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C.U.B.S.: Creating unique beginnings for student involvement on campus

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This research is a product of the graduate program in [Counseling and Student Development](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

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C.U.B.S.: Creating Unique Beginnings for

Student Involvement on Campus

(TITLE)

BY

Alisha Scaggs

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Science in College Student Affairs

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS


May 2009

YEAR

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Abstract

Promoting student involvement on college campuses is an important asset for the college community. Involvement plays a role in several factors, one of the most important being overall student satisfaction. In what way is student satisfaction affected when first year students are given an extra leadership opportunity where they are automatically put in a leadership position just as they move onto campus? More importantly, in what manner will placement in a leadership role impact their development? The present study investigated the role of student involvement in the personal development of a group of Midwestern university freshmen women placed in a residence hall first year leadership program at the start of their first college semester. Data were gathered by means of one-on-one interviews conducted by the researcher among a snowball sample of participants and non-participants in the Creating Unique Beginnings for Success (C.U.B.S.) residence hall leadership program. Qualitative data were analyzed using the method of constant comparative analysis to further understand the perceived role of volunteer leadership involvement among freshmen at the university during the first semester, as well as for formative program evaluation of the C.U.B.S. program. C.U.B.S. participants, compared to non-participants, gained greater personal confidence, took more risks to get involved in residence life activities, and were more satisfied with their overall residence life experience.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the first cohort of Carman C.U.B.S. participants. Your willingness to participate in the unknown was incredible. Thank you for taking a chance, moving in early, and allowing me to be in the front seat of your first year of college. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Thanks again,

Alisha Scaggs

Thanks for listening to me complain for almost two years about having to complete a thesis and giving me a helping hand (or hug) when I've needed it.

Dr. Eberly, my thesis chair, thank you for pushing me to continually strive for greatness. I appreciate the amount of hours you have dedicated to proofreading my thesis and the amount of personal time you have given up in order to help all of us defend our thesis. Without your enthusiasm for research, I would have never gained this valuable experience.

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Jody Stone, committee member, thanks for everything. Literally, I have almost everything to thank you for! From serving on my thesis committee, to allowing me to advise the Residence Hall Association with you, to supporting me during my job search, to being there for me during day to day life, to allowing the Carman C.U.B.S. program to even come in to existence. This thesis would not have been possible without you in the equation. Thank you for being such an amazing role model and support system to me. I will miss your guidance no matter where life takes me. You have taught me so much about being a caring and intentional professional, thank you!

To my Carman staff members, thank you for all of your support! In my two years of graduate school every one of you became invested at some point or another in how my

classes were going and how my thesis writing was coming. Some of you kept me company in my office until the early hours of the morning while working on it, others brought me snacks and pick-me-ups when I needed it most, many of you would take turns asking me about my thesis every single day until I had made some progress. I hope that I was able to inspire all of you with hard work as much as all of you inspired me.

To the 2009 CSA Cohort, we finally made it together. You have all been so wonderful these past two years. Without all of your support I would have never made it this far. Thank you for taking this crazy journey with me and allowing me to be a part of all of your journeys as well.

And finally, to the participants who gave me their time and shared many wonderful experiences with me. All of you have something uniquely awesome to offer to this university and I hope that all of you seize the opportunity to do so. Thank you for telling me your stories and best of luck as you continue on with your college career!

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Chapter I

Introduction

Astin (1975) proposed the concept of student involvement as a major influence in retaining students in college. Nine years later, Astin (1984) introduced his theory of student involvement, citing it as a developmental theory for higher education. Astin (1984) defined involvement as the “amount of physical and psychosocial energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 297). Astin’s early work about student involvement was academically centered and rarely took into account the value-added experiences of extracurricular involvement. However, the focus on involvement has now shifted to outside of classroom connections being the most impactful on students. Out-of-class experiences present students with challenges, both personal and social, that help them develop larger and more complicated insights on academic and personal matters. Out-of-class experiences have also been shown to compliment and give more meaning to material learned inside the classroom (Kuh, 1995).

Holding a leadership position in a student organization produces higher levels of purpose development, involvement in education, life management skills, and participation in cultural activities. Holding specific leadership responsibilities or offices in clubs or organizations correlates positively with gains in “interpersonal competence, practical competence, cognitive complexity, and humanitarianism” (Kuh, 1995, p. 129). The more hours students spend participating in organizations, the more likely they will be elected into student offices, have greater public speaking abilities, have greater leadership abilities, and interpersonal skills (Astin, 1993).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to identify the experiences of students that participated in a new freshmen leadership program called the Carman Creating Unique Beginnings for Success (C.U.B.S.) at a comprehensive Midwestern university in comparison to other non participating new first term students at that same university who were not in the leadership program. The second purpose of this study was to determine if and how the experiences impacted those students. This study also examined ways in which personal development and satisfaction were affected by involvement outside the classroom setting during the first semester for first-time students. The findings of this study may help administrators decide if the Carman residence hall C.U.B.S. program should be continued, discontinued, or expanded to a first year residence life experience program. In addition, the present study may also help decide how to go about continuing the group and in what ways the program was and was not successful in its first semester.

The problems of concern for this study were (1) the lack of freshmen involvement during the first semester; (2) the lack of interest and engagement of freshmen students when it comes to involvement in the residence halls; (3) the lack of leadership training opportunities freshmen are given on campus.

Research Question

The following research question guided the present study.

1. In a qualitative comparison of Carman C.U.B.S. participants and a similar group of non-participants, what is the perceived impact of the Carman C.U.B.S. program on new, first-time students?

The following interview protocol questions also guided the present study.

For all participants:

1. In what ways have you changed as a person since coming to college and what factors influenced those changes?
2. Which activities have you become involved in since moving to the university?
3. Who or what played the biggest factor in your involvement or noninvolvement?

For Carman C.U.B.S. participants:

4. In what ways has the C.U.B.S. program impacted your involvement?
5. In what ways has the C.U.B.S. program impacted your college experience thus far?

Significance of the Study

Astin (1993) found that student-student interaction has its strongest positive effects on leadership development, overall academic development, self-reported growth in problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, and cultural awareness. Student-student interaction also had positive correlations with all satisfaction outcomes except facilities which could conclude that satisfaction in college and universities is highly dependent on students having interactions with other students. These interactions occur minimally in the classroom setting, leaving out-of-classroom experiences to take the brunt of student-student interaction (Astin, 1993).

So what role does involvement play? In an interview with Schroeder (2003), Astin expounded on the role of involvement and whether it should be more academic or student affairs based. Astin (1993) said,

The world's problems are not going to be solved by math and science and technology; they are human problems, problems of beliefs and values and feelings. It would behoove higher education to begin to attend more to these aspects of students' development (p. 14).

During the Summer of 2008 two of the resident directors of Carman Hall, a primarily freshmen residence hall on a comprehensive Midwestern universities campus, were looking into a way to get freshmen residents involved as soon as they arrived on campus. Based off of a program that asks returning students to come back early in order to help other students move in, the directors created a program called Carman C.U.B.S. C.U.B.S. stands for Creating Unique Beginnings for Success. This program's goals included utilizing the C.U.B.S to help prepare the building, decorate, and help check-in their peers during move-in day. The program also aimed to get freshmen involved immediately, and to use the C.U.B.S. as role models for other freshmen residents to get involved. After the initial move-in process was completed and Carman Hall was up and running, the goals shifted to utilizing the C.U.B.S for creation of welcome programs for the residents. From there the goals included increasing the involvement on campus for those that are in the C.U.B.S program, compared to students who are not in the program, increase the satisfaction of the transition into the university, and eventually, increase retention.

With the previous research showing that out-of-class experiences most benefit students, there are still some gaps that need to be filled. Fourbert and Grainger (2006) questioned whether involvement and development have a causal relationship, or if they just coincide. Could it be possible that the development is just a natural outgrowth of the

college experience? Or do leadership positions and involvement outside of the classroom have a significant impact on how students develop? Another question that was not answered in their study was whether highly developed students are always the ones seeking out leadership positions or if involvement helps the necessary development occur. The hope was to answer these questions and more in the present study.

Research Site

The present study was conducted on the campus of a comprehensive mid-sized Midwestern university. The institution offered 44 undergraduate degrees. The student to faculty ratio was 1:15. The institution had over 150 registered student organizations and 27 Greek organizations at the time of the study.

At the time of the study, the institution had 12 residence halls housing over 40 percent of the undergraduate student body, or just over 4,000 students. The residence hall from which the participants were drawn from was Carman Hall, a predominately freshmen residence hall housing just over 700 students. Carman Hall is made up of two towers, one male tower with nine floors, and one female tower with 10 floors. The residence hall had a hall government which held nominations and elections for the executive board typically every September. The hall government planned all-hall programming and was the voice for Carman Hall. Each community had a live-on resident assistant that assists with the community development and enforces university policy. Additionally, the hall staff included one Complex Director and one Resident Director, both with master's degrees, two graduate students, both obtaining degrees in College Student Affairs at the time of the study, one full time secretary, and one

undergraduate Senior Staff Assistant, responsible for academic initiatives and other duties as assigned.

Sample Population

Current enrollment at the institution at the time of the study was 12,179 students, and of this number, 1,725 were first-time students. Women made up 58 percent of the university's campus and men made up 42 percent. Ninety-seven percent were in-state students with a large majority hailing from the Chicagoland area. The population for this study was taken from Carman Hall. Three of the study's participants were drawn randomly from the entire Carman Hall pool of residents, while three were from the Carman C.U.B.S. program.

Carman C.U.B.S. participants were chosen to be in the program based on a volunteer basis. In the summer of 2008 a mailing was sent out to every future resident in the building giving them the opportunity to apply to the front desk in Carman Hall, purchase a Carman Hall t-shirt, or apply to be part of the Carman C.U.B.S. Fifteen applied and all applicants were accepted. From those 15 initial participants, three students with continuous involvement in the program were asked to take part in this study.

