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Parental Involvement in Higher Education: Understanding the Concerns and Expectations
of the Parents of College Students

by

Wilson Onu

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Donald E. and Helen L. Ross College of Education

Lynn University

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Abstract

Parental involvement in higher education has become more prevalent on college campuses as evidenced by increased reports in news media, journalistic articles, and academic publications. Parents who play an active role in their children's day to day college experiences present a new challenge for college administrators who often find themselves attempting to address parents' concerns while being mindful of student development goals as well as complying with federal laws like the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which protect college students' privacy. Using Nietzsche's 'perspectivism' as a conceptual rationale and employing a sequential explanatory mixed methods design, this study set out to understand a) the common concerns and expectations of parents during their children's transition to college; (b) how parents view their role during their children's college experience; (c) how institutional structures such as programs and policies mediate parental involvement on college campuses. Results from this study support the notion that parents consider themselves consumers, involved partners and investors in their children's college experience. Parental involvement in this study was driven by specific concerns parents had for their students' academic or social wellbeing. Institutional policies were ineffective in mediating parental involvement and parents' expectations were mediated more by their student's ability to address parent's concerns than by institutional structures. An effective institutional response to parental involvement requires institutions of higher education to meaningfully engage parents in a manner that is developmentally appropriate for the student and respective of the aims and ends of the institution.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Parental involvement at the college level is often described in journalistic media using negative terms such as ‘meddling’ or ‘hovering’. Parents who play an active role in their children’s day to day experiences on college campuses represent a new frontier for college administrators who often find themselves in a balancing act, attempting to address parental involvement while complying with federal laws like the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which protect students’ privacy. Examples of parental involvement at the college level include parents who contact college professors to dispute their student’s grade (Manos, 2009), or parents who contact student affairs professionals to intervene in roommate conflicts or disciplinary hearings involving their students (Galsky & Shotick, 2012). Reports concerning parents who intervene in their children’s professional experiences are also on the rise. Parents have been known to contact admission officials at graduate schools on behalf of their student’s graduate application (Mueller, 2014), attend career fairs, contact potential employers and even accompany students to job interviews, negotiating offers from employers and reviewing students’ performance reviews with employers (Taub, 2008).

Although parental involvement in higher education is not a new phenomenon in the United States, it has recently become more prevalent in colleges and universities as evidenced by the increased reports in news media, journalistic articles, and academic publications (Cullaty, 2011). This may be due to a number of reasons. For instance, the steady increase in college costs and the decline in state funding of higher education have

increased the financial burden on families across the United States prompting more parents to become financial stakeholders in their student's college experiences (Selingo, 2013) and as such are more involved throughout the college experience. Also, generational changes associated with today's college-age students who, among other distinguishing characteristics, place a high value on interpersonal relationships, (Twenge, 2006) may explain the increased occurrences of parental involvement during the college experience. Societal changes may also partially explain the increased occurrences of parental involvement in their college student's day to day experiences while away at college. For instance, changes in technology allow parents today to be in constant communication with their student either via texts or video chat. As a result, these parents may become aware of their student's concerns and challenges well in advance of college administrators and sometimes act to address the issue at hand. Moreover, recent security incidence on college campuses such as the campus shootings at Virginia Tech in 2007 and most recently on the campus at Seattle Pacific University in 2014, may add to parents' concerns about safety on college campuses and as such increase their level of involvement and interaction with their student and the institution.

Statement of the Problem

Reports and articles about parental involvement at the college level suggest that some college administrators are yet to fully grasp the nature of parental involvement on college campuses (Sax & Wartman, 2010) and its effect on college student development and thus are reluctant to formally integrate parental involvement into institutional culture. Terms such as 'meddling', 'hovering', or 'helicopter parenting' may describe perceptions

of parental involvement at the college level, but these terms do little to explain the phenomenon.

A chief concern among college professionals (faculty, staff and administrators) is that such high levels of parental involvement at the college level may impede students' development toward autonomously functioning adulthood – an important outcome of the traditional residential undergraduate experience (Taub, 2008; Cullaty, 2011). When parents tackle challenges that are typical to the traditional college experience (from roommate disputes, to contesting grades or matters of conduct), they deprive their student of the opportunity to achieve competency by experiencing these challenges (Taub, 2008). Parents also communicate a lack of faith in the student's ability and a sense of inadequacy or incompetence to the student by interfering (Schiffrin et al., 2013). This in turn may have developmental consequences for the student if he/she does not learn how to deal with failure or handle situations on their own when they arise (Coburn, 2006; Schiffrin et al., 2013).

