaning-making experiences (Parks, 2000). This is especially evident during the sophomore year as students shift their focus from the past to the present, which creates added anxiety (Kramer, 2000).

The sophomore year typically involves second-year students searching for a network of support or mentoring community; however, many times these students have difficulty navigating this process (Parks, 2000). Scholars also assert that second-year students epitomize a “focused exploration,” whereby students “actively seek insight in relationships, future, and self” (Schaller, 2005). Whether this explorative period focuses on relationships, future, or self, one mainstay must be in place if student growth and development is to occur: tangible opportunities for students to realize and know that they belong to a community (Kramer, 2000). This would positively affect sophomore success by providing them the means to acquire coping skills necessary to navigate this “lost year,” preventing higher attrition rates, and allowing these students to make meaning from new experiences and knowledge. This understanding parallels each student development theory and model integrated in this case study.
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

The primary theories considered in this case study were Tinto’s (1975, 1988) Model of Student Retention, Baxter Magolda’s (1992) Epistemological Reflection Model, Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman’s (1995) Transition Theory, and Schaller’s (2005) Stages of the Sophomore Year. The issues and experiences that second-year college students advance through directly correlate to the aforementioned student development theories because each of them has the potential to accentuate the significance of various developmental themes common during the sophomore year: Retaining second-year students is a frequent problem for colleges and universities (Tinto, 1975, 1988), while a spike in making meaning out of new knowledge often occurs in sophomore development as well (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Determining how to cope with these new transitions is another common trend for second-year students (Kramer, 2000).

After much deliberation, I decided that Schaller’s Stages of the Sophomore Year model made the most sense to guide this case study because of its insightful depiction and description of the second-year in college. However, a summary of each theory is provided below.

Schlossberg’s Transition Theory

Schlossberg et al.’s (1995) Transition Theory is comprised of “four major sets of factors”: Situation, Self, Support, and Strategies. Each set requires individuals to evaluate what “assets” and “liabilities” they will use to “cope with transition” (Summers, 2002). Some common questions asked in this theory include: what is triggering this situation? What personal and demographic characteristics are affecting me in this moment? What social
supports do I have? Which coping strategy will I use in each transition? Schlossberg et al. (1995) combined her theory with other developmental models later in her research.

In relation to the subject at hand, one cannot help but wonder how this theory looks within the context of the second-year in college? One example of this congruence is how the second-year in college is typically characterized by learning how to cope with new transitional experiences (Miller, 2006). As sophomores pass through young adulthood they rarely identify what “assets” and “liabilities” they will use to manage their emotions, respond to conflict, and learn from decisions they make (Schaller, 2005).

**Baxter Magolda’s Epistemological Reflection Model**

College sophomores also endure changes in their epistemological framework between their first and second year (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Baxter Magolda (1992) demarcates this meaning-making period in her Epistemological Reflection Model when students begin to realize that knowledge is sometimes ineffable and uncertain. The second stage in Baxter Magolda’s (1992) Epistemological Reflection Model is called “transitional knowing.” Students in this stage desire to understand knowledge instead of merely acquiring it (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Sophomores also yearn to make meaning out of all the new knowledge and experiences they encounter (Kramer, 2000).

During the first year of college, most freshmen rely heavily on their advisors, parents, and other authority figures to make meaning of knowledge for them; however, second-year students begin to realize that authorities are not “all-knowing” (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Consequently, students in this stage demand these authority figures to offer more “information regarding the applicability of knowledge” (Baxter Magolda, 1992). However, developing one’s voice, in order to initiate this demand for more information, is often a
struggle for sophomores without having an already established rapport with professors and peers (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Baxter Magolda (1992) reported that half of college sophomores are known as “transitional knowers.” This report captures the reality that sophomores require highly structured and purposeful avenues for learning and development.

**Tinto’s Model of Student Retention**

Correspondingly, second-year students have traditionally been the most problematic for colleges and universities to retain (Powers, 2008). Tinto’s (1975, 1988) Model of Student Retention investigates this retention crisis, dominant in second-year student populations. Tinto posits that academic and social “integration” must occur, whereby students feel valued by staff, peers, and ultimately their institution. Draper comments on Tinto’s “integration” concept, stating:

> It [Tinto’s theory] claims that whether a student persists or drops out is quite strongly predicted by their degree of academic integration, and social integration. These evolve over time, as integration and commitment interact, with dropouts depending on commitment at the time of the decision. (Draper, 2003)

Schaller offers a similar view to that of Tinto, asserting: “The strongest second-year transition programs make a clear link between academic and career advising” (Powers, 2008). Whether emphasizing the “integration” of social and academic realms or accentuating the effect of frequent faculty-student engagement during the sophomore, each viewpoint calls institutions to respond appropriately and swiftly.

**Schaller’s Stages of the Sophomore Year**

Random exploration, focused exploration, tentative choices, and commitment comprise the four stages of development outlined in Schaller’s (2005) Stages of the Sophomore Year model. The primary content areas in this model are relationships, self, and academics (Schaller, 2005). Sophomores can experience multiple stages at one time, but
typically, one stage is most prominent (Schaller, 2005). Random exploration consists of a fascinating combination of “exuberance” and a lack of reflection (Schaller, 2005). This stage is often observed during the first year (Schaller, 2005).

Upon completion of the first year in college, students (sophomores) enter what scholars call the “neutral zone” (Bridges, 1980). Sophomores in this stage have already acquired an overabundance of “information about self, peers, and the world” during their freshmen year, but are now confronted with the dilemma of what to do with all of this information (Schaller, 2005). Focused exploration derives from an experience of “frustration,” which inaugurates reflection (Schaller, 2005). Sophomores are the most common student population represented in this stage (Schaller, 2005).

Action is the main characteristic of the third stage, tentative choices, when students feel a stronger sense of “relief” and cope with any existing remnants of anxiety (Schaller, 2005). Once sophomores enter the fourth stage, commitment, they begin to consistently feel confident in their decisions, relationships, and self (Schaller, 2005). This commitment stage is the obvious and ideal choice for second-year students to function within. Schaller summarizes her developmental model by stating that any initiative or program that aims at addressing a specific cohort, like sophomores, must be founded on students’ needs and experiences (Schaller, 2005). Exploring these needs and experienced-based programs is the next step to solving this developmental equation.

The theories considered and used to guide this study related to the purpose of this research because each theory offered insight into what developmental changes transpire during the second year in college. Schlossberg et al.’s (1995) Transition Theory was considered to help guide this study because of its emphasis on the complexities of coping
with transition, which is often present during the transition throughout the second-year in college. Baxter Magolda’s (1992) Epistemological Reflection Model was also considered to guide the purpose of this study because of its depiction of meaning-making experiences and understanding knowledge, which is defined as transitional knowing. As previously stated, Baxter Magolda (1992) cites that half of the “transitional knower’s” in college today are sophomores. Tinto’s (1975, 1988) Model of Student Retention was considered to guide the purpose of this research because of its explanation of the link between “social integration” and student retention, specifically during the sophomore year. Schaller’s (2005) Stages of the Sophomore Year related to this study and guided the purpose of this research not simply because of its obvious title, but because of its wealth of information related to the sophomore year in college. Schaller’s (2005) theory relates to this research and guides the purpose of this research because it specifically addresses the second-year cohort and the variety of transitional experiences they encounter. It also succinctly summarizes how sophomores cope with stress and anxiety, the importance of community, and how they navigate through their academic life (Schaller, 2005). Altogether, these developmental theories related to this research because each theory was applicable to the developmental themes and stages commonly present during the sophomore year.