Summary

This chapter introduced the concept of student involvement and an overview of the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the research questions, the research site, and the sample population. The next chapter will present a literature review on research in the area of student involvement in out of class experiences.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

In order to conduct new research on the somewhat broad topic of student involvement, the researcher must first understand the research that has already been presented. Most research conducted on the topic of student involvement is specific, based on the researcher's interests. Common themes in my research included how students develop based on involvement, grades and academics related to involvement, how involvement affects preparedness after college, and how involvement affects student satisfaction with their chosen institution. It is important as a researcher to understand the limitations of these studies so predictions can be made about what else could be studied, should be studied, or should be expanded on in greater detail.

Literature Review

Early studies on student involvement focused on academic performance. Astin (1984) presented a theory on student involvement and how it affects student development. In his theory, Astin offered five basic postulates dealing with student involvement. He first postulated that involvement refers to how much effort students exert both psychologically and physically in either their generalized student experience or specific investments in certain programs or assignments. The second postulate is that involvement occurs along a continuum. Involvement is constantly happening; a student may be highly involved in one activity and less involved with another activity at the same time or different times, or vice versa. The third postulate is that involvement is both qualitative and quantitative. For example, academic work can be measured more quantitatively with grade point average, how many hours the student spends studying,

etc. In the same sense, how involved a student is can be measured qualitatively by how effective their studying is, how much they participate in class discussions, etc. The fourth postulate is that the amount of learning and personal development experienced by a student is directly proportional to how much quality and quantity that student puts into their program. The fifth and final postulate in Astin's theory is that the effectiveness of a program is directly related to and affected by the effort and capacity that program has to increase student involvement. Along with Astin's theory, he outlined three academic models that professors use to explain student development. The first is the subject-matter theory which says that the success of the student depended mostly on the subject matter. The second theory Astin mentions is the resource theory. Resource theory says that things such as facilities, human resources, and financial resources are the most important ingredients to successful student development. The third and final theory in Astin's 1984 work is the individualized theory. This theory says that neither resources nor subject matter can be applied to all students and instead, how the instructor teaches as well as the content of the class needs to meet the needs of the students on an individual level in order for their development to occur successfully (Astin, 1984). In later work, Astin (1993) stated that the hours per week that a student spends participating in clubs and organizations has a correlation with their ability to speak in public, their ability to lead, and their interpersonal skills.

Kuh (1995) focused on out-of-class experiences that seniors associated with their personal development and learning. Kuh found that many experiences outside of the classroom potentially affected and contributed to outcomes that students valued in college. Study participants noted that their knowledge was primarily acquired through

academic programs in a formal setting. However, participants also said that the world is their laboratory outside of the classroom. The out-of-class experiences presented the students several challenges, both socially and personally, and also challenged their views on personal, academic, and other subjects, making their worldview more complex. The students also reported that their experiences outside of the classroom helped them gain a better understanding of what they were learning inside of the classroom. The most powerful experiences included those that demanded the students put forth a lot of effort in tasks such as decision making and planning as they interacted with people from various groups around campus.

One question Kuh addressed was whether students were more satisfied during the college years if they participated in extracurricular activities. Similar to Astin (1993), Kuh found that participation in extracurricular activities, living in the residence halls on campus, and having open dialogue with university faculty and staff were all positively related to persistence and satisfaction as well as promoting social competence, autonomy, confidence, self awareness, and diversity (Astin, 1993, Kuh 1995). In Fischer's 2007 study on college involvement and outcomes based on differences in race and ethnicity, he concluded that satisfaction with college was most closely related to the ties that students formed to others once on campus, especially social ties. All students who were unable or failed to form satisfactory informal social connections and all students (except white students) who were unable or failed to form formal social connections on campus were significantly more likely to drop out of the university than those students who were more involved.

When Kuh and Pike (2005) compared first and second generation college students and their intellectual development and engagement, they found, similar to Kuh's 1995 study, that students who planned to pursue an advanced degree, females, minority students and students living in campus residence halls tended to be more engaged overall. As a result, these students reported greater gains in their learning and intellectual development. In this study, Kuh and Pike identified on-campus living as the single most important factor in student engagement. In combining direct and indirect effects on learning outcomes, living on campus had the greatest total effect of any student characteristic measured. The reason behind this outcome could be that when students live on campus they are in close proximity to other students, making it impossible not to be confronted daily by diversity between other students, issues involving confrontation, and meeting those with shared and differing interests and values (Kuh, 2005).

During the last few decades, institutions of higher education have observed that their students attach less importance to helping others and place more importance on gaining financial security. Furthermore, Astin (1993) suggested there is a growing individualism among college students and declining interest in civic engagement and politics. A number of higher education institutions have responded to this movement by establishing leadership development programs, both volunteer and academic, volunteer and community service centers, and other programs designed to involve students as "social participants" in their institution and community (Antonio, 2004, p. 55).

All students who are able to involve themselves in leadership training will reap major benefits. Leadership training and education programs can increase student skills and knowledge. Since there is a good chance that leadership potential can be found in every

student, colleges and universities need to help students develop that potential through leadership programs and activities (Astin, 2001).

Foubert and Grainger (2006) supported Astin's 1993 study on the impact of involvement on student success. Foubert and Grainger examined students at the beginning of their freshmen year, the beginning of their sophomore year, and the end of their senior year, specifically concentrating on involvement in clubs and organizations and how much they developed using Chickering's seven vectors. They looked at students with no involvement, students who only attended meetings, students in leadership positions, and students who chartered or founded organizations. The authors found that more involved students developed more quickly in all areas, especially in moving through autonomy through interdependence and establishing and clarifying purpose. Completely uninvolved students always had lower developmental scores. In addition, those students who founded the organization or held other leadership positions within those organizations developed more than those who just attended regular meetings. The number one implication for this study is that student affairs professionals need to encourage their students to join student clubs or organizations that are of interest to them, and such professionals should also work to create meaningful campus involvement opportunities in order to foster and promote modest gains in student development (Foubert, 2006).

As the millennial generation is starting to graduate from college, team dynamics are often what some companies are starting to lean towards and what the generation is most comfortable with doing (Cappelli, 2002). Banjeri (2007) reported poll numbers that said 76 percent of business leaders wanted colleges to "place more emphasis" on

teamwork skills in diverse groups (p. 1). In addition, more jobs require that employees be able to communicate and have good interpersonal skills, which cannot be taught in a classroom. Leadership, internships, and work experiences help set students apart from one another and encourage more competence for the work place. Competence in the work place includes such things as decision making, teamwork, critical thinking, and oral and written communication (Cappelli, 1992). Almost two-thirds of employers or about 63 percent, say today's college graduates lack the essential skills to succeed in the current global economy, according to a new report by the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise, or LEAP, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (Banerji, 2007).

While some of these skills may be used or learned in the classroom, all must be learned to be successful in most out-of-class activities. Students, for the most part, understand this and know that the skills they are learning through involvement outside of class will be important, if not more important, than their class work. Students understand the transferable skills they are learning and perfecting (Kuh, 1995).

With the previous research showing that out-of-class experiences most benefit students, there are still some gaps that need to be filled. Fourbert and Grainger (2006) questioned whether involvement and development have a causal relationship, or if they just coincide. Could it be possible that the development is just a natural outgrowth of the college experience? Or do leadership positions and involvement outside of the classroom have a significant impact on how students develop? Another question that was not answered in their study was whether highly developed students are always the ones

seeking out leadership positions or if involvement helps the necessary development occur.

Summary

This second chapter summarized literature in out of class student involvement. The third chapter will describe the qualitative methodology for this study. Included is the purpose of the study, the location, participants, qualitative design data collection procedures, and plan of analysis. The fourth chapter will consist of finds based on emerging themes using the “voices” of the participants. The final chapter will include conclusions and recommendations for research and practice.

Chapter III

Methodology

This present qualitative study was a descriptive analysis of six female students' experiences as they became involved in student life during their first semester of college. The researcher focused on the role of student involvement in how students experience college, what influences their involvement; different levels of involvement, and most importantly, if the Carman C.U.B.S leadership program influenced students' involvement and engagement. The research was qualitative in nature because of the importance of getting the whole story of differing student's involvement. Data was collected by conducting one-on-one in depth interviews with participants. The reason for one on one interviewing instead of a focus group interview is that each student is unique in their involvement on college campuses and focus groups could have the potential to not let everyone in the group's voice be heard or story be told. Also focus groups could create the problem of students not opening up as much or being intimidated.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the present qualitative study was to evaluate the differences in involvement, development, and satisfaction between students involved in a freshmen leadership program, and students not involved in that freshmen leadership program. The participants in this study were six first-time female students living in Carman Hall on a comprehensive Midwestern university's campus. Three of the students were active participants in the Carman C.U.B.S., a new freshmen leadership program in Carman Hall, while the other three students were chosen at random out of the entire population of Carman Hall. One research question guided the present study.

1. In a qualitative comparison of Carman C.U.B.S. participants and a similar group of non-participants, what is the perceived impact of the Carman C.U.B.S. program on new, first-time students?

The following interview protocol questions also guided the present study. (Attachment B)

For all participants:

1. In what ways have you changed as a person since coming to college and what factors influenced those changes?
2. Which activities have you become involved in since moving to this university?
3. Who or what played the biggest factor in your involvement or noninvolvement?

For Carman C.U.B.S. participants:

4. In what ways has the C.U.B.S. program impacted your involvement?
5. In what ways has the C.U.B.S. program impacted your college experience thus far?