Significance of the Study

Parental involvement at the college level will likely increase in the coming years (Savage, 2005a; Carney-Hall, 2008) and engaging parents of college students will become more important to student recruitment and retention as institutions “serve increasingly diverse student populations” (Savage, 2005b). Colleges and universities will need formal structures in the form of programs, policies and practice that address parental involvement. In order to meaningfully engage parents of traditional age college students, in a manner that supports student development and is respectful of the purpose and

mission of the institution, a better understanding of parental involvement at the college level is needed (Cullaty, 2011).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of parental involvement in higher education, by exploring the concerns and expectations that drive parents to get involved in their son's or daughter's college experience, as well as how these concerns and expectations are mediated by institutional structures such as programs, policies and practice. This study focused on parents' perspective of their involvement during their students' undergraduate experience. An expected outcome of this study was to derive more descriptive and informative definitions of parental involvement at the college level that can inform college and university officials as they develop programs and services to address parental involvement on their campuses. For the purpose of this study, parental involvement covered parent's interactions with their student and institutional representatives during the first semester of their freshman year (Cullaty, 2011).

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. What are the common concerns and expectations that parents of traditional college students have during their transition to college?
2. How do parents of traditional college students view their role during their son or daughter's college experience?

3. How do institutional structures (programs, policies, and practice) influence the concerns and expectations of parents of traditional college student?

Rationale for the Study

University administrators, faculty and staff can no longer dismiss parents as part of their students' undergraduate experience. Today's college students are generationally closer to their parents, are in touch much more frequently and instantaneously (Howe and Strauss, 2003). Parents of today's college age students reciprocate this new paradigm and remain actively involved even as their children leave for traditional residential campuses (Coburn, 2006; Taub 2008). The concern expressed by many educational professionals is that this type of involvement may interfere with a student's development of autonomy, competence, and purpose (Savage, 2005b; Taub, 2008).

There is little in student development theory directly linking parental involvement with student development at the college level. In fact, the most widely used theories were formulated at a time when societal notions shifted to viewing college students as adults (Taub, 2008). Reports and articles about parental involvement suggest that some college administrators are yet to grapple with the nature of parental involvement (Sax & Wartman, 2010) and its effect on college student development and thus are reluctant to formally integrate parental involvement into institutional culture. If institutions hope to meaningfully engage parents of college students, a better understanding of parental involvement is needed (McNeal, 2012).

The literature on this subject is highly polarized, mostly due to varying conceptualizations of parental involvement in higher education by researchers

(Catsambis, 1998). The effect of parental involvement on student's autonomy development (Cullaty, 2011), student engagement and educational outcomes (Shoup, Gonyea, & Kuh, 2009), overall student well-being (Garrison, 2013; Schiffrin et al., 2013), as well as student development outcomes (Spence, 2012) have been documented. Although there have been studies that examine parents' expectations of the college experience (Young, 2006; Spearman, 2010; Alger, 2011), more studies from the parent's perspective are needed to increase our understanding of the phenomenon.

Colleges and universities would need formal structures in the form of programs, policies and practice that address parental involvement in a manner that is developmentally appropriate for the student and respective of the aims and ends of the institution. In addition, institutions must determine how parents view their role in the process of their college student's development in order to properly engage them (Cullaty, 2011). This study was conducted to understand the concerns and expectations that drive parental involvement and how effective institutional structures (such as programs, policies and practice) are in mediating these concerns and expectations of parents.

Conceptual Rationale for the Study: Perspectivism

To add to the body of literature on the subject of parental involvement, this study took a perspectivist view of understanding social concepts such as parental involvement in higher education. Perspectivism is a term coined by Friedrich Nietzsche which implies that all knowledge is from a particular perspective and therefore subjective. Nietzsche's theory posits that "objective knowledge is impossible" and that "perspective cannot be eliminated i.e. values cannot cease to guide our knowledge, and that the attempt to

eliminate it completely is misguided” (Hales & Welshon, 2000). Nietzsche goes on to explain that “there is only a perspectival seeing, only a perspectival ‘knowing’; the more affects we are able to put into words about a thing, the more eyes, various eyes we are able to use for the same thing, the more complete will be our ‘concept’ of the thing, our ‘objectivity’.” (Nietzsche, Clark, & Swensen, 1998; Hales & Welshon, 2000).