**Characteristics of Quality Sophomore Year Experience Programs**

Some common intervention strategies regarding the sophomore slump include, developing special curricular and co-curricular programs, providing special counseling for freshmen prior to entering their second year, and establishing dynamic mentoring relationships with faculty and staff (Miller, 2006). These interventions are intended to prevent the sophomore slump, whereby second-year students receive the appropriate
guidance from faculty, staff, and campus resources through a structured program. However, launching these strategies and interventions before students enter their sophomore year is paramount to a successful second year. Simply producing programs that increase student involvement is a noble start, if the objective is merely to meet an institutional or departmental quota; but sophomores require more specific, relevant interventions that support and challenge their developmental needs that will prepare them for the future (Miller, 2006).

Susan Mosley-Howard, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at Miami University, Ohio comments on this need for specific second-year programs, stating, “In higher education we put lots of emphasis on the first-year programs, but all of the sudden the second year comes and it’s easy for students to get lost in the mix” (as qtd. in Powers, 2008). Molly Schaller, associate professor in the department of counselor education and human services at the University of Dayton, echoes this sentiment as well: “We’re getting to the point where institutions are articulating to students and faculty that it’s not just another year [referring to the sophomore year]—there are special programs for them” (Powers, 2008).

Altogether, each factor stemming from students’ first-year experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom, must be taken into consideration before crafting curricular and co-curricular initiatives for sophomores. Factors, such as, previous academic success in both major and general education classes, whether a student was on academic probation during their sophomore year, and what external influences have impacted their holistic growth, would be relevant.
An Overview of Current Sophomore Year Experience Programs

Programs that fulfill these specific objectives that have been proven to be effective and are currently being implemented at various colleges and universities across the nation are described in the proceeding pages. The following institutions offer sophomore year experience programs that have been recognized by the National Resource Center for First Year Students and Students in Transition (Hunter, Tobolowsky, & Gardner, 2009). A program description for each institution is provided below as well. A full list of sophomore year experience programs throughout the United States is published by the National Resource Center for First Year Students and Students in Transition (2010).

In the Western United States, many sophomore year experience programs seem to offer some solid opportunities for sophomores to grow in their curricular and co-curricular development, but two in particular appear to be especially stellar: California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo’s Sophomore Success Program and the University of Hawaii, Manoa’s The Sophomore Experience. Cal Poly’s Sophomore Success Program (SSP) focuses on a three-pronged approach to student learning and development of academic planning, community interaction, and personal autonomy (Hunter et al., 2009), while the University of Hawaii, Manoa’s The Sophomore Experience provides career advising and planning, information and support for getting involved on campus, and faculty and staff mentor opportunities (Kudlaeck, 2008).

The number of sophomore year experience programs in the Midwest is robust to say the least. Butler University, Kalamazoo College, Case Western Reserve University, and Beloit College are just a few of the sophomore year experience programs offered in this region of the country (Hunter et al., 2009). Butler University targets “at-risk” students in the
health and science majors, advising them into the healthcare field; Kalamazoo College requires all sophomore students to participate in a career service component to their college experience, connecting them with various academic disciplines and assisting them in setting vocational goals; Case Western Reserve University’s Second-year institute and Second Year Academic Excellence Seminar (ACES) offers resources on study abroad options, career planning strategies, and resume seminars for second-year students; and Beloit College offers several sophomore events, and provides 13 grants to second-year students ranging from $500-$1500 per year (Hunter et al., 2009).

Sophomore year experience programs are not lacking in the Eastern part of the country either. Emory University devotes a large residence hall entirely to second-year students under the supervision of full-time staff; Saint Michael’s College established a Sophomore Development Office under the leadership of their Sophomore Development Coordinator; the University of South Carolina’s The Sophomore Initiative, is recognized as the pinnacle for second-year student programs and directs the National Resource Center for First Year Students and Students in Transition (Hunter et al., 2009).

**Academia and Faculty**

The aforementioned paragraphs discuss why a significant group of college students often experience a “slump” during their second year. Notwithstanding, how do sophomores who thrive developmentally between their first and second year in college, succeed without specific intervention or intentional program involvement? In other words, what is the secret to a successful sophomore year? Some professionals suggest a necessary ingredient to assuring success during the second-year involves “increasing the level of intellectual
engagement in order to sustain the high expectations of the first year” (Schreiner & Pattengale, 2000).

Anderson and Schreiner (2000) state “sophomore students are often in the transition from general education courses to courses in an academic major. Issues such as uncertainty about a major may create tensions that could have an adverse effect on their success” (p. 89).

The pressure of deciding on a major frequently surfaces during the sophomore year and usually revolves around issues related to vocational confusion, pressure to succeed from family, and a students feeling a sense of belonging to their department (Anderson & Schreiner, 2000). While the vast majority sophomores do not decide on a major upon entering their second-year, a fair amount of these students in transition actually change their major, whereby a declaration of a new major is warranted (Anderson & Schreiner, 2000).

A viable response from academia could be to revisit and reconsider general education course sequences for underclassmen (Anderson & Schreiner, 2000). Perhaps enrolling sophomores in more major courses earlier in their matriculation could help remedy the common undeclared status of so many second-year students, and reverse their disconnect to faculty, and establish a clearer academic and vocational path:

Sophomores, in particular, are at a stage in their college career where institutions may need to be especially aware of relevant issues. Increasingly, the second year is being viewed as a time of moratorium; in which students seek to solidify their career decisions and personal goals. (Anderson & Schreiner, 2000; Boivin, Fountain, & Baylis, 2000, p. 100)

In addition, Graunke and Woolsey (2005) state,

Sophomores were less likely than students in other classes to be actively involved with their own learning or to see faculty as actively engaged in their personal and academic development” and were “most likely than any students in other classes to report that confirming their major selection or deciding on an appropriate career was their biggest personal problem. (p. 72)
Therefore, it is evident that sophomores require just as much, if not more, personal and academic support than freshmen.

**University Policy**

Some institutions have returned to previous residential policies requiring students to live on campus for their first two years (Powers, 2008). The reason behind this initiative is derived from the fact that students who live off campus during their second year perform worse in the classroom and are less involved on campus than their on-campus peers (Powers, 2008). A myriad of developmental issues materialize during the second-year of college (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). These issues are vast and differ depending on how much support (or how little) is offered from faculty and staff in the form of curricular and co-curricular programming, and university policy (Powers, 2008). Typically, sophomore year experience programs, or, SYE’s, combine curricular and co-curricular initiatives that mirror both departmental and institutional objectives, goals, and policy (Powers, 2008).

**SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW**

Responding to the sophomore slump with practical opportunities to improve student learning and development is absolutely vital to the success of this student population (Schreiner & Pattengale, 2000). While introducing specific programs and initiatives that support second-year students is becoming a growing trend for many colleges and universities (Schreiner & Pattengale, 2000), only one-third of the nation’s colleges and universities have programs designed specifically for sophomores (Powers, 2008). Perhaps the lack of sophomore year experience programs is due to an inadequate response from faculty, staff, and administrators because of a lack of foundational knowledge on what the second-year of college entails; a depleting resource of funding, and a virtually non-existent number of
positions in higher education geared towards the sophomore year experience (Powers, 2008). This summary requires further examination of the sophomore year in college because these theories do not offer a complete account on all the factors that influence second-year college student development at a faith-based university. These theories do offer valuable insight into what stages and themes are common during the sophomore year of college, but they do not provide specific recommendations on how to make the sophomore year experience more productive, supportive, and effective for students a faith-based university.