These research questions were targeted at discovering what factors students felt had influenced any change in themselves since entering college, and whether leadership involvement played a factor in that change, and more specifically if the Carman C.U.B.S. program played a factor in that change. These questions served the purpose of discovering if those who were involved in the Carman C.U.B.S program were impacted and in what ways.

Qualitative Design

The qualitative design of this research included individual life history interviews (Karen, 1993). Data were digitally recorded during all one-on-one life history interviews

after participants signed an informed consent document that indicates they understand the purpose of the research, and may withdraw their participation, and thus their interview, at any time. The researcher transcribed the recorded data, and then requested research participants to member-check the transcriptions for opportunities to add any additional information, or take any information out. Participants added no changes when member-checking their transcripts. After the transcripts were checked, coding and analysis took place. The researcher used the data itself to organize and code the data. The researcher segmented verbal data into topics or themes in order to reflect participants' "voices" as themes emerged from the data. Field notes maintained by the researcher were also used in the course of the content analysis (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001).

Location

The present study was conducted on the campus of a mid-sized Midwestern university. Current enrollment at the institution was 12,179 students, and of this number, 1,725 were first-time students at the time of the study. The institution offered 44 undergraduate degrees. The student to faculty ratio was 1:15. At the time of the study the institution had over 150 registered student organizations and 27 social fraternity and sorority organizations. The population of the local city of Charleston was approximately 25,000 including the 12,000 plus the university student population.

Participants

The participants for this study were six female freshmen after their first semester of college. Three of the freshmen were participants in the Carman C.U.B.S program. The remaining three freshmen were not participants of the program but will reside in the same residence hall. The selection of the participants were picked by selecting three

Carman C.U.B.S and three freshmen from the same residence floor community, picked at random by selecting the next person alphabetically underneath the Carman C.U.B.S participants on the alphabetical listing of the building.

Procedures

After IRB approval, the participants were identified through personal contacts with the Carman C.U.B.S. participants and other new first-term freshmen students living in Carman Hall . Once participants agreed, they signed-up for one on one times with the researcher based on the participant's schedule. The interviews were held in their residence hall on campus. Students first read and signed an informed consent form (Appendix A), which allowed the researcher to gather data from the participants. Participants were then informed that they may withdrawal from the study at any time. After a consent form was signed, the researcher proceeded with opening questions to build rapport and a basic level of trust with participants. Life history interview questions dealing with students initial college experiences focusing on the Carman C.U.B.S. program followed. The one on one interviews took place in the researcher's office in order for a level of comfort to be built up by the participants and also to offer privacy to the participants. The researcher was guided by the research question and interview protocol questions. The researcher asked follow up probes pertinent to the study based on the feedback of the participants and the direction of their one on one interview.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology of this study including the purpose of the study, qualitative design, participants, location, and procedures. The next chapter will discuss the findings.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter is a presentation of six female undergraduate freshmen's experiences during their first semester. Three of the females were participants in the Carman C.U.B.S. program (Creating Unique Beginnings for Success) and three were not as involved. Each of these women was in their first year of college and shared differing experiences and stories with the researcher. All participants were eager and willing to take part in the study and to voice their experiences during their first semester of college. None of the participants elected to change the transcription of their interview during the member check process. One research question guided the present study.

1. In a qualitative comparison of Carman C.U.B.S. participants and a similar group of non-participants, what is the perceived impact of the Carman C.U.B.S. program on new, first-time students?

The following interview protocol questions (Appendix B) also guided the present study.

For all participants:

1. In what ways have you changed as a person since coming to college and what factors influenced those changes?
2. Which activities have you become involved in since moving to this university?
3. Who or what played the biggest factor in your involvement or noninvolvement?

For Carman C.U.B.S. participants:

4. In what ways has the C.U.B.S. program impacted your involvement?
5. In what ways has the C.U.B.S. program impacted your college experience thus far?

Carman C.U.B.S. participants

The three Carman C.U.B.S. participants, Bella, Alice, and Rosalie, will all be referred to using pseudonyms to respect their confidentiality. If two or more of them are grouped together, they will be referred to as “participants,” or “C.U.B.S. participants.”

Carman C.U.B.S. participants will always have their names *italicized*. The following are biographical sketches of each Carman C.U.B.S participant included in the present study.

Bella

Bella was a 19 year-old college freshmen. She is a Caucasian female originally from a village 30 minutes south of the Chicago Loop. When *Bella* was not at school, she lived at home with both of her parents, three older brothers, and one older sister. *Bella* attended high school and graduated in a class of several hundred students. While in high school *Bella* was involved in student council, dance team, speech team, four musical productions, computer science team, honors symphonic band, marching band, and gave morning announcements over the school’s public address system. *Bella* became a member of the Carman C.U.B.S. freshmen leadership group in July 2008, a month prior to matriculating at her university. *Bella* served as vice president of her residence hall’s hall council executive board, participated as a member of the Emerging Leaders Program for the Office of New Student Programs, wrote for the school newspaper, and worked with the school radio station. Next year, *Bella* will continue to live on campus and further her hall involvement by being a Resident Assistant.

Alice

Alice was a 19 year old college freshmen. She is a Caucasian female originally from the south side of Chicago, approximately 20 minutes from the Chicago loop. While

Participants not in the Carman C.U.B.S. program

The three research participants not in the Carman C.U.B.S. program, Renee, Esme, and Jane, were all referred to using pseudonyms to respect their confidentiality. If two or more of them are grouped together, they will be referred to as “non-participants”, or “non-C.U.B.S. participants.” Non-participants will always have their names underlined. The following are biographical sketches of each non-participant included in the present study.

Renee

Renee was a 19 year-old college freshmen. She is a Caucasian female originally from the west side of Chicago, about 45 minutes from the Chicago loop. When Renee was not away at school, she lived with both her mother and father, and one younger sister. Renee attended public high school and graduated in a class of several hundred. While in high school, Renee was involved in basketball, cross country, marching band, the National Honor Society and Music Honor Society, and also student government. First semester, Renee was involved in marching band. Next year Renee will be living in another hall on campus and plans to be in marching band, and Kappa Kapp Psi, the honors fraternity for band members.

Esme

Esme was an 18 year-old college freshmen. She is a Caucasian female originally from a small town three and a half hours west of Chicago near the Mississippi flood plain. When away from school, Esme lived with her mom and dad and one younger brother. Esme went to a small high school and graduated with a class of less than 100 students. While in high school, Esme was president of the National Honor Society, vice

president of student council, vice president of a student coalition for the expansion of a two-way highway, a football and basketball cheerleader, played in band, and sang in a Catholic traveling choir. At the time of her interview, Esme was just inducted into Phi Sigma Phi, an honors leadership, scholarship and service fraternity (<http://www.phisigmapi.org/>). Next year Esme will be living in a different hall on campus and will be involved in a leadership group to move students in to the halls. She also plans to be active in Phi Sigma Pi.

Jane

Jane was an 18-year-old college freshman. She is a Caucasian female originally from a suburb, 10 minutes north of Chicago. Jane went to a private high school and was in a graduating class with a few hundred other students. While at home, Jane lived with her mother and father, two younger brothers, and one younger sister. While in high school Jane stayed after school to work on art projects and was on the track team for one year. Next year Jane will be living off campus and hopes to get involved in a sorority at some point.

Throughout the individual interviews and analysis of the findings, common themes emerged regarding first year experiences dealing with involvement or non involvement, as well as participant's overall experiences transitioning from high school into their first year in college.

Theme One: The degree of high school involvement was directly linked to the degree of college involvement for those not in the Carman C.U.B.S program.

All six research subjects were involved in activities outside of the classroom during high school. One C.U.B.S. participant, *Bella*, was on the dance team and in band

among several other activities. Another C.U.B.S. student, *Alice*, was a student ambassador for three years, gave tours, and was on the cross country and track team. She also did volunteer work for campus ministry. The last C.U.B.S. participant, *Rosalie*, was in volleyball for three and a half years, on student council for two years, on the student newspaper staff, and part of Students Against Drunk Driving.

All three participants had been involved outside of the classroom since coming to college as well, centering the majority of their involvement in the residence halls. Besides being involved in the C.U.B.S. leadership program, two of the C.U.B.S. students, *Bella* and *Alice*, were on Carman Hall Council. *Bella* was the vice president overall, while *Alice* was the vice president for hall improvements. The third C.U.B.S. student, *Rosalie*, was a front desk assistant for the hall. *Bella* and *Alice* were also members of Emerging Leaders, a program sponsored by New Student Programs. *Bella* was also involved in her major, wrote for the student newspaper, and volunteered in the college radio station.

The participants who were not involved in the C.U.B.S. program were also involved in activities while in high school, but to varying degrees. Esme was in everything from National Honor society, to student council, to cheerleading for two sports, and in a traveling choir and band. She was vice president of a student coalition for the expansion of a two-way highway that went past her school. On top of her activities she took flute lessons on the side and had a part time job at a photography studio. Renee played two sports, basketball and cross country, was involved in band, and participated in the National Honor Society and student government. Jane was not as involved, but participated in track for one year and frequently stayed after school to work on art projects.

The three non participants all had different levels of collegiate involvement.

Renee, being very involved in band during high school, centered her involvement around band during her first year in college as well. She was in marching band and pep band and joined Kappa Kappa Psi, a national honors band fraternity. In addition she was part of the Education Scholars Program, a university-sponsored program to encourage high achieving students to become teachers. A second non C.U.B.S. participant, Esme, was in the process of induction into Phi Sigma Pi, an honors fraternity, at the time of the interview and had been invited to join the Honors College over Christmas break. She has plans to attend honors student society meetings in the future. During her one on one interview, Esme stated, "I have chosen to only be involved in academics because that is what I was mainly involved in during high school, so that is what I wanted to go for in college. It is what I'm used to I guess." Jane, the non participant who was the least involved in high school, had not gotten involved in college activities yet at the time of her interview for the present study, but hoped to do so in the future.