By using this theory of knowledge to examine parental involvement in higher education from the parent perspective, this study recognizes that our understanding of the phenomenon of parental involvement could only benefit from exploring additional perspectives on the subject. Figure 1 below illustrates Nietzsche's perspectivism in relation to the study of parental involvement in higher education. It illustrates how each perspective (student, parent, and institution) is unique in relation to the others.

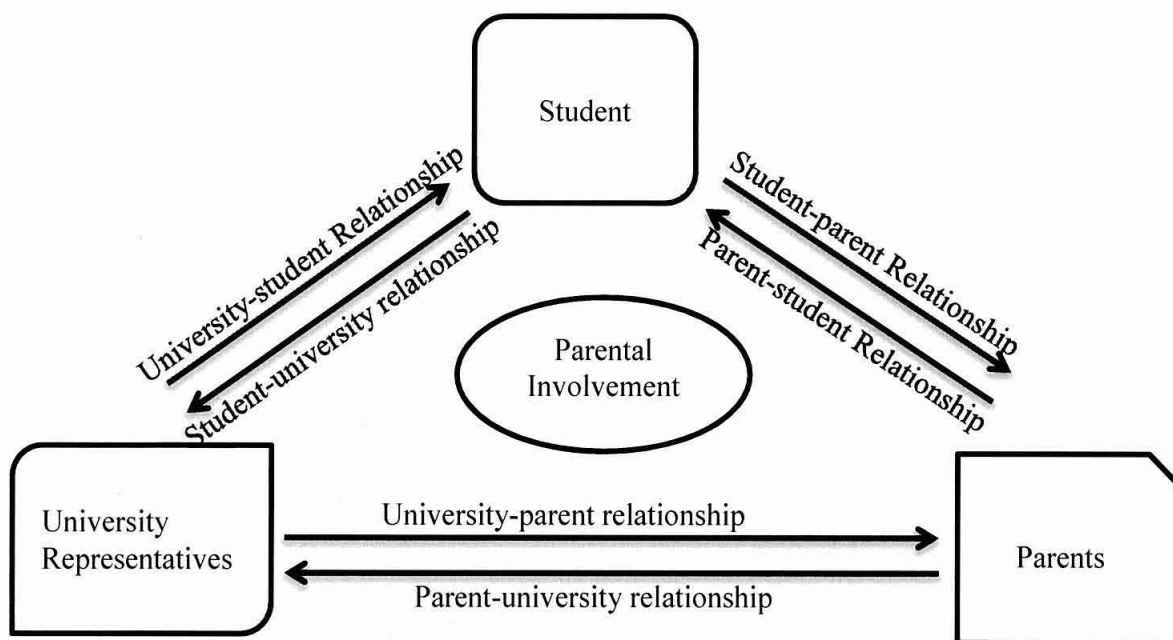


Figure 1. Applying Perspectivism to the Study of Parental involvement in Higher Education

To increase our understanding of parent involvement and to add to our ‘knowing’ of the phenomenon as Nietzsche explains, an examination from each perspective involved is needed. The perspectivist view is also ideal for theory construction (McGuire, 2004), an expected outcome of the grounded theory methodology used by this study.

Role of the Researcher

By adopting Nietzsche's perspectivist approach to knowledge, this researcher must also acknowledge the presence of his perspective and its unavoidable role in this study. Malterud (2001) explains that a “contemporary theory of knowledge acknowledges the effect of a researcher’s position and perspectives, and disputes the belief of a neutral observer”. Furthermore, “a researcher’s background and position will affect what they chose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions” (pg. 483-484). As a researcher, it is important therefore to reflect upon my own positionality in order to appropriately account for it and avoid undue influence throughout the research process. “Positionality represents a space in which objectivism and subjectivism meet... To achieve a pure objectivism is a naïve quest, and we can never truly divorce ourselves of subjectivity. We can strive to remain objective, but must be ever mindful of our subjectivities. Such is positionality” (Bourke, 2014).

I am currently employed as an academic coach at the university which serves as the site for this study. Prior to assuming the role of academic coach, I worked as an admissions representative for the same university. In both of these positions I interacted with parents of prospective and current college students. I have been privy to

conversations with parents about their concerns, expectations, and in some cases demands of the institution. These interactions with parents have ranged from informative to confrontational and surrounding diverse academic and social issues concerning their students and sometimes themselves.