This case study will inquire about the sophomore year in college through individual interviews designed to elicit authentic responses of what factors that influence social, curricular, and co-curricular growth and development in second-year college students at a faith-based university.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative case study was utilized as the primary methodology in this research. A case study “refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular participant or small group, frequently including the accounts of subjects themselves” (Colorado State University, 2011). A case study approach can be used in several ways, but my primary focus was to provide second-year students a chance to share their stories about their academic and personal life. Ultimately, I wanted to study both their perspective on their second-year in college and how they viewed it affecting their overall growth and development.

The purpose of this case study was to determine what social, curricular, and co-curricular characteristics affect second-year college students at a faith-based, liberal arts university in the Western United States. Fifty student subjects were recruited for this case study. A total of 17 individual interviews were conducted as the primary data collection method for this case study, as students described their sophomore year experiences inside and outside of the classroom. The low number of responses was primarily due to subjects not completing the screenings questions or consent form before the deadline set for them by the primary researcher.

I selected a qualitative case study with interviews for my research design because case studies aim to offer subjects an ample opportunity to share their perception of their experience without a sense of restriction (Stake, 1995). My first obligation, as it relates to this study, is to understand this one case, not how this case relates to others (Stake, 1995). In
addition, a case study is also an effective methodology when using “how” questions because “the questions are targeted to a limited number of events or conditions and their inter-relationships” (Creswell, 1994; Soy, 1997). Therefore, subjects will be given a specific topic to focus on when answering my interview questions. I also wanted to organize this study around issues (Stake, 1995), so subjects would both experience a healthy amount of freedom in their responses, but also provide relevant data pertaining to what social, curricular, and co-curricular factors affect sophomore students at a faith-based university.

In other words, when participants were interviewed, they were immediately informed of the case study topic. After informing them of the case study topic, I asked them a series of interview questions. Next, I recorded each subject’s answers from the interview questions. Finally, I compared their responses to the interview questions with the literature review to determine if there were any similarities, themes, or words or phrases present.

**Steps Involved in Qualitative Research**

For this study, the qualitative method was the method of choice because I wanted to focus on exploring variables related to their experiences and descriptions that would not be as apparent when using quantitative methods since quantitative methods typically focus on closed-ended questions and numbers (Creswell, 1994). Following the process for qualitative research, I asked (a) eleven screening questions to determine subject eligibility, (b) evaluated, selected eligible candidates, and provided consent forms to subjects via email or in person, (c) met with subjects individually, gathered information, and determined any themes present in subject responses, (d) evaluated and determined if subject responses resonated with developmental theories utilized in this study, (e) recorded hand-written notes, and
(f) analyzed written notes and extracted any patterns, themes, or similarities from subject responses.

**CASE STUDY**

The methodology I selected for this case study was qualitative in nature. The primary reason for why I opted to use this type of methodology for this case study was to ensure that each subject would be able to share their sophomore year experiences without feeling restricted to a simply “yes” or “no” answer, but to feel comfortable elaborating on each area of their curricular and co-curricular life during their second-year in college. My main technique for this case study was one-on-one interviews with students at this Western faith-based university who recently completed their sophomore year. I also evaluated documents related to the sophomore year experience.

The primary researcher took hand-written notes during the interviews and then transcribed them word for word on a personal computer. A member check was also conducted shortly after the interview process concluded in order to ensure that subjects’ responses were captured accurately. This process involved the primary researcher emailing each subject their exact, word for word responses to the interview questions, and then asking for each subject to respond to confirm or deny the accuracy of the primary researcher’s hand-written notes of their individual interview responses. The member check results confirmed that all of the hand-written notes recorded by the primary researcher from the individual interview responses were truthful and accurate.

A constant comparative method of analysis was performed during this case study. This method involves the primary researcher using one piece of data, in this case, the individual interviews, and comparing it to all other pieces of data that are either similar or
different (Glasser, 1965). The other source of data that the individual interviews were compared to was the document analysis. The main goal in using the constant comparative method was to draw new meaning from the data (Glasser, 1965).

The interview responses were read through one by one multiple times and compared to the other interview responses as well as the document analysis. Key themes and statements were then extracted from this constant comparative method to identify discrepancies or similarities in the data sources.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions were explored during this case study.

1. What are sophomores' perceptions of about what contributes to success in their second year of college?

2. What are the important characteristics of a quality sophomore year experience program?

3. How can a quality sophomore year experience program at a faith-based university enhance student growth and development?

**SAMPLE POPULATION**

The site where this case study took place was chosen for a number of reasons. First, this site possessed an ideal sample population to interview. Secondly, this site was the place of employment of the primary researcher. Lastly, this site was selected to conduct this research because it is a faith-based university. This case study was primarily conducted in a residence hall on the campus of a Western, faith-based university in the United States. The sample population for this case study was drawn from students at the university, who were English-speaking, and who had just completed their sophomore year at the conclusion of the Spring 2010 semester, fell within the age range of 19-22, and were either in good academic standing or on academic probation in their second-year of college.
Of the fifty male and female sophomore students recruited for this case study, only seventeen students responded and participated. There were seven female subjects and ten male subjects. Ethnicities represented in this study included two African-Americans, one Latino-American, and fourteen Caucasians. This sample population was asked to report their gender, if they were comfortable doing so, but a definitive answer was not required, nor was it a major area of focus in this study.

The Western faith-based university where this study was conducted currently has nearly 3000 students enrolled in either an undergraduate or graduate program. This university primarily exists as a four-year, residential, private, Christian, liberal arts university, with strong denominational ties to a specific Church.

**THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR SELECTING STUDENTS FOR INTERVIEWS**

Subjects were selected after potential subjects completed the necessary screening interview questions. All screening and interview questions can be found in the Appendix A and B. Screening potential subjects was necessary for this study so that the data obtained from the interviews would generate an accurate portrayal of the sophomore year, by recent sophomores at a faith-based university. Subjects were also selected based on their availability to be interviewed. Secondly, subjects selected for this study were drawn from a pool of students who recently completed their sophomore year of college at the university. All subjects who were eventually selected as eligible for participation in this case study, were English-speaking, students between the ages of 19-22, and either reported being in good academic standing or on academic probation during their sophomore year. Each subject was invited to participate in this case study via email and face-to-face communication since the primary researcher was employed at the university where potential subjects were enrolled.
Since FERPA regulations prohibit the disclosure of academic performance issues by a school employee to anyone other than the student themselves, the interviewer (primary researcher) interviewed all subjects individually. No other data was extracted from students’ records. The only data collected from subjects for this case study was from the interviews as stated in the Potential Subject Prompt, Consent Form, and Case Study Questions documents (see Appendices C and D).

ENSURING CONFIDENTIALITY

The primary researcher established an agreed upon time convenient for each subject who participated in this case study. Then, subjects were assigned a random participation number that will be referred to in the “Findings” and “Analysis” chapters instead of their name. The coded piece of paper, or “key,” was kept under lock and key in the researcher’s private office.