Four out of the six research subjects were heavily involved in some form or another on campus, while one participant was just starting to get involved at the time of the interview, and one participant was anticipating getting involved at some point in her sophomore year.

Theme two: Non participants felt more independent after coming to college because of the obstacles they overcame during their first semester.

The three non participants credited increasing personal independence as their main source of change since coming to college. In her one-on-one interview, Renee stated, "I've grown a lot on my own just by living by myself and depending on myself

and no one else.” The three students all said that being on their own forced them to be more independent. Jane talked about focusing on her future as a driving force behind her sense of independence and her strong goal orientation.

I’ve always been independent but I’m a lot more independent and a lot more goal oriented. If I need to do something, I will do it. If my roommate is going out, or my friends are going out I will stay in and do my homework or study if I need to.

I’m much more focused on my future.

Esme talked about independence as a form of new self confidence since coming to college. She was forced into being more independent after a breakup with her boyfriend.

I’ve gained more self-confidence and independence because it is a three and a half hour drive here from home. When I came here at the beginning of the school year I hated driving it and had my boyfriend drive me every time. When he broke up with me during first semester, I had to learn. And I became very self-confident. I used to depend on others a lot and now I’m more self-reliant.

Of the non Carman C.U.B.S. participants, Jane thought her change to independence was just a natural progression of coming to college, while Esme and Renee said that breaking up with their significant others has made them become more independent. Renee said,

I broke up with my boyfriend right before I came and we had been dating for two and a half years before that, so it was a huge change. I was freaking out before I came and even thought, “what if I don’t make friends?” I realized that everything is going to work out somehow, even if it might not be what you expected.

Although all three non participants felt more independence after coming to college, only one C.U.B.S participant, *Bella*, felt she became more independent. During her one on one interview she stated,

I'm much more independent obviously. You come to college and you don't have your parents pushing you and waking you up for class, stuff like that. I think knowing when I have to be at certain meetings or class, has made me more independent.

Two of the three participants said that they have become somewhat better people since coming to college. *Alice* felt that her decision to not go out and party every weekend has changed her as a person. *Alice* noted,

I don't want to say I've become a better person, but I think you could have gone either one of two ways once you got to college. You could have gone the go out and party every weekend or the opposite way. I went more towards the not go out and party every weekend way.

Rosalie said that she has also become a better person because since coming to college she has developed a more caring attitude towards others.

I think I am nicer in a way. I used to not care about what other people thought about me. I didn't care about school and I didn't care about other people. Now, I think, 'okay this person is obviously upset, I should do something to try and help them.' Now I care about others and I actually see that I can be helpful to them.

Of the participants overall, the non participants, Jane, Renee, and Esme felt that they had gained independence during their first semester, as did *Bella*, a participant, who felt she also had gained a sense of independence. The two other C.U.B.S. participants, *Alice* and *Rosalie*, felt their major change during the first semester was in becoming better people.

Bella and *Alice* cited interpersonal conflict and overcoming its consequences as the biggest factor in their change since coming to college. *Bella*, who originally said she became more independent upon coming to college said, "A lot of what I have gone through has been dealing with friends who do things that I don't normally do. I think that has made me a more independent person and helped me realize my values and goals." *Alice*, who cited becoming a better person since coming to college, had conflict with a student staff member that helped her grow.

I think I became a lot more mature just because I had to deal with a lot of situations, things that you wouldn't expect that you would have to deal with your first semester. I had a lot of issues with my resident assistant at the beginning of the year, so that forced me to step up and learn how to deal with it and make things different.

Alice went on to say that as a student leader in her residence hall, she valued the opinions of the directors in the building to the point where she chose her actions so that they would not look down on her.

I was active in hall council and I didn't want to get in trouble by getting a drinking ticket because I didn't want the directors to look at me any differently just because I'd gotten in trouble.

The third Carman C.U.B.S. participant, *Rosalie*, gave the C.U.B.S program and residence life staff members credit for helping her become a better person.

C.U.B.S. helped me not be so shy anymore, and the other residence hall staff. My RA is always telling me, just keep your door open, so I do and people walk in to my room all the time just to talk to me. It's nice to be able to say, 'yeah I talked to her all the time and help her when she is upset.'

Theme three: C.U.B.S. participants had higher satisfaction with their on campus experiences and felt more connected to the residential life staff.

All three Carman C.U.B.S. participants rated their experience one to three points higher on a scale from one to ten than those who were not involved in Carman C.U.B.S. (Table 1). All three C.U.B.S. participants also cited the hall director team and others on hall staff as reasons why they have enjoyed their experience so much. *Bella* summed up her experience well.

I would say an eight. I think that the experience with being in a dorm is something I wouldn't change for the world. I am living in a dorm next year and I will live in a dorm all four years if I can. I just feel like it's an experience that everyone definitely should be able to do. I also think that it's a learning experience and the people I have met and the people that help run this residence hall especially have made it a very good experience for me. The people that work here have become my mentors, not only through hall council and stuff like that, but through life. I feel comfortable talking to any of the people who work here, whether it be an RA or a director. It's a small little family. I get excited whenever I see any of the

directors or RA’s and I really like that aspect about it. Another reason that it was really nice for me to be in this residence hall is because it’s all freshmen and we are all going through the same stuff. We are all homesick at one point or another and we all can say what classes or hard, or freak out about a test together. Other places you can’t do that. It’s a big mix, a big variety and chances are it’s not going to be hard to find someone in your same class or someone you can really relate to. I feel blessed and privileged to have had that here.

Table 1

Self-Reported Satisfaction with Residence Life on a scale of 1 to 10

	CUBS Participants Satisfaction			Non Participants Satisfaction		
	Bella	Alice	Rosalie	Renee	Esme	Jane
10						
9						
8	X	X	X			
7						X
6				X		
5					X	
4						
3						
2						
1						

Alice had a conflict with her RA first semester, but was able to pull through it and through the help of the director team, still have a good experience. She stated, “Taking everything into consideration, I would say an eight just because I had a lot of issues during the first part of the semester with my RA but ever since that has been settled, it’s been awesome.” *Rosalie* echoed the fact that the hall staff had a crucial role in her satisfaction.

I would say an eight. I know a lot of the directors on more of a personal level so it's nicer because I do feel comfortable and if I have something wrong I know I have someone to talk to who has been through college. They also know what's going on in the building and on my floor so that's really helped. And I've gotten to know the RA's and that is really nice too just because they are so nice and so welcoming. It's not like you have to be scared of the RA's or the directors.

The three non C.U.B.S. participants did not rank their experience so high. Jane ranked her experience as a seven.

I really like Carman. Except for being far away from campus I really like it. The dorm (rooms) are bigger than anywhere else. I love the food here, everyone else hates it but I love it. And all of my friends live here, it's all freshmen so I've met so many people. It's definitely been the college experience that I wanted to have instead of living in some other place.

Another non C.U.B.S. participant, Esme also disliked the distance from the building to the main campus. She said,

I would rank it a five probably. I like living in Carman, but it's kind of far off campus and there are some girls on my floor that have been kind of rowdy. But I like others, so it's been so-so.

Renee ranked her experience as a six, citing roommate differences as a factor.

My roommate and I don't particularly get along the best, so that kind of throws a little hitch in everything. Also most of the people I hang out with are closer to

campus, most of them live in the middle of campus, so I spend most of my time over there. So I'm not really in this building much.

When asked what some of their favorite things about college have been, all had varying answers. However, of the C.U.B.S. participants, all mentioned enjoying their living space, the time they have spent in the residence halls, and the fact that they felt at home in their residence hall environment. *Bella* stated,

I think my number one reason for coming here and why I love it is because I do feel like I am home. This school has become my family. My mom gets mad at me because I'm like, "Oh, I'm going home today!" when I leave to come back to school. She tells me, "School isn't your home." I think it is. I feel attached to it almost, that's my favorite thing about it. I don't feel like a number here, everyone is friendly and knows me and they say 'hi' even if they don't know me.

Another C.U.B.S. participant, *Alice*, enjoyed a multitude of things, including being active in the building. She said, "I like being active in the building and I have met a really good group of people who are now my core group of friends. I like my classes too and the events and things you can do on campus." *Rosalie* also liked a multitude of similar things.

I like the dorms and I like that [the university] is known for education because that is really what I want to be. When I first came here I really liked how everyone here was together and bonded and if you needed anything you could stop and ask

anyone and they would talk to you. It's a really friendly community and I like that a lot.

Two out of the three non C.U.B.S. participants, Jane and Esme, have enjoyed the smaller size of the campus compared to other state-assisted schools the most. Jane said, "I like that it is a lot smaller than some of the other campuses I have been to. There is a lot more to do. I have been to a private high school so I liked that it was still bigger student wise. And it's a pretty campus."

Another non C.U.B.S. participant, Esme, agreed.

I like the size and the friendliness of the campus; people will hold the doors for you and say "hi" to you even if they don't know you. At other bigger schools people don't care, they are just there to party and that is all they care about.

The last non C.U.B.S. participant, Renee, has most enjoyed doing things for band.

I love going to all of the basketball and football games. I'm in the band so I get to go to everything. I also like seeing what everyone is doing and I enjoy going to classes.

Theme four: C.U.B.S. participants and non participants all felt welcomed and connected once stepping on to campus.

All six participants spoke very passionately about their decision to attend college and in particular, the university in question. One non Carman C.U.B.S. participant, Esme originally followed her boyfriend to college, but stayed because of the size of the campus.

I followed my boyfriend here and then we broke up. But I really like how small the campus is. I was going to go to a private school just because of the size, I had

the idea that the public state schools would be bigger campuses, but it's more put together here.