As a college student, my own parents were heavily invested both financially and emotionally in my college education. I was born and raised in Nigeria, where I attained my primary and secondary education. To pursue an undergraduate degree, I moved to Dublin, Ireland where I studied Business Administration at the American College Dublin. Although there is vast ethnic diversity in Nigeria and most of West Africa, the creed of respecting elders and parents in society are cornerstones in most cultures and in most cases are deeply rooted in strong cultural and religious contexts. These social structures characterized the student-parent relationship during my college years. My parents covered the entire cost of my undergraduate tuition and therefore were very influential in my choice of institution and major of study, yet I do not recall any instances in which my parents and the institution were in contact.

This reflection on my own experience as a college student and then as a college professional is necessary for the purpose of this study. This process of accounting for one's own perspective during the research process is called reflexivity (England, 1994; Malterud, 2001). Reflexivity is both an awareness and a continuous process during research. It involves "self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher" (England, 1994, pg 244) while maintaining "an attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction,

especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process” (Malterud, 2001). Although this study is concerned with the parent perspective of their son or daughter’s college experience, understanding my positionality and the presence of my perspective throughout the research process, from conceptualization of the study to “the framing and communication of conclusions” (Malterud, 2001), is important to the integrity of the entire endeavor. As Malterud (2001) states, “preconceptions are not the same as bias, unless the researcher fails to mention them.” (pg. 484).

Assumptions

There were a few assumptions made regarding the parameters of this study. The first was that parents who would participate in the study were involved in their son or daughter’s education. The second was that parents who participated in all aspects of the study would do so honestly, providing reliable responses that reflect their expectations and concerns. Finally, it was assumed that the institutional structures (programs, policies and practice) at the site university would be a significant influence on parental involvement during the period in which this study was conducted.

Limitations

This study was limited to parents of incoming students at the site university. As part of this study a survey was presented to parents by the researcher, in paper form, at the site institution’s ‘new student orientation’ on August 22nd, 2014. The survey was not made available via a website prior to or after the implementation of the study. This may have limited the number of parents able to participate in this study.

The 'new student orientation' program took place in the university's gymnasium and ran throughout the day on August 22nd 2014. Parents who were in attendance were seated in a 'parents and family section' while their son or daughter went through the various 'check-in stations' (such as 'housing', 'financial aid', 'parking' etc.), set up around the gymnasium. It was during this time that parents were approached by the researcher to participate in this study. Of the surveys that were collected at the end of the day, some were only partially completed. Those surveys with no participant responses beyond the demographic section were discarded, further limiting the number of parent participants available for this study.

Delimitations

This study was solely concerned with parents' perspective of their involvement in their son or daughter's college experience. It did not investigate or seek to compare the perspective of the student or institutional officials at the site college. Given the sensitive nature of the subject being studied, it was important to limit this study's inquiry to the parent perspective so that participants would provide honest and reliable responses that reflect their expectations and concerns. Also, the site college is home to a nationally recognized program which serves students with learning disabilities. Although parent expectations have been observed to influence eventual educational outcomes in students with learning disabilities (Doren, Gau, & Lindstrom, 2012), this study was not intended to focus on parents of students within a specific population such as students with learning disabilities. Nevertheless, it is possible that a significant number of parent who participated in this study might fall into this category. Given the small number of

participants, findings from this study should therefore not be generalized to other parent populations and any attempt to draw comparisons should be done with significant caution.

Definition of Terms

Parental involvement. For the purpose of this study, parental involvement refers to the nature of parents' interactions with their students and institutional representatives during the first semester of their freshman year (Cullaty, 2011). These interactions may either include specific university issues (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000), or contact with institutional representatives on behalf of their student in relation to a specific concern (Keppler, Mullendore, & Carey, 2005).

Parent involvement strategies. Parent involvement strategies tend to exist on a continuum that vary depending on causal factors and developmental stages in a student's life (McNeal, 2012).

Helicopter parenting. This refers to a phenomenon in which parents 'hover' over every aspect of their student's education. It has been associated with parents of millennial students (Howe & Strauss, 2000) and has gained popularity because it graphically depicts the type of parenting behavior that student affairs professionals find concerning (Taub, 2008).

Millennial Students. Millennial students refer to the generation of traditionally aged college students born between 1982 and 1995 (Howe & Strauss, 2000, 2003).