The only person collecting data from participants during the interview process was the primary researcher. The primary researcher has a connection to a few potential subjects, as he is employed at the university where the research was conducted, so all subjects were informed that this factor would not influence this study in any way. The purpose behind not offering any incentive for participating in this case study was to reduce the amount of potential influence outside of the research context that may have an effect on subjects’ responses.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The recipe that was used for the document analysis involved the following process: determining what questions would be answered from reading and analyzing selected documents and what criteria that would be used for selecting a document for analysis. The
criteria used for selecting a document for analysis was based on the findings of the literature review. The criteria used for selecting a document for analysis was also obtained from workshops addressing sophomore experiences. Each document selected for the document analysis was chosen because of its relevance to the second-year student and to describe the impact that sophomore year experience programs can have on sophomore college students.

The following documents were chosen for analysis: the preliminary findings from the 2005 National Survey on Sophomore-Year Initiatives published by the National Resource Center for Students in Transition; a Power Point entitled, “I’m Not New Anymore, But I Still Feel Lost! Determining the Needs of Second-Year Students on Small College Campuses” (Gansemmer-Topf & Stern, 2008) on the Grinnell College website, an essay found on the Clarion University homepage titled, “The Sophomore Year: Literature Search to Support a Sophomore Year Retention and Success Initiative at Clarion University of Pennsylvania” (Karp, Croskey, Swanson, & Ansell, 2008), Valdosta State University’s Sophomore Year Experience Quality Enhancement Plan, a PowerPoint entitled, “What About Us?” Engaging Second-Year Students, (Kennedy-Phillips, Boehm, Moses, & Athas, 2010) presented at the annual NASPA (National Association for Student Personnel Administrators) conference in Chicago, Illinois in 2010 by The Office of Student Life from The Ohio State University, and “Ya Gotta Declare Yourself: Reshaping the Sophomore Year at St. Lawrence University,” an essay by Robert Thacker (2008).

Each document selected for analysis met the following criteria: it included curricular and co-curricular data related to the sophomore year in college, it cited foundational sophomore year literature included in chapter two, and it referenced the primary student development theory utilized in this study (Schaller’s (2005) Stages of the Sophomore Year).
Altogether, the document analysis did not go beyond the sophomore year topics presented in the interviews because the main objective was triangulation. The first goal behind this process was to see if the interview questions were informed by the document analysis. The second goal of the document analysis was to determine if the themes extracted in the document analysis were present in the interviews.

A multitude of websites, publications, and resources on current sophomore year experience programs, both at public and private four-year institutions, were reviewed in preparation for this case study. The primary documents analyzed for this case study were: preliminary findings from the 2005 National Survey on Sophomore-Year Initiatives published by the National Resource Center for Students in Transition; a Power Point entitled, “I’m Not New Anymore, But I Still Feel Lost! Determining the Needs of Second-Year Students on Small College Campuses” (Gansemter-Topf & Stern, 2008) on the Grinnell College website, an essay found on the Clarion University homepage titled, “The Sophomore Year: Literature Search to Support a Sophomore Year Retention and Success Initiative at Clarion University of Pennsylvania,” (Karp et al., 2008). Valdosta State University’s Sophomore Year Experience Quality Enhancement Plan, a PowerPoint entitled, “What About Us?” Engaging Second-Year Students, (Kennedy-Phillips et al., 2010) presented at the annual NASPA (National Association for Student Personnel Administrators) conference in Chicago, Illinois in 2010 by The Office of Student Life from The Ohio State University, and “Ya Gotta Declare Yourself: Reshaping the Sophomore Year at St. Lawrence University,” an essay by Robert Thacker (2008).
INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Each interview question was intended to produce some new form of insight and knowledge on the second-year college student experience. These questions were developed from an exhaustive review of sophomore year literature previously mentioned in chapter two and from a document analysis described in the previous paragraph. The interview questions aimed at measuring what and how social, curricular, and co-curricular characteristics affected second-year college students at the faith-based university. The interview questions were informed by several pieces of literature in chapter two; however, some questions were also developed from Schaller’s Stages of the Sophomore Year model, and from hand-written notes and observations from various sophomore year experience workshops at professional conferences.

DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

The data collection and analytical process was a culmination of (a) individual interviews with sophomore students at a Western faith-based university, (b) analyzing written notes from the individual interviews, and (c) document analysis of the aforementioned resources in the “Document Analysis” section. Permission was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) from all institutions involved to conduct this case study (see Appendix E for the IRB and Appendix F for the Copyright Plan).

DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGIES

An accurate portrayal was given of sophomore students’ experiences from the primary researcher’s hand-written notes and observations, which includes subjects’ understanding and awareness of their development, their reaction to the interview questions, and their perceptions of the second-year in college as a whole. Then, all hand-written notes
were summarized from each individual interview and cross-referenced with the documents and student development theories utilized in this case study. The purpose behind choosing this strategy was to determine if any themes or similarities could be drawn from subject responses. Deciphering the hand-written notes from the interviews concluded the data analysis process; this was separate from any cross-reference process to ensure that each subject’s responses fully captured their sophomore year experience at this faith-based university. The questions used in the document analysis included the following: do any elements in this document relate to the elements in the literature review? Do any elements in this document reflect themes present in the interview questions?

**TRUSTWORTHINESS OF DATA**

To preserve and ensure the authenticity of the data acquired from this case study with interviews, I emailed a copy of my notes to each subject individually and asked each subject to verify that their responses to the interview questions are accurate. The results from this process generated a very minimal response from each subject. Most subjects responded to the primary researcher’s request with a simple, “yes” or “everything looks good”; and, each subject affirmed the accuracy of their responses to the interview questions. All interviews followed the same protocol and questions related to this study. The data acquired from this study will be used to help create a Sophomore Year Experience pilot program at a faith-based university in the Western United States.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The following data was gathered from individual interviews and document analysis. All responses in block quotations were directly extracted from the primary researchers' written notes during the interview process. Some subjects were highly transparent during the individual interviews; these students did not hold back any details regarding their sophomore year experience at this faith-based university and typically described their frustrations about professors they did not get along with, disagreement with university policy as it related to behavior, and how difficult it was to juggle every class assignment, paper, or exam with their social life.

I analyzed and extracted various themes stemming from subjects’ interview question responses that coincided with the primary student development theory discussed in the previous two chapters. However one theme did not resonate with the primary student development theory, Schaller’s Stages of the Sophomore Year, which does not take into account the first theme of (a) time (a lack of it) and pressure (to succeed). Nonetheless, the other two themes gleaned from the findings did echo Schaller’s “random exploration” and “commitment” stages because student subjects, (b) emphasized the need for community and interaction with peers, staff, and faculty, and (c) stressed their ubiquitous confusion about their major, vocation goals, and academic future. Various testimonials highlighting these themes are paired together below.
TIME AND PRESSURE

Most subjects indicated that while their investment in their studies required an ample amount of time and energy and contributed to a great deal of pressure to succeed from external and internal forces (parents, professors, and classmates), it eventually produced better time management skills. Some subjects reported that their peers often observed their rigorous studying schedule and habits, which in turn, positively influenced the study habits of those very students, but sometimes intimidated their younger peers, painting a pressure-filled picture of the sophomore year.