Jane looked up to her aunt who attended the university previously and then when she came to visit, liked it enough to attend. Renee had a "feeling" when she stepped on to campus.

Originally I was planning on majoring in music and I really liked the program here, especially with a new Fine Arts building being built. But I also got the feeling when I came here, I was like "Oh, this is where I want to come!" I just got really excited, like I wanted to get involved with everything here. I love the people, they were really nice, and when I went to some other colleges I did not feel like I was welcome. I could tell I was welcome here, so after I saw this school I stopped looking.

Two of the research C.U.B.S. participants felt at home and welcome when coming to visit the university and felt they would be more connected. *Alice* happened upon the University by chance and felt so connected she decided she had to attend.

I was actually planning on going to another school but my dad made me stop here on the way so that I could have something to compare it to. I fell in love with this campus immediately. I continued on that day to the original school I was visiting and stopped back by here on my way back home. I knew this was the place. I liked the smaller campus and I felt so much more connected.

Bella, a C.U.B.S. participant stated,

I chose to come here because the minute I got here I felt like I was home. I visited a few other schools and the schools I visited were all Big 10 huge schools and I came here and I did not feel like a number, I felt like an individual. I thought I could shine bright here like I needed to. I just definitely felt that I could establish myself and make a lasting impression here if I wanted to do that. It has felt like a family. I am very proud of this school.”

For the last C.U.B.S. participant, *Rosalie*, a research assignment in high school first made her interested in the school but the location of the school was the most important factor for her, as well as the reputation of her future academic major.

I chose this school because I did not really know where I wanted to go at first, and then we had to research about colleges and that is when I first realized I liked it. Then in the summer I came to visit and liked it and came back in March once again after I was accepted. I like it mostly because it is close enough to where I can go home if I want to, but also far enough away where I’m not home all of the time. Also I liked it academic-wise because the School of Education is well known and I want to be a teacher.

Theme five: Carman C.U.B.S. participants benefited more from resident director mentorship.

When asked what led you to these activities during their one on one interviews, all study participants had varying answers depending on their involvement. Two of the C.U.B.S. participants credited the C.U.B.S. program for getting them involved. *Bella* stated,

I honestly do believe that it was the Carman C.U.B.S. program that helped me get involved because I do not think I would have known about hall council if I was not in the C.U.B.S. program. I just remember the director team telling us about hall council and the job it entails and what it is actually about. I feel like having that personal talk and plug about it made me think that I would love to be involved in something like that. Through that talk I had the opportunity to decide if that was something I wanted to do. That kick started me to where I wanted to go and I'm the type of person who wants to get as involved as possible. C.U.B.S. pointed me in that direction.

A second C.U.B.S. participant, *Alice* felt similarly.

I received a random email from the complex director in the building inviting me to apply to be on Carman C.U.B.S. and telling me what it was. So I thought, "Alright, I will apply," and I did and was accepted. That pushed me into other activities like being an executive board member of hall council. In high school I always wanted to run for positions, but I just never did. Because I did the C.U.B.S. program I was able to get to know the adults in the building. They encouraged me to run for a position. Plus all of my friends I had met here through C.U.B.S. were also going to run. First semester the executive board was pretty much a bunch of Carman C.U.B.S.

Theme six: Peers had a direct influence on involvement among participants and non participants.

Two of the research subjects credited their friends for reasons they had been led down their current involvement path. Jane, who had not yet sought out involvement, said,

“My friends are the source of why I am not involved. We mainly just go out. Its hard to know what is going on, so we just end up going out.” *Rosalie* also credited her friends for pushing her into her current involvement path. However Rosalie is a Carman C.U.B.S. participant.

A lot of my friends push me to be involved. If they are doing something then I will go along. Like hall council, I'll come to that every once in a while because my friends go and they are on the executive board. It helps when your friends are involved because if my friends are involved, I will do it too.

Esme, a non participant, decided to get involved in certain activities after being “shoulder tapped.” “Shoulder tapped” in the context of the present study meant that Esme was singled out and asked to participate in a specific activity.

For Phi Sigma Pi, one of the RA's sent out flyers so that is how I found out about that, I was interested in being around people who were also interested in their grades like I am. For the honors program I received an email from the woman in charge [a Dean] and responded to it.

Renee, also a non participant, was encouraged by older students to get involved.

I got a letter in the mail from the Teacher's Association as soon as I got here so I filled out the application and essay and I was accepted. Then I was asked through band to join Kappa Kappa Psi. Older students, mainly from the music department, have encouraged me to get involved here because there are so many programs that I could do. They have encouraged me to do different things.

Theme seven: C.U.B.S. participants expressed a readiness to expand their leadership outside the residence halls, while non participants would also like more leadership experience.

All three Carman C.U.B.S. research participants are looking to get more involved outside of the residence halls next year. *Rosalie* said, "I would like to do other things outside of the residence hall. I know there are other clubs out there that I could join." *Alice* echoed her sentiments, "I want to do something outside of the residence hall. I just feel like everything I've been involved in is just in my residence hall. I'm thinking about pledging the honors fraternity [Phi Sigma Pi] here." *Bella* talked about getting more involved in her major, but was struggling to find a sense of balance among everything in which she wanted to be involved.

I am going to be an RA next year, which I'm really excited about. I would like to get involved more in the production end of the campus radio station. I just have not had the time to this year. I also have not had the time to be in front of the camera at the news station, but that comes with being there often and for a longer period of time, so I wish I could have gotten more involved with that. There are also different drama things I want to do but I haven't really had time. One of the hardest things about coming to college is prioritizing what you do. In high school I feel like you could do as many things as you want and that is what I did. I danced, I was in art club, I was in band, I could do whatever I wanted to do. But you come here and you really have to pick and choose to do the things you love the most. And if you enjoy dancing and playing the band you have to pick what

you can and can't do. Things are just so demanding. I was considering being another mentor for emerging leaders, but I don't even know if that is a possibility.

Jane, one of the non-C.U.B.S. participants who has not been involved up to this point would like to join the accounting society and possibly rush a social sorority in the future. "I did not do much in high school so I think in college I should do more and expand. Plus I think the sorority would be fun with lots of activities." A second non C.U.B.S. participant, Esme, would like to get more involved in volunteer work and leadership opportunities.

I would like to do more volunteering stuff. I just started volunteering for a camp for the disabled after getting an email from the community service coordinator on campus, and I would like to get a little more involved in volunteering. I would also like to get more involved in hall leadership, like hall council. I went once or twice this year because my RA encouraged me to go and gave me points on my academic initiative, but I was so busy trying to adjust to the first semester I missed my opportunity. It is something I will seek out next year.

The final non C.U.B.S. participant, Renee, will also be seeking out more leadership roles in the coming year.

I really wanted to be a resident assistant this year but with the way my schedule is there is no way I would be able to. Sometime in the future I want to take more leadership roles in something, I think that would be really cool. I like having people depend on me, I like being the person that someone can come to when they

have questions or need help. So far I have just been wanting to find out everything before I throw myself in.

Theme eight: Degree of involvement did not reduce the level of homesickness.

All three Carman C.U.B.S. participants have been homesick in one form or another. One C.U.B.S. participant, *Bella*, who went home once a month, did not become homesick until towards the end of first semester, and credits not being homesick until later in the semester to being so involved that she did not have time to be homesick.

I have been homesick, and it was really weird. It was first semester right around finals week. I think it was the week before when I started studying. I was having a hard time finding the balance of finding a good place that I could study. It was always available for me to study in my room in high school but here my roommates like music when they are studying. It made me think “Oh, I miss home!” But other than that I never noticed being homesick. I obviously missed my family, but it wasn’t a huge homesick feeling until the end. I think that is really good because I have other friends in college and they call me upset that they are homesick. I feel because I was so involved right off the bat that it definitely made it that much easier. It [the transition from high school to college] was just so natural. I constantly had something to do so my mind did not have time to miss the things at home.

Alice, another C.U.B.S. participant, went home often first semester, almost every other weekend, and mainly missed her boyfriend as part of her homesickness. She stated, “It was nice going home, but I never thought ‘I want to go home right now.’ And I didn’t

really miss my parents.” *Rosalie* went home once a month to visit her four little brothers. She credited her homesickness to being away from them. She said during her one on one interview, “It is just hard to be away from them. I usually call them or email my mom or call and talk to my grandma. Usually the feeling goes away after I call.”

Two out of the three non C.U.B.S. participants, Jane and Esme, had never been homesick. Jane visited home once a month, while Esme varied her time home her first year. “When I was dating my boyfriend we went home every weekend because he wanted to so I went home with him. But since we broke up, I haven’t been home that much.” The third non C.U.B.S. participant, Renee, was homesick at the beginning of the semester but quickly overcame it after making friends. Second semester she only went home for Spring Break. She said, “I called my friends a lot in the beginning because we are placed all around the United States right now, so that is hard. Eventually I started making new friends here and got used to it.”

Theme nine: C.U.B.S. participants were more involved in leadership activities early on than non-participants.

Two of the C.U.B.S. participants seemed to have prioritized their involvement and recognized its importance early on, especially when it comes to leadership positions. *Alice*, one of the C.U.B.S. participants, felt that her personality has been a driving force behind getting involved.

I make a lot of lists and make sure I get to bed early, I don’t waste a lot of time. I think it is my personality. I like being active. I can’t just sit in a room all night and do nothing or watch TV. I can’t even nap, I would feel like I’m wasting time. I

need to be doing things and by being active in the building it gives me something to do that's not nothing.

Bella knew early on what her goals would be for the next year and strived to reach them through involvement.