Autonomy development. Autonomy development refers to a stage in student development theory in which students rely less on parents and form autonomous

identities on the path to adulthood. Autonomy has been identified as a key developmental goal for college students. The transition to adulthood occurs from ages 17 to 22 and is characterized by a separation from parents (Levinson, 1978). Autonomy development is central to most adult and student development theories in which the culmination is characterized by increasing responsibility and competence in adult social roles (Levinson, 1978; Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Cullaty, 2011).

Semi-autonomy. Semi-autonomy may describe a bridge between autonomy development and dependency on parents as reflected by the college experience in which students live away from their parents in residence halls but are dependent on them financially and/or emotionally (Goldscheider & Davanzo, 1986; Arnett, 2000).

Student development theory. Most student development theories rely on the theoretical framework of Chickering (1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) which view student development as influenced by various environmental factors and in relation to students' individual development through stages culminating in adulthood. Student development theories form the bases of practice for student affairs professionals.

Transition Theory. Schlossberg's (1995) Transition Theory focuses on the individual's ability to cope with transitions. As with Chickering's theory, Schlossberg's transition theory considers the context in which development occurs as part of the process (Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman, 1995). As such, influence from the environment is as crucial to development as the individual's core traits and abilities. This theory describes the set of factors that influence an individuals' ability to cope with transition as situation factors (that describe the transition situation), factors of self (demographic

characteristics such as age, gender or ethnicity, and psychological resources such as optimism and self-efficacy), factors of strategy (which refers to the individual's actions when coping with a transition) and factors of support (which refers to the people and institutions to which the individual in transition can turn to for support) (Taub, 2008).

Emerging adulthood. Emerging adulthood is defined as a stage of development between ages 18 to 25 years and is “marked by important transitions such as increased autonomy in decision-making and fewer social constraints than during adolescence” (Arnett, 2000).

Interdependency. Interdependency represents a stage of student development that follows autonomy development. The task of moving through autonomy toward interdependence has three components: emotional independence, (which represents a detachment from the continual need for approval and reassurance), instrumental independence (which represents the ability to solve problems, complete tasks and be flexible to one's needs) and the recognition of interdependence (an ideal state in which one realizes that neither absolute independence nor total dependence is optimal) (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The beginning of this movement toward autonomy is characterized by a disengagement from parental support and more reliance on peers and “nonparental adults” until an interdependence is established (Chickering, 1969; Chickering and Reisser, 1993).

Institutional Structures. At the university in this study, institutional structures can be defined as programs, policies and practice within an institution (universities and

colleges) that serve students, govern student life and characterize the relationship between institutional representatives and students respectively.

Perceptions-through-practice. At the university in this study, perceptions-through-practice can be defined as the characteristics of a program or service within an institution as measured by the perception of those on the receiving end of the program or service.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) – refers to a federal law enacted in 1974 that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all institutions that receive government funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

The Buckley Amendment to FERPA. The FERPA is also known as the Buckley Amendment. It requires institutions to keep student records confidential except in the case of emergencies, court orders, or university officials who have a need to know. It also provides students with the right to inspect records about themselves such as recommendation letters submitted to colleges on their behalf that are kept by the institution.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Literature on the subject of parental involvement in higher education varies from anecdotal accounts portraying the stereotypical ‘helicopter parent’ who hovers over their college-aged student, to research about the impact of parental involvement on college student success and wellbeing. The accounts to date represent highly polarized views on the nature of parental involvement in higher education, its effect on student involvement and appropriate institutional responses to the growing phenomenon. These conflicting views in the literature may be due to varying conceptualizations of parental involvement by researchers (Catsambis, 1998), views which become even more confounding during the transition to college in which the role of parental involvement and its impact on a host of college outcome-related variables, has yet to be fully understood or universally defined. Regardless of the variety of opinion on the subject, it seems parental involvement will continue to rise across college campuses in the United States as more college-age students transition to college (Coburn, 2006). As such, more research is needed to understand parental involvement as it transitions with their students to college (Vianden & Ruder, 2012).