Loss of sleep, due to a lack of time and an ever-present sense of pressure to succeed, was the most common trend reported by subjects when asked about the impact that their academic life had on their sophomore year. Therefore, despite the lack of sleep that most of these second-year students endured, their investment and commitment to their academics proved to be quite profitable. A statement from a white female student at this faith-based university reinforces this concept.

In some cases it hindered me academically because I had less time for studies and I was getting less sleep. But that wasn't true for all extra curricular activities, and despite that drawback, all of my activities enriched my experience. I was involved in ASB and it impacted my sophomore year greatly. I struggled in the beginning of each semester with feeling lonely because I didn't have time to be with friends.

This statement captures the sentiment shared by many of the subjects interviewed for this case study, which reported a lack of time during their sophomore year because of the multitude of curricular, co-curricular, and personal demands in their lives.

COMMUNITY

Extra-curricular involvement was defined by the researcher and communicated to each test subject as “any extra-curricular activity, leadership position, or area of service that
engaged them outside of the classroom.” Most respondents immediately referenced the significance of being involved with a community-oriented activity on campus (i.e. athletic team, leadership position, club, campus ministry) when asked about their extra-curricular involvement.

Most subjects reported a transformative and enjoyable experience in community. Subjects frequently referred to their experience as a “connection” process that produced lasting memories and strong interpersonal relationships with peers. Some of these testimonials included:

I think it connected me to a diverse group of people on campus. Our campus always has something going on which provides a lot of different options. It helped me step out of my shell and really get involved with the campus life. You interact with people that are not in your typical “friend group” and experience campus life to a different extent. It’s all about being in community and fellowship.

The majority of subjects in this case study reported a minimal number of intimate, deep, and authentic friendships during their sophomore year in college. In fact, one subject commented that they possessed a “good amount of friends, but no friendships.”

Nearly every student indicated that they had established a strong rapport with both faculty and staff during their sophomore year. Only two subjects mentioned a weak connection with faculty and staff as a sophomore, but attributed this divide to their own lack of initiative. The most prevalent theme emanating from this inquiry was the familial connection sophomores reported with faculty and staff from their second year experience. One male, Latino student reported the strongest aspect to feeling a part of the community at this institution derived from consistent and intimate interaction with faculty in his academic department:

I feel like the faculty in my major cares about me. You become like family (within your major) and the professors connect with you on a very personal level and let you know they value you.
Most subjects attributed this communal link to faculty and staff as a proactive, self-initiated approach by the student. In other words, a strong, healthy connection to their professors was more likely to occur if they “made the first move” in the relationship. Coincidentally, all subjects who reported a strong connection to faculty remain enrolled at the faith-based university where this case study was conducted, and planned on graduating from this institution as well.

**Vocation, Major, and Academic Life**

“Dominant,” “hellish,” and “a constant juggling act” were words and phrases used by sophomore to describe the more negative aspects related to their academic experience. Additionally, only a handful of subjects indicated their academic life during their sophomore year was “enjoyable” or “manageable.” The majority of subjects described their sophomore year as a challenging one that required balance, discipline, and sacrifice, especially in regards to their major. Overall, most respondents stated that they eventually learned how to manage their time better during their sophomore year than they did as a freshman. One female respondent stated:

> I think sophomore year was a challenging one. I think it ended up being challenging because of the "what-ifs" that I had. Questions about whether or not I was in the right department, do I really like my major? Sophomore year was a constant juggling act and my academics were on top one second and then on the bottom the next. Overall, my sophomore year was one of the hardest academic years of my life.

Another subject offered a slightly different view of their sophomore year:

> I didn’t do as well as I could have. I should have studied more, but I know what to do next year. My sophomore year was the hardest academic year I ever had. I didn’t know how to prioritize and balance stuff as well as I would’ve like to.
This white male subject describes his sophomore year experience as one that was marked with apathy and surprise. However, the majority of subjects interviewed for this case study did not share this same sentiment.

A small portion of subjects reported the main hindrance to their academic success hinged on peer collaboration assignments, like group papers, projects, and presentations. Subjects strongly indicated that these obligatory assignments negatively affected their individual academic achievements. This fascinating belief appears to involve students projecting responsibility for their own academic success onto their fellow student instead of accepting that peer collaboration is a mainstay in higher education. Another subject responded to this question by focusing on “distractions” inside the classroom, hall mates in the residence halls, and the overabundance of school activities on campus.

Prayer and exercise were the most frequent coping activities and strategies reported by second-year college students at this faith-based university to combat their confusion about their vocational goals, their choice in a major, and their overall academic life and future, but also to make meaning of their young adult life. Nearly every subject in this case study cited the significance of employing some spiritual discipline or practice in their daily lives, namely prayer, meditation, and scripture reading. However, the purpose of these therapeutic forms of worship is not limited to simply coping with stress and anxiety from daily life, but coping with new and foreign transitional experiences that force them to evaluate and identify their “assets” and liabilities.” Conversely, while stress levels varied from subject to subject, nearly every response gathered during the individual interviews indicated second-year students struggled initially with choosing and familiarizing themselves with an effective coping activity or strategy.
DOCUMENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

The document analysis focused upon six documents and included the following: the 2005 National Survey on Sophomore-Year Initiatives published by the National Resource Center for Students in Transition. This document reported that sophomore experience programs increased the likelihood of second-year students interacting with faculty on a regular basis, provided more opportunities for sophomores to learn more about their major, and offered them more options for engaging in the co-curricular (Cox & Tobolowsky, 2005). These findings parallel the data found in the literature review and mirror the themes present in the interview questions as well. These documents were selected for the document analysis instead of the literature review because each document differed from the documents in the literature review. Most documents reviewed in the literature review were cited from books, articles, and journals. Conversely, most documents from the document analysis derived from websites, PowerPoint presentations, or surveys focused on the sophomore year experience.

The second document examined for the document analysis was a Power Point entitled, “I’m Not New Anymore, But I Still Feel Lost! Determining the Needs of Second-Year Students on Small College Campuses” from the Grinnell College website (Gansemer-Topf & Stern, 2008). This document cited many of the same scholars and literature included in the literature review, including, Schaller (2005), Kramer (2000), Boivin et al., (2000), and Lemons and Richmond (1987). The themes evident in this document focused on three areas: academic life, social interactions, and extracurricular life. Sophomores reported a more rigorous academic schedule during their second year, greater anxiety about wrestling with larger life questions, and the need for consistent faculty interaction (Gansemer-Topf & Stern, 2008). These findings resonated with the findings from the interviews, including, “My sophomore year was the hardest academic year I ever had,” “I think sophomore year was a
challenging one. I think it ended up being challenging because of the "what-ifs" that I had," and “I feel like the faculty in my major cares about me.”

The next document analyzed for the document analysis was an (electronic) essay found on the Clarion University homepage titled, “The Sophomore Year: Literature Search to Support a Sophomore Year Retention and Success Initiative at Clarion University of Pennsylvania” (Karp et al., 2008). This document cited several expectations that sophomore students have for their second year in college. Some of these expectations paralleled subject testimony in the individual interviews. These included: a lack of motivation and time to learn, the importance of feeling supporting by both their peers and their professors, and feeling a sense of pride about their campus community (Karp et al., 2008). However, some information extracted from this document was not congruent with the individual interviews. Sophomores at this university were not satisfied with the living conditions in the residence halls, which were not mentioned as an area of dissatisfaction in the individual interviews (Karp et al., 2008).