Early on in the year I decided I wanted to be an RA so through hall council I thought that it would be a really good idea to show that I can do that. I feel almost like being a part of hall council and the executive board means everyone is looking up to you. People are seeing what you are doing for the hall and I feel like that is what an RA is, a role model throughout the college. So I feel like that was a short step to maybe jump starting my way to that actual spot. Plus I really wanted to do it. I mean, what a great opportunity. You are really speaking for an entire community, to even make their experience better is really rewarding when I think about it. I really enjoy doing that.

Theme ten: C.U.B.S. participants gained extra confidence from involvement in the leadership program.

All three C.U.B.S. participants gained some form of extra confidence from the program. All three also gained personal relationships from the experience. *Bella* said, It helped me become a member of hall council and executive board. It automatically made me feel proud to be in Carman. It gave me a lot of confidence too because it was a group of people and we were doing little projects together and making decisions together and you create a close bond with these people before school even started. Before everyone else moved in you had those couple of friends that you made bonds with and that you had memories with and that was

really cool to have. It just really eases your worries and your butterflies. Being in Carman C.U.B.S. it was like I was already involved in something. I already took pride in something and I wanted to be proud of other things. I wanted to get involved in hall council and I wanted people to know that I wanted to make a difference and it made me proud not only of the university but of my hall.

Alice credited the program for her complete involvement. She stated,

The C.U.B.S. program is pretty much what made me so involved. It was good to have my friends and I go from C.U.B.S. to executive board. I think the program did a really good job. It introduced me to so many people and it got me involved in executive board. It allowed me to get close to the adults in the building too.

Rosalie credited the program with getting her out of her comfort zone.

When I came I was really shy. With C.U.B.S. it helped me get involved in stuff and I talk to people a lot more now than I would have if I wouldn't have been in it. Like if I meet someone new I'm not all shy so that's really a plus that I got out of that. It also helped me make new friends and again, not be so shy anymore. That is a good thing to not be shy because you do need to meet new people and get out there and that really helped with that. I think the main factors that specifically helped me be less shy are that we had to help do check in for the hall. With that they told us that we had to be happy and excited to be there and talk to everyone. And I did that and pushed myself. Now I'm just excited to meet and talk to new people.

Theme eleven: Pre-college expectations differed among participants and non participants

All six participants expected different things before coming to college. Of the non C.U.B.S. participants Jane had difficulty articulating what she expected, but knew that it had met her expectations. Renee was mainly scared about the unknown concerning her classes and meeting other people before arriving on campus.

I came a week early because of band camp so I was excited but nervous about what camp would be like, what if my teachers do not like me, what if I don't know anything, etc. But I was also really excited to be living by myself for the first time. I ended up loving it here more than I thought I was going to just because of the people and the friends I have made.

Another non C.U.B.S. participant, Esme, thought that college would be just as busy as high school and was surprised by the amount of "downtime" she had.

I thought I would not have as much downtime. I didn't have any downtime in high school, I was always busy. I would come home, do my homework, and go to bed. That is what I expected when I came here because I knew I was up for some really hard classes since I am a science major. I was nervous about my major and having a hard time in classes. Graduates used to come back to my high school and tell us to read our textbooks and study a lot because college is so hard. But it hasn't been hard.

Of the Carman C.U.B.S. research participants, *Bella* thought that the campus atmosphere would be crazy, and that partying would be central to student life.

I was thinking that it was going to be crazy. I thought that it was just going to be a huge party. I was scared of the complete chaos it might be. I was also antsy because I knew I'd be at a university and I just thought it would be nuts. And then I got here and it was way different. There are times when if you want to find a party, you can find a party. But you will only find that atmosphere if you are the type of person who is looking for that. It is not just one big party, it is what you make of it. If you want partying to be your college experience, you can do that. But if you have other things in mind you can concentrate on those other things.

The two other C.U.B.S. participants both anticipated the relationships that they would be building. *Alice* said, "I was just hoping to meet a lot of people on my floor and be good friends with them, so that is what I did." *Rosalie* had more of a pessimistic attitude when it came to the people she would possibly meet.

I was really scared but excited at the same time. I pictured it to be friendly because I had been on campus a few times and everyone seemed to be friendly but I was still scared that everyone would be like, "ah, I don't want to talk to you!" I guess I was afraid that I would not make friends because I came here and only knew one other person and we did not live in the same building. I was mainly nervous that it would not be friendly. But when I got it here it was really friendly and everyone wanted to talk to me.

Theme twelve: All participants expressed varying degrees of regret from their first semester of college.

All six research participants varied greatly with their thoughts on what they would do differently if they could reprise their first semester. One Carman C.U.B.S. participant,

Bella, regretted her first encounter with her roommate and would like to go back to that day. Another Carman C.U.B.S. participant, *Rosalie*, wished that she would have put her academic life as high up as she put her social life inside of the building.

I'd probably study a lot more because I did not do that enough. I'd probably also go to all of my classes, because I did not do that either. I think I was more worried about hanging out and that my friends would not understand if I needed to study.

But now I know to tell them, "no I can't, I have to study."

Another research participant, Jane, this time a non Carman C.U.B.S. student, also wished she would have calmed down socially. She stated,

I think since at home it was so strict with curfew and everything I just feel like coming here I went crazy because I could do whatever I wanted to do. So if I could go back I would calm down socially.

Alice, a C.U.B.S. participant and Renee, a non participant, would not change anything if they could go back. The last non C.U.B.S. participant, Esme cited personal reasons as issues she would go back and change, specifically breaking up with her significant other.

I probably would have broken up with my boyfriend sooner because I think he held me back from doing a lot of things like hall council. I did leadership positions all throughout high school so I wish I would have done that and gotten involved on campus sooner, but I'm working on it now.

Theme thirteen: C.U.B.S. participants took personal risks when it came to what they were involved in, while non participants did not take risks.

One theme central to much of the data collected is the fact that C.U.B.S. participants took risks with their involvement from the moment they stepped on to campus. Whether that be because of their personality, because they were involved in a leadership program immediately, they had mentors to guide them from the beginning, or other reasons, they felt comfortable leaving their comfort zone and trying something different. Bella, Alice, and Rosalie, all C.U.B.S. participants, all took on leadership positions in their residence hall and immersed themselves in things that they did not participate in during high school. However the non participants tried to stay on the same path of involvement that they were on during high school.

Renee, being very involved in band during high school, centered her involvement around band during her first year in college as well. She was in marching band and pep band and joined Kappa Kappa Psi, a national honors band fraternity. A second non C.U.B.S. participant, Esme, was in the process of initiation for Phi Sigma Pi, an honors fraternity, at the time of the interview and had been invited to join the Honors College over Christmas break. She has plans to attend honors student society meetings in the future. During a one on one interview, Esme stated, "I have chosen to only be involved in academics because that is what I was mainly involved in during high school, so that is what I wanted to go for in college. It is what I'm used to I guess." Jane, the non participant who was the least involved in high school, had not gotten involved in college activities yet, but hoped to do so in the future. Thus, she continued a pattern of non-involvement in college just as she had in high school.

Participants in the C.U.B.S. program were pushed out of their normal routines and in to things they would not have normally done. *Alice*, a C.U.B.S. participant, had always wanted to do a leadership position in high school, but just never did. After joining the C.U.B.S. program, she was able to stretch herself and accomplish that goal.

I received a random email from the complex director in the building inviting me to apply to be on Carman C.U.B.S. and telling me what it was. So I thought, “Alright, I will apply,” and I did and was accepted. That pushed me into other activities like being an executive board member of hall council. In high school I always wanted to run for positions, but I just never did. Because I did the C.U.B.S. program I was able to get to know the adults in the building. They encouraged me to run for a position. Plus all of my friends I had met here through C.U.B.S. were also going to run. First semester the executive board was pretty much a bunch of Carman C.U.B.S.

Rosalie credited the program with getting her out of her comfort zone.

When I came I was really shy. With C.U.B.S. it helped me get involved in stuff and I talk to people a lot more now than I would have if I wouldn't have been in it. Like if I meet someone new I'm not all shy so that's really a plus that I got out of that. It also helped me make new friends and again, not be so shy anymore. That is a good thing to not be shy because you do need to meet new people and get out there and that really helped with that. I think the main factors that specifically helped me be less shy are that we had to help do check in for the hall. With that they told us that we had to be happy and excited to be there and talk to

everyone. And I did that and pushed myself. Now I'm just excited to meet and talk to new people.

Jane, one of the non-C.U.B.S. participants whose biggest involvement this past year was social in nature with a small group of like-minded friends, mentioned that she would like to join a social sorority her sophomore year. "I did not do much in high school so I think in college I should do more and expand. Plus I think the sorority would be fun with lots of activities." Jane also mentioned that a reason she was not involved is that she did not know what to be involved in, or what was going on around campus. Jane said, "My friends are the source of why I am not involved. We mainly just go out. It's hard to know what is going on, so we just end up going out."

Renee, also a non participant, would like to participate in different activities next year centered around leadership. Renee said that the reason she did not get involved her first year is because she wanted to sit back and see what she could get involved in.

I really wanted to be a resident assistant this year but with the way my schedule is there is no way I would be able to. Sometime in the future I want to take more leadership roles in something; I think that would be really cool. I like having people depend on me, I like being the person that someone can come to when they have questions or need help. So far I have just been wanting to find out everything before I throw myself in.