Parental involvement as discussed in the literature defines parent’s interactions with their student and institutional representatives regarding their student’s college experience (Cullaty, 2011). Further delineation is needed between ‘parent contact’ which is defined as the frequency with which parents communicate with their student, and ‘parental involvement’, defined as a parent’s interest and involvement in students’

academic progress and decision making (Harper, Sax, Wolf, 2012). A common characteristic of the type of parental involvement that higher education officials find troubling is when parents actively take on problems and concerns that their students should be handling themselves (White, 2007). This type of involvement is not typical of all parental involvement however, nor is it necessarily present in most aspects of the phenomenon as discussed in this review. Parental involvement seems to exist on a continuum that varies depending on several causal factors and developmental stages throughout a student's life (McNeal, 2012). As parental involvement during a student's college experience is likely to change from year to year and as students mature (Harper, Sax, Wolf, 2012), this study examined parental involvement during the initial semester of students' transition to college and university.

The transition to college is one of the most challenging times for students and can result in feelings of being pressured and overwhelmed (Coburn, 2006). Students who are in contact with their parents frequently are most likely to turn to them for advice during these challenging or stressful periods; however, a 2007 survey (Kohut et. al, 2007) showed that sixty-four percent of millennial-age students (born between 1982 and 1995) reported having their parents help complete tasks such as errands and housework when feeling overwhelmed. More often than not, these 'errands' might include college-related activities. As such, some college professionals worry that parental involvement in this fashion may impede students' development (Taub, 2008); however, earlier research suggests that parental support and attachment can aid in transition, social adjustment, as well as personal-emotional adjustment (Lapsley, Rice and FitzGerald, 1990), promoting

the view that support in the appropriate amount can help students face challenges and facilitate their development rather than impede it (Sanford, 1962; Taub, 2008).

Conflicting scientific views such as these continue to fuel the debate on parental involvement in higher education.

The interactions that university officials have with parents of college students on college and university campuses also provide conflicting views of parental involvement. Tales of unpleasant encounters with parents are all too familiar on college campuses. This researcher has witnessed such peculiar encounters first-hand; parents calling college professors to dispute their students' grade because the student 'was present in class and should have a passing grade', and parents calling academic advisors to either register their college students for classes or dispute class selections their students had already made. Yet other accounts of parental involvement are less fantastical, like one of an educational professional at a small community college in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia who described a young student attending her orientation with a full entourage of younger siblings, parents, and grandparents who wanted to witness and celebrate such a momentous family occasion – the highest accomplishment anyone in that family had achieved (Cutright, 2008). This is in sharp contrast to the highly educated parent who wants to sit in on their students' orientation meeting to "make sure they take the right classes". It is therefore prudent to view parental involvement in higher education through a variety of lenses and in various correlational contexts. Not all parental involvement is intrusive (Wartman & Savage, 2008).

Parental Involvement Prior to Higher Education

Parents of college students today have always been encouraged to get involved in their children's education. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 practically mandated parental involvement, through parent participation programs, for schools receiving Title I funding (Mattingly, Prislín, McKenzie, Rodrigues, and Kayzar, 2002). As such parents have always had a very hands-on approach to their students' education (Coburn, 2006); it is therefore logical that they would carry on their involvement as their student heads to college (Carney-hall, 2008). Moreover, an increasing number of incoming college students arrive with "a history of mental health issues and learning disabilities for which their parents have actively advocated successfully with school administrators" in the past (Carney-Hall, 2008). The apprehension with this kind of involvement, in which parents act as advocates at the college level, is that it becomes developmentally inappropriate for college students as they transition to adulthood (Taub, 2008).

Parental Involvement and Student Development theory

Student development theories, especially psychosocial theories, deal with development in light of a combination of factors that are internal (physical and cognitive) and external to the student (demands, expectations and pressures of society) as such it is relevant in discussing the effect of parental involvement on college student development (Taub, 2008). There is little in student development theory directly factoring the role and effect of parental involvement on student development. In fact, the most widely used theories were formulated at a time when societal notions shifted to viewing college students as adults (Taub, 2008).

Chickering's (1969; Chickering and Reisser, 1993) theory in which he developed seven psychosocial "vectors" that construct the tasks of identity development during an individual's college years is probably the most well-known and widely used by college professionals. Of importance to this discussion are the developmental tasks (or vectors) which students are faced with during the first two years of their transition to college; these include developing competence, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, and developing identity (Taub, 2008).

Developing Competency. This focuses on the development of basic skills in the intellectual, interpersonal, and physical areas. The end result is an overall sense of competence: the belief that one can handle unanticipated situations on their own as they arise. This sense of competence is foundational for risk taking – a necessary tool for further growth and development. Parental involvement, the kind criticized by professionals in higher education, may interfere with this task (Taub, 2008). When parents tackle challenges typical to the traditional