The fourth document evaluated for the document analysis derived from a co-curricular initiative by Valdosta State University. This main reason this document was selected was because it mentions Schaller’s Stages of the Sophomore Year as a developmental theory integrated in the university’s Sophomore Year Experience Quality Enhancement Plan. This document provided a sound description of Schaller’s Stages of the Sophomore Year in the context of proposing an SYE, which was the primary reason for including it in the document analysis.

The fifth document examined for the document analysis was a PowerPoint (described findings from a recent study) entitled, “What About Us?” Engaging Second-Year Students,
(Kennedy-Phillips et al., 2010) presented at the annual NASPA (National Association for Student Personnel Administrators) conference in Chicago, Illinois in 2010 by The Office of Student Life from The Ohio State University (Kennedy-Phillips et al., 2010). This document was selected because of its primary research question and how that question relates to this study: “What are the factors associated with the social and academic involvement among second year students?” (Kennedy-Phillips et al., 2010). Furthermore, most of the findings from this study, disseminated in this PowerPoint, were congruent with the findings from the individual interviews. One of these findings suggests, “second-year students’ psychological attributes, namely institutional commitment and academic self-efficacy, were consistent precursors to their subsequent involvement, both academically and socially” (Kennedy-Phillips et al., 2010).

The last document reviewed for the document analysis was a short essay about the sophomore year, “Ya Gotta Declare Yourself: Reshaping the Sophomore Year at St. Lawrence University” by Robert Thacker (2008). The findings from this document echoed the data about student retention found in the literature review. Thacker (2008) states, “It is during the sophomore year, too, that colleges see a continuation of student departures at a high rate, either for purposes of transferring to another college or to leave college altogether” (p. 4). This statement is congruent with Powers’ assertion mentioned in chapter two that “second-year students have traditionally been the most problematic for colleges and universities to retain” (Thacker, 2008, p. 1).

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

In the interviews, students reported the importance of a strong connection to faculty and staff at this faith-based university as being paramount to a successful sophomore year,
the significance of engaging in the co-curricular, and the impact that coping strategies played in their development as young adults.

The document analysis produced findings similar to those found in the individual interviews. Coping with heightened levels of anxiety, adjusting to a more rigorous academic schedule, and trying to avoid becoming another attrition number was all data extracted from the document analysis exclusive to the sophomore year.

The following chapter summarizes the current trends in higher education concerning sophomore year experience programs, and offers specific recommendations for the creation of a sophomore year experience program at this faith-based university. These specific recommendations will include providing sophomore students with more opportunities to connect with faculty in the curricular and co-curricular, educating faculty on these sophomore issues, and garnering support from major stakeholders on campus.
CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from the interviews and document analysis relate to the first research question, what are sophomores' perceptions of about what contributes to success in their second year of college? Based on my findings from my document analysis and interviews: sophomores feel valued and welcomed by faculty within their own major. If they have not yet selected a major, then receiving regular, weekly advising from their academic advisor would be an adequate response as well. Sophomore students are much more likely to be retained if they receive this kind of support and attention.

This finding relates to one particular student development theory stated in chapter two (Tinto, 1975, 1988). Secondly, sophomores at this school need more opportunities to make meaning out of the plethora of information, relationships, and experiences they encounter in the co-curricular, which would echo Schaller’s Stages of the Sophomore Year, specifically, in the first two stages, random and focus exploration, when second-year students experience a debilitating sense of frustration from not knowing how to navigate through the overabundance of information, relationships, and experiences they encounter during their freshmen year (Schaller, 2005). Not surprisingly, second year college students at this faith-based university must be highly committed and invested in their academic life if they are to succeed (Schaller, 2005). Sophomores need to feel connected, committed, and confident in their decisions, relationships, and self, both in the curricular and co-curricular (Schaller, 2005). Consistent prayer, meditation, and Scripture reading (Christian Bible) was a piece of
relevant data that did not directly relate to the literature used in this case study; however, these practices could be deemed as “coping strategies” during this transitional year in college if applied to a non, faith-based institution.

The purpose behind the second research question was to inform the reader of student perceptions of the important characteristics of a quality sophomore year experience program. This question generated the following data: Many second-year students interviewed for this case study mentioned a desire to take more courses in their major prior to their sophomore year, so they would feel more connected intellectually and psychologically to their department. This parallels Anderson and Schreiner’s (2000) assertion that “sophomore students are often in the transition from general education courses to courses in an academic major. Issues such as uncertainty about a major may create tensions that could have an adverse effect on their success” (Anderson & Schreiner, 2000, p. 89). Therefore, an important characteristic of a quality sophomore year experience program would involve a component that stresses collaborative efforts between faculty and staff, placing a greater emphasis on enrolling students in more major courses prior to their second-year year (Gordon, 2010).

The final research question asked was about how a quality sophomore year experience program at a faith-based university could enhance student growth and development. This question produced some valuable information as well. In fact, one piece of data generated from this research question stated, if second-year college students at this faith-based university were offered the opportunity to participate in a sophomore year experience program, they would drastically increase the likelihood of graduating from their
current institution, increasing their cumulative GPA, and improving their competency in intrapersonal, interpersonal, and character development skills (Graunke & Woolsey, 2005).

Altogether, my findings from my interviews and document analysis from this case study affirm my recommendations. Specific recommendations are outlined in the remaining pages below.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

To adequately respond to the developmental needs of second-year college students, higher education professionals must first glean wisdom and insight from their institutional infrastructure (Hunter et al., 2009). Institutions of higher education must not act as separate, monolithic entities, built to serve a particular department or office, but they must function as a diverse, cohesive organization (Cox & Tobolowsky, 2005). If this does not occur, then there is little hope of fostering a holistic learning environment for future generations.

The findings suggest two possible barriers to implementing a sophomore year experience program at this faith-based university. The primary researcher identified these barriers during the interviews and document analysis. Each barrier was extracted from either the interview responses or from the documents analyzed in the document analysis. The first possible barrier preventing an SYE program from being launched at this faith-based university is the lack of time that second-year students reported during the interviews. The second potential barrier is the lack of community knowledge from faculty, staff, and administrators on what SYE’s offer second-year students and how they impact their development and student retention. These barriers from the key findings related to either the themes from the interviews or from the document analysis of time, community, and vocation because they either delineate the lack of time sophomore students reported in the interviews,
the lack of knowledge from faculty, staff, and administrators about SYE’s and their impact on student retention reported in the document analysis. The theme of vocation from the interviews was not related to the findings, but from the document analysis.

One recommendation would be to provide sophomore students with more opportunities to connect with faculty, staff, and administration on a more regular basis. One way to accomplish this goal would be to help sophomores define their curricular and co-curricular goals through one-on-one advising from faculty and staff, and identifying and utilizing campus resources that offer leadership, mentoring, and career opportunities that relate directly to their major and vocational goals. Staff, faculty, and administrators alike must engage, empower, and recognize these often overlooked students so the critical connection between student and learning occurs (Hunter et al., 2009). This recommendation relates to the findings from the interviews and document analysis because each of the aforementioned instruments generated responses emphasizing the importance of second-year students interacting with faculty on a regular basis (Cox & Tobolowsky, 2005).