Summary

C.U.B.S. participants were asked fourteen open ended questions and non C.U.B.S. participants were asked twelve open ended questions (Appendix B). The

information gathered from the students resulted in thirteen different themes: (1) High School Involvement is directly linked to College involvement for those not in the Carman C.U.B.S program, (2) Non participants felt more independent after coming to college because of the obstacles they overcame while in their first semester, (3) C.U.B.S. participants had higher satisfaction with their on campus experience and felt more connected to the residential life staff, (4) C.U.B.S. participants and non participants all felt welcome and connected once stepping on to campus, (5) Carman C.U.B.S. participants benefited more from director mentorship, (6) Peers had a direct influence to involvement among participants and non participants, (7) C.U.B.S. participants would like to get involved in leadership outside of the residence halls in the future, while non participants would like to gain more leadership experience in general (8) Homesickness is not heavily affected by involvement, (9) C.U.B.S. participants were more involved in leadership activities early on than non participants, (10) C.U.B.S. gained extra confidence from participation in the leadership program, (11) Pre-college expectations differed among participants and non participants, (12) All participants had varying degrees of regret during their first semester of college, (13) C.U.B.S. participants took risks when it came to what they were involved in, while non participants did not take risks.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present qualitative life history study was implemented to explore the experiences of six first time students at a comprehensive Midwestern university. The focus of the study was to examine the experiences of three of the participants, who were members of a new freshmen leadership group, versus three of the participants who were not members of the leadership group. This chapter is a comparison of the lived experiences of the six participants and the literature. This chapter also includes limitations, recommendations for future leadership programs, suggestions for further research, and a conclusion to the study.

Significance of Results

Many themes were drawn from the one on one interviews regarding the experiences of those in the Carman C.U.B.S. program and those that were not in the program. There were many similarities identified in the students' experiences that were also found in the published literature on student involvement. The number one connection between the literature and this study was that students gained numerous benefits from being encouraged by student affairs professionals to get involved.

Astin (1975) proposed the concept of student involvement as a major influence in retaining students in college. Out of all of the participants studied, all students will be returning to the university. In addition, all of the participants in the Carman C.U.B.S. program will be returning to housing, while two of the three non C.U.B.S. participants will also be returning to housing. All of the students in the study felt some connection to

campus, whether that be from involvement, friends, or the overall welcoming feeling that the campus gave them.

Kuh (1995) stated that holding specific leadership responsibilities or offices in clubs or organizations correlates positively with gains in “interpersonal competence, practical competence, cognitive complexity, and humanitarianism” (p. 129). The more hours students spend participating in organizations, the more likely they will be elected into student offices, have greater public speaking abilities, have greater leadership abilities, and interpersonal skills (Astin, 1993). Foubert and Grainger (2006) questioned whether involvement and development have a causal relationship, or if they just coincide. One non participant in the present study, Jane, felt that her development and growth in college was just a natural transition and outgrowth of the college experience. Another question Foubert and Grainger asked in their study was whether highly developed students are always the ones seeking out leadership positions or if the act of involvement itself helped the necessary development occur. In the present study, those students that were involved in high school activities had the greater likelihood to become involved in college during their first semester. The participants in the study only sought leadership positions or involvement after someone they looked up to asked them. If that connection was never made mentor to student, then no involvement took place. In the present study, it is unclear if the students that were highly involved were already more developed than those that were not involved, however, those that became involved their first year in college, did acquire a larger skill set than those who were not as involved.

Kuh (1995) found that many experiences outside of the classroom potentially affected and contributed to outcomes that students valued in college, as well as

reinforcing their values. One C.U.B.S participant, *Alice*, valued not joining the party scene and felt that her decision to not go out and party every weekend changed her as a person. *Alice* noted,

I don't want to say I've become a better person, but I think you could have gone either one of two ways once you got to college. You could have gone the go out and party every weekend or the opposite way. I went more towards the not go out and party every weekend way.

The out-of-class experiences presented the students several challenges, both socially and personally, and also challenged their views on personal, academic, and other subjects, making their worldview more complex. A non C.U.B.S. participant, *Esme*, was challenged by a change in her relationship status first semester, but gained more self confidence as a result.

I've gained more self-confidence and independence because it is a three and a half hour drive here from home. When I came here at the beginning of the school year I hated driving it and had my boyfriend drive me every time. When he broke up with me during first semester, I had to learn. And I became very self-confident. I used to depend on others a lot and now I'm more self-reliant.

Kuh (1995) also stated that the most powerful experiences included those that demanded the students put forth a lot of effort in tasks such as decision making and planning as they interacted with people from various groups around campus. *Bella*, a C.U.B.S. participant, who originally said she became more independent upon coming to

college said “A lot of what I have gone through has been dealing with friends who do things that I don’t normally do. I think that has made me a more independent person and helped me realize my values and goals.” *Bella* went on to say that being a member of the Carman C.U.B.S. impacted her the most because of the very things Kuh mentioned, decision making and planning with various individuals and groups.

It helped me become a member of hall council and executive board. It automatically made me feel proud to be in Carman. It gave me a lot of confidence too because it was a group of people and we were doing little projects together and making decisions together and you create a close bond with these people before school even started. Before everyone else moved in you had those couple of friends that you made bonds with and that you had memories with and that was really cool to have. It just really eases your worries and your butterflies. Being in Carman C.U.B.S. it was like I was already involved in something. I already took pride in something and I wanted to be proud of other things. I wanted to get involved in hall council and I wanted people to know that I wanted to make a difference and it make me proud not only of the university but of my hall.

Alice, also a C.U.B.S. participant, who cited becoming a better person since coming to college, had conflict with a student staff member that helped her grow.

I think I became a lot more mature just because I had to deal with a lot of situations, things that you wouldn’t expect that you would have to deal with your first semester. I had a lot of issues with my resident assistant at the beginning of the year, so that forced me to step up and learn how to deal with it and make things different.

One question Kuh (1995) addressed was whether students were more satisfied during the college years if they participated in extracurricular activities. In the present study, all three Carman C.U.B.S. participants rated their overall experience one to three points higher on a ten point scale than those who were not involved in Carman C.U.B.S. Similar to Astin (1993), Kuh (1995) found that participation in extracurricular activities, living in the residence halls on campus, and having open dialogue with university faculty and staff were all positively related to persistence and satisfaction as well as promoting social competence, autonomy, confidence, self awareness, and diversity. All three C.U.B.S. participants mentioned that interacting with the residence hall staff in particular increased their satisfaction and made their overall experience more enjoyable. *Bella* said:

The people I have met and the people that help run this residence hall especially have made it a very good experience for me. The people that work here have become my mentors, not only through hall council and stuff like that, but through life. I feel comfortable talking to any of the people who work here, whether it be an RA or a director. It's a small little family. I get excited whenever I see any of the directors or RA's and I really like that aspect about it.

Rosalie, also a C.U.B.S. participant, echoed *Bella*'s sentiments:

I know a lot of the directors on more of a personal level so it's nicer because I do feel comfortable and if I have something wrong I know I have someone to talk to who has been through college. They also know what's going on in the building and on my floor so that's really helped. And I've gotten to know the RA's and that is really nice too just because they are so nice and so welcoming. It's not like you have to be scared of the RA's or the directors.

In his study on college involvement and outcomes based on differences in race and ethnicity, Fischer (2007) concluded that satisfaction with college was most closely related to the ties that students formed to others once on campus, especially social ties. In the present study, participants mentioned social ties a lot not only as reasons why they were satisfied or not, but also as reasons as to whether they were involved or not.

Jane, who has not sought out involvement said, “My friends are the source of why I am not involved. We mainly just go out. It’s hard to know what is going on, so we just end up going out.” *Rosalie* also credited her friends for pushing her to her current involvement path. However this student was a Carman C.U.B.S. participant.

A lot of my friends push me to be involved. If they are doing something then I will go along. Like hall council, I’ll come to that every once in a while because my friends go and they are on the executive board. It helps when your friends are involved because if my friends are involved, I will do it too.

Another C.U.B.S. participant, *Alice*, mentioned some of her favorite things about campus, including social ties, saying, “I like being active in the building and I have met a really good group of people who are now my core group of friends. I like my classes too and the events and things you can do on campus.” *Rosalie*, a C.U.B.S. participant, also likes the social ties she’s made, among other things.

I like the dorms and I like that it is known for education because that is really what I want to be. When I first came here I really liked how everyone here was together and bonded and if you needed anything you could stop and ask anyone and they would talk to you. It’s a really friendly community and I like that a lot.

During the last few decades, higher education professionals have observed that their students attach less importance to helping others and place more importance on gaining financial security. Furthermore, Astin (1993) suggested there is a growing individualism among college students and declining interest in civic engagement and politics. A number of higher education leaders have responded to this movement by establishing leadership development programs, both volunteer and academic, volunteer and community service centers, and other programs designed to involve students as “social participants” in their institution and community (Antonio, 2004, p. 55). One C.U.B.S. participant, *Rosalie*, contributed her changed attitude and less individualistic approach to participation in the C.U.B.S. program.

I think I am nicer in a way. I used to not care about what other people thought about me. I didn't care about school and I didn't care about other people. Now, I think, 'okay this person is obviously upset, I should do something to try and help them.' Now I care about others and I actually see that I can be helpful to them.

In addition, those students who founded the organization or held other leadership positions within those organizations developed more than those who just attended regular meetings. The number one implication for Foubert's (2006) study was that student affairs professionals need to encourage their students to join student clubs or organizations that are of interest to them, and such professionals should also work to create meaningful campus involvement opportunities in order to foster and promote modest gains in student development. The C.U.B.S. program set out to encourage more students to get involved

early on, and from the participant's perspectives, the C.U.B.S. program pushed them to do other things as well. *Bella* stated:

I honestly do believe that it was the Carman C.U.B.S. program that helped me get involved because I do not think I would have known about hall council if I was not in the C.U.B.S. program. I just remember the director team telling us about hall council and the job it entails and what it is actually about. I feel like having that personal talk and plug about it made me think that I would love to be involved in something like that. Through that talk I had the opportunity to decide if that was something I wanted to do. That kick started me to where I wanted to go and I'm the type of person who wants to get as involved as possible. C.U.B.S. pointed me in that direction.

A second C.U.B.S. participant, *Alice* felt similarly.