Another recommendation is to address the issue of student attrition during the sophomore year. Helping educate faculty on this retention issue is key, so they do not view themselves as merely classroom educators, but as developmental specialists and mentors. Student affairs staff warrants a paradigm shift as well. Hopefully, this will engage them more so as a young adult and member of society, rather than just as a consumer. This recommendation was not congruent with the findings in the interviews, but was identified in the document analysis: “It is during the sophomore year, too, that colleges see a continuation of student departures at a high rate, either for purposes of transferring to another college or to leave college altogether” (Thacker, 2008).
A last recommendation would be to garner support from major stakeholders on campus (Hunter et al., 2009). Faculty buy in will be key in ensuring this program’s success because it helps legitimize student-learning programs in the university setting, whether curricular or co-curricular (Gordon, 2010). Gaining support from various administrators is paramount for monetary reasons (Gordon, 2010). Since administrators are often responsible for providing data to accreditation agencies, they also demand evidence for co-curricular programming from student affairs personnel (Gordon, 2010). They typically hold the key to program funding as well. This recommendation surfaced more in the literature review and was outside the scope of my interviews and document analysis; however, this recommendation can be linked to the findings section in order to appeal to the stakeholders at this university.

**Program Design**

Designing a co-curricular program that gives sophomores an avenue to formulate and develop their social skills would not only enhance their interpersonal competency but would help minimize their frustration and anxiety level (Schaller, 2005). The program design will be informed by my findings by data found in the literature review, document analysis, and interviews. An effective sophomore year experience program must possess the following elements according the information gathered through the study. Therefore, all sophomore students where this case study was conducted will be offered the opportunity to participate in a pilot sophomore year experience program at this faith-based university (if it is approved). Initially, participants will be asked to develop a *Sophomore Success Plan* at the beginning of their sophomore year (or during the end of their freshmen year) with support and advising from staff and faculty advisors. They will be encouraged to choose a major during their third
semester (sophomore year), if they have yet to do so. Participants will be given the opportunity to take part in several sophomore-geared events during the course of the year as well.

A sophomore year weekend workshop during their third semester will be one of these events. Staff will conduct a pre-assessment of students’ goals during this time. All sophomore students who participate in the sophomore year weekend workshop will be asked to attend the End of the Year Retreat as well. This will take place towards the end of the second semester of students’ sophomore year. Lastly, all participants will be assigned an upperclassmen mentor who will act as a liaison between the program coordinator and the student.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to identify their desired junior and senior year experiences (i.e. classes, study abroad, internships, co-curricular activities).

2. Students will be able to describe their specific academic goals for each of their courses.

3. Students will be able to disseminate how they have used their Strengths (Strengths Quest) as a tool for success during their sophomore year.

4. Students will be able to communicate their behavioral and mental successes in written and verbal forms (i.e. higher GPA, hold a student leadership position, successful time management) at the end of each semester.

5. Students will be able to create a plan for improving academic performance and/or co-curricular involvement.

Recommendations for Further Research

Investigating the impact of sophomore specific living-learning communities would be one recommendation for further research, while researching the financial feasibility of creating more staff positions at various faith-based colleges and universities that work solely
with second-year students would be another. Researching how sophomore-specific financial aid packages affect student retention would also be a recommendation for further research as it relates to this case study. Each of these recommendations for further research are supported and echoed in the literature review, document analysis, and individual interviews.

The potential benefits of investigating the impact of sophomore-specific learning-living communities could include: additional assistance for sophomores towards the selection of a major, planning and preparation for study abroad programs, and community service and civic engagement opportunities by living in a major-specific living-learning community. Creating more sophomore-specific staff positions at faith-based colleges could also benefit second year students’ development by assigning educated and experienced student affairs professionals to oversee second year students outside of the classroom whose primary objective is to program, mentor, and assist these students in transition. Researching the potential benefits of sophomore-specific financial aid packages could benefit sophomore students by offering them more financial assistance along with major and career counseling in order to help decrease sophomore drop out rates. Sophomores traditionally have had one of the highest attrition rates among college students so perhaps offering scholarships and grants specifically for sophomores involved in SYE programs could be beneficial for student persistence and graduation rates.

**CONCLUSION**

Sophomore year experience initiatives continue to be launched at both public and private institutions of higher learning. Unfortunately, a program of this nature does not exist at the institution where this case study was performed and where the primary researcher is employed. Nonetheless, as previously stated, this was an influential reason for choosing the
topic of second-year college student experiences and determining what affects them during this pivotal time as young adults. It is my hope that these recommendations will be an impetus for the creation and implementation of a sophomore year experience program at this faith-based university, while also offering new data to faculty, staff, administrators, and students at other institutions of higher learning.


invisible students: Helping sophomores succeed (pp. 89-93). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina National Resource Center Publications.


**WORKS CONSULTED**


APPENDIX A

SCREENING QUESTIONS
SCREENING QUESTIONS

“The Sophomore Slump at a Faith-Based University: Exploring Curricular and Co-curricular Development and Regression During The Second Year of College”

Case Study Screening Questions

By Evan Parry
Graduate Student
San Diego State University

*INSTRUCTIONS: I am collecting data for my Masters thesis in Postsecondary Education/Student Affairs at San Diego State University. I am INTERVIEWING a number of sophomore students at Point Loma Nazarene University. Participation in this CASE study is purely voluntary. Please respond to as many questions as you feel comfortable answering. Responses will be grouped for analysis to ensure confidentiality. All responses are strictly confidential.

Some participants will be interviewed in person, while other subjects will be interviewed over the phone since they are living at their permanent home address. Subjects interviewed over the phone will be read these instructions as well as a consent form for their permission to participate in this CASE study. All subjects will be interviewed individually.

The data collected from this study will be held confidential to the extent permitted by law and will never be identified in any publication. A random participation number rather than my name will be used with the data. Any subject’s participation in this CASE is strictly voluntary. Potential subjects may withdraw from the study at any time. Please do not share anything you are not comfortable sharing with the primary researcher during the CASE study.

*PURPOSE: The purpose of this case study is to determine what factors affect sophomore residential students at a private, faith-based, liberal arts university. Moreover, it is to provide sophomores a chance to share their story about their experiences at a faith-based university.

SCREENING QUESTIONS

1. Did you recently complete your second-year (sophomore year) in college?

   Yes   No

2. Are you currently in good academic standing?

   Yes   No
3. Were you on academic probation during your freshmen year?

Yes  No

4. Were you on academic probation during your sophomore year?

Yes  No

5. Please indicate your gender

Male  Female

6. What is your ethnicity? (Circle all that apply)

African American
Asian/Pacific Islander
Native American
Latino/Latina
Caucasian
Other
Prefer not to answer

7. What is your academic major?

8. Were you undeclared before your sophomore year?

Yes  No

9. Do you plan on graduating from your current institution?

Yes  No

10. Were you employed during your sophomore year?

Yes  No

11. Indicate your freshmen and sophomore year extracurricular involvement below (Circle only one):

Freshmen Year

   Student leadership (RA, ASB, etc.)
Club & Organization (intramurals, academic major club, etc.)
Athletics
Campus and/or Church ministry
Other (please describe)

Sophomore Year
Student leadership (RA, ASB, etc.)
Club & Organization (intramurals, academic major club, etc.)
Athletics
Campus and/or Church ministry
Other (please describe)
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Case Study
“The Sophomore Slump at a Faith-Based University: Exploring Curricular and Co-curricular Development and Regression During The Second Year of College”
Evan Parry

1. How did your extra-curricular involvement impact your sophomore year?

2. Describe your perception of your academic experience during your sophomore year. In other words, share your story about your academic life during your sophomore year, or better yet, walk me through a type academic week in the life of a sophomore.

3. Was there any thing that hindered your success inside and outside of the classroom during your sophomore year?

4. How would you describe your social life during your sophomore year?

5. How connected did you feel to faculty and staff at your school during your sophomore year?

6. What social activities and strategies did you use to cope with stress during your sophomore year?

*INTERVIEWS WILL BE COMPLETED BY November 19th, 2010*
APPENDIX C

SUBJECT PROMPT FORM
SUBJECT PROMPT FORM

Case Study- Subject Prompt

The Sophomore Slump at a Faith-Based University: Exploring Curricular and Co-curricular Development and Regression During The Second Year of College

By Evan Parry
Graduate Student
San Diego State University

*INSTRUCTIONS: I am collecting data for my Masters thesis in Postsecondary Education/Student Affairs at San Diego State University. I am interviewing a number of sophomore students at Point Loma Nazarene University. Participation in this case study is purely voluntary. Please respond to as many questions as you feel comfortable answering. Responses will be grouped for analysis to ensure confidentiality. All responses are strictly confidential.

The location where the interviews will be conducted will be on the campus of a local, Western University. Each interview will be entirely private. Subjects will answer the interview questions individually to ensure confidentiality. Anyone interviewed over the phone will be asked to respond to interview questions in a private, undisturbed area where they feel comfortable. Subjects who participate in the case study inside the residence halls will be interviewed individually, in a private office space of the researcher. Both subjects interviewed over the phone or in person will be read these instructions as well as a consent form for their permission to participate in this case study.

The data collected from this study will be held confidential to the extent permitted by law and will never be identified in any publication. A random participation number rather than my name will be used with the data. Any subject’s participation in this case is strictly voluntary. Potential subjects may withdraw from the study at any time.

While the researcher’s affiliation with Point Loma Nazarene University may call some privacy issues into question, it does not make the researcher a mandated reporter on student conduct violations because these kinds of questions will not be asked. Please do not share anything you are not comfortable sharing with the primary researcher during the case study.
APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Consent to Act as a Research Subject

San Diego State University

Consent to Act as a Research Subject

_The Sophomore Slump at a Faith-Based University: Exploring Curricular and Co-curricular Development and Regression During The Second Year of College_

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigators: Evan Parry, Primary Researcher, 619-559-0779, and Dr. Marilee Bresciani, supervising professor, 619 594-8318.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this case study is to determine what characteristics affect second-year college students at a faith-based institution, either positively or negatively. This qualitative data will then be used to help create a Sophomore Year Experience program at the Western faith-based university where this case study will be conducted.

Description of the Study: After you agree to participate in this case study, please sign the consent form and return it back to the researcher. After you and the primary researcher agree on a meeting location, please be prepared to answer interview questions in a private, comfortable location. You will be given the option to participate in the case study either over the phone or individually in person. Lastly, participation in this case study will require approximately 30-45 minutes from you. This time approximation is based on how long it will take you to answer all the case study questions, as well as review the Consent Form and return it to the researcher. You understand that the proposed length of your participation in this study consists of one session that will last approximately 30-45 minutes. Mr. Parry, will individually interview you, either in person or over the phone, whichever you prefer.
Risks or Discomforts: You will be instructed by the primary researcher to not inform him of any sensitive information relating to you. If you choose to disclose any sensitive information about yourself during the interviews, the primary researcher will refer you appropriately. Nevertheless, your responses will not impact or influence this study. In addition, the primary researcher cannot guarantee that disciplinary action will not take place in the event that you disclose information about yourself that indicates that you have violated your institution’s student conduct policy. You will be made aware of counseling referrals in this event, as well as in the Subject Prompt and the Consent Form.

Benefits of the Study: You will not receive any direct benefit by participating in this study. Although you will not receive any direct benefits by participating in this study, you will be providing valuable data towards the development of a Sophomore Year Experience program at your school. Nonetheless, I cannot guarantee, however, that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent allowed by law. You will only be identified by a pseudonym, and your responses will be kept for three years in a private, locked cabinet in the researcher’s office. There will not be a breach in confidentiality. All data will be reported anonymously. You will be interviewed individually, in a private location where you feel comfortable.

Incentives to Participate: You will be given no incentive to participate in this case study.

Costs and/or Compensation for Participation: You will not accrue any monetary costs by participating in this study for the possible exception of transportation costs if you choose to meet the primary researcher at an off campus location.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with San Diego State University, Point Loma Nazarene University, or the primary investigator, Mr. Parry. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are allowed.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions regarding this study at any time during your participation, please contact the primary researcher at 619-559-0779.
If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at San Diego State University (telephone: 619-594-6622; email: irb@mail.sdsu.edu).

Consent to Participate: The San Diego State University Institutional Review Board has approved this consent form, as signified by the Board's stamp. The consent form must be reviewed annually and expires on the date indicated on the stamp.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this consent form. You have been told that by signing this consent form you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

____________________________________
Name of Participant (please print)

____________________________________   ________________
Signature of Participant                   Date

____________________________________   ________________
Signature of Investigator                 Date
APPENDIX E

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
PLNU IRB

Expedited Review

# 754

Date: Monday, July 19, 2010

PI: Evan Parry

Title: Exploring Sophomore Student Experiences at a Faith-Based University

The research proposal was reviewed and verified as an expedited review under category 7 and has been approved in accordance with PLNU's IRB and federal requirements pertaining to human subjects protections within the Federal Law 45 CFR 46.101 b. Your project will be subject to approval for one year from the July 19, 2010 date of approval. After completion of your study or by July 19, 2011, you must submit a summary of your project or a request for continuation to the IRB. If any changes to your study are planned or you require additional time to complete your project, please notify the IRB chair.

For questions related to this correspondence, please contact the IRB Chair, Ross A. Oakes Mueller, Ph.D., at the contact information below. To access the IRB to request a review for a modification or renewal of your protocol, or to access relevant policies and guidelines related to the involvement of human subjects in research, please visit the PLNU IRB web site.

Best wishes on your study,

Ross A. Oakes Mueller

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, IRB Chair
APPENDIX F

COPYRIGHT PLAN
COPYRIGHT PLAN

June 2010

Dear Graduate and Research Affairs Dean:

I have discussed all rights pertaining to my thesis data and publication authorship with my thesis advisor, Dr. Marilee Bresciani. I understand that the copyright of the written thesis belongs to me once it is created. I also understand that the copyright of the thesis will only be shared if submitted for publication (for example, in an academic journal) upon completion of the thesis.

My plans for publication include submitting it for publication to various student affairs journals. These journals include: Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, the Growth Journal, and the Journal of College Student Development. I understand that I will be the primary author if published in a journal with my thesis advisor serving as the secondary author.

The amount of effort involved concerning publication plans will be moderate from both the primary author and the secondary author. The anticipated deadline for publication has been tentatively set for the end of the year, 2010.

Respectfully,

Evan Parry