I received a random email from the complex director in the building inviting me to apply to be on Carman C.U.B.S. and telling me what it was. So I thought, alright I will apply, and I did and was accepted. That pushed me into other activities like being an executive board member of hall council. In high school I always wanted to run for positions, but I just never did. Because I did the C.U.B.S. program I was able to get to know the adults in the building. They encouraged me to run for a position. Plus all of my friends I had met here through C.U.B.S. were also going to run. First semester the executive board was pretty much a bunch of Carman C.U.B.S.

Astin (2001) found that all students who are able to involve themselves in leadership training reaped major benefits. Leadership training and education programs can increase student skills and knowledge. Since there is a good chance that leadership potential can be found in every student, college and university staff members need to help students develop that potential through leadership programs and activities. In addition, when students are involved in leadership training they also realize the transferable skills they are learning and perfecting (Kuh, 1995). *Bella* knew early on what her goals would be for the next year and strived to reach them and gain skills necessary through involvement.

Early on in the year I decided I wanted to be an RA so through hall council I thought that it would be a really good idea to show that I can do that. I feel almost like being a part of hall council and the executive board means everyone is looking up to you. People are seeing what you are doing for the hall and I feel like that is what an RA is, a role model throughout the college. So I feel like that was a short step to maybe jump starting my way to that actual spot. Plus I really wanted to do it. I mean, what a great opportunity. You are really speaking for an entire community, to even make their experience better is really rewarding when I think about it. I really enjoy doing that.

A second Carman C.U.B.S. participant, *Rosalie*, also realized valuable skills she was learning, the most important being how to step out of her comfort zone.

When I came I was really shy. With C.U.B.S. it helped me get involved in stuff and I talk to people a lot more now than I would have if I wouldn't have been in it. Like if I meet someone new I'm not all shy so that's really a plus that I got out

of that. It also helped me make new friends and again, not be so shy anymore. That is a good thing to not be shy because you do need to meet new people and get out there and that really helped with that. I think the main factors that specifically helped me be less shy are that we had to help do check in for the hall. With that they told us that we had to be happy and excited to be there and talk to everyone. And I did that and pushed myself. Now I'm just excited to meet and talk to new people.

The C.U.B.S. participants of this study were able to get involved in leadership position more quickly than those not in the program. In addition, the C.U.B.S. program gave them confidence and encouraged them to seek out other opportunities on campus, increasing their skill set and helping them develop at a quicker pace. Non C.U.B.S. participants had varied levels of involvement but none held leadership positions. In addition most of the activities that the non participants were involved in were similar to their high school involvement, showing a lack of risk taking on their part. Those that were involved were led to those activities by others who sought them out or by friends that were also involved in the activity.

Limitations

There are some limitations in this study that are worth nothing. Qualitative research cannot be generalized beyond the sample of students who were studied and instead focuses on understanding the experiences of the participants in the study (McMillan & Shcumacher, 2001).

1. The present study only focused on students in one particular residence hall.

2. The present study only focused on a snowball sample of Carman C.U.B.S participants.
3. This was a gender and racially biased study since all participants were Caucasian females.
4. Some participant interviews did not contain as much “thick description” (McMillan & Schmacher, 2001, p. ???) as the researcher would have preferred. Despite asking participants to add information during the member check process, none elected to do so.
5. The researcher co-created the C.U.B.S. program and had previous experience directly working with the C.U.B.S. participants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the data collected and presented in this study, several recommendations are offered to those individuals wishing to continue or start a first year experience leadership program, and those individuals who care about student involvement and see it as a key piece to help students develop.

1. Faculty and staff play a key role in helping students become involved. Interaction with faculty and staff is key for students to understand the possibilities of what they can get involved with, why they should get involved, and how to get involved. Getting students involved in the beginning of the year should be a primary focus for faculty and staff members.
2. The more involved a student is in their residence hall, the more satisfied they will be with their overall experience. Residence hall staff members should

work hard to connect with students and help them find something that will interest them within the hall or on campus.

3. Residence hall directors and others can use peer influence positively when trying to get others involved. If a student with a lot of influence over others can be encouraged to become involved, then there is a good chance they will get their friends involved as well. Having sophomore, past C.U.B.S. participants act as C.U.B.S. mentors in their second year could be one way to provide positive peer pressure to facilitate first year student involvement.
4. Housing professionals should realize first-time students involved in first semester is important and take the appropriate actions. If students are not engaged in out of classroom experiences immediately, they will spend most of their first year sitting on the sidelines or always “getting ready” to become involved.
5. One of the fastest ways for first time students to gain leadership experience is through residence life. Marketing that fact can help recruit freshmen students into new experiences.
6. More programs need to be implemented in halls that house first time students in order to increase leadership experience, teach skills, and provide mentorship to a larger number of students.
7. Better marketing of the Carman C.U.B.S. program needs to be in place and students should be notified sooner that they will be a part of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCHERS

1. Conduct a similar study that takes into account comparison factors such as whether the student is a first generation college student, what role their parents had in them being involved, or taking into account their predispositions. Finding out additional factors could help determine if those involved in Carman C.U.B.S. are already natural leaders, or if leadership skills are developed by the program
2. Interview the entire population of Carman C.U.B.S. participants. Interviewing every participant would help the researcher get a richer perspective on the program.
3. Expand the number of the non participants interviewed. Interviewing more than three non participants would help the researcher gain a better perspective on how non participants get involved and how to better reach them.
4. Expand on topic areas. There is an opportunity to take several of the themes and create research to specifically expand on that theme. Areas of specific interest of expansion could be high school versus college involvement, how mentorship directly affects involvement, and risk taking versus not taking risks to enter unfamiliar areas of personal experience.
5. The present study only looked at Caucasian females. Interviewing both males and females of all different races could help further expand themes of involvement or non involvement.

CONCLUSION

The results from this study indicated that participants in the freshman leadership group, the Carman C.U.B.S., voiced gains in confidence, took more risks with leadership, took leadership positions sooner, and were more satisfied overall with their residence hall experience their first semester at college than were non participants. Students not in the Carman C.U.B.S. program may get involved in out-of-classroom experiences their first semester of college, but those experiences are more likely to be closely related to activities participated in during high school. In addition, for those in their first semester of college, peers play an important role in getting other peers involved or not involved. Mentors in the form of residence hall directors, faculty members, or older students, can be the deciding factor in whether a student gets involved first semester. In this study, all of the participants wanted to be involved. However, the extent to which they actually became involved depended on how connected they were to the residence life staff, if they were ever specifically sought out by an older student, faculty member, or staff member, and if their friends were involved. The overall experiences of the participants in the present study showed that a freshmen leadership program in a residence hall can add positive experiences to its participants and can help those participants become involved in other activities, improve their interpersonal skills, and enjoy a richer college experience.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Informed Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Student Involvement's Role on Campus

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Alisha Scaggs and Charles Eberly, Ph.D. from the Department of Counseling and Student Development at Eastern Illinois University.

You have been asked to participate in this study for one of two reasons, either you are a member of the Carman C.U.B.S. program, or you are a freshmen currently living in Carman Hall and you have been chosen randomly by the researcher. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

• PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to identify the experiences of students participating in a new freshmen leadership program called the Carman Creating Unique Beginnings for Success (C.U.B.S.) at Eastern Illinois University in comparison to other non participating new first term students at that same university who were not in the leadership program. The second purpose of this study is to determine if and how the experiences have impacted those students. This study will also examine ways in which personal development and satisfaction are affected by involvement outside the classroom setting during the first semester of first-time students.

• PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign up for one on one times with the primary researcher based on your schedule. During this one on one meeting, you will be asked questions dealing with you initial college experiences focusing on your involvement or non involvement on Eastern Illinois University's campus. The interview will be audio-taped. After the interview is completed and the researcher has time to transcribe the information, you will be asked to double check the information to make sure everything is correct. At that time you will also have the opportunity to add information, or take information out. The one on one meetings will take place in the researcher's office in Carman Hall out of convenience and privacy for you, the participant. Participation should last approximately one month which includes one week for the researcher to conduct interviews, two weeks for the researcher to transcribe the interviews, and one week for participants to member check the information to make sure everything is correct.

• POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no anticipated adverse risks associated with this study. One minimal risk may be that by answering questions in the interview protocol, you as a participant may self

realize the benefits or non benefits of being involved and change your direction based on those revelations.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

The main benefit would be that as a subject, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your experiences during your first semester. The university may benefit from this research in the future if the research influences the Housing and Dining department to create a freshmen year experience program or something similar based on the success and benefits of the Carman C.U.B.S. program.

- **INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION**

No incentives will be offered to subjects for participation in the research.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information collected will be kept in a confidential location. The tapes will be stored in a secure location and once transcribed, they will be deleted. In addition any information collected via computer will only be accessible through a password system on a person drive located on that computer.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdrawal at any time. There is no penalty from withdrawing and you will lose entitlements that you currently have if you choose to withdraw. Additionally, you may refuse to answer any questions at any time.

- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any concerns or questions about this study please contact:

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• **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call, write, or email:

Institutional Review Board
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Ave.
Charleston, IL 61920
Telephone: (217) 581-8576
Email: eiurb@eiu.edu

You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with EIU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time. I have been given a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

The following research question guided the present study.

1. In a qualitative comparison of Carman C.U.B.S. participants and a similar group of non-participants, what is the perceived impact of the Carman C.U.B.S. program on new, first-time students?

The following interview protocol questions also guided the present study.

For all participants:

1. In what ways have you changed as a person since coming to college and what factors influenced those changes?
2. Which activities have you become involved in since moving to Eastern Illinois University?
3. Who or what played the biggest factor in your involvement or noninvolvement?

For Carman C.U.B.S. participants:

4. In what ways has the C.U.B.S. program impacted your involvement?
5. In what ways has the C.U.B.S. program impacted your college experience thus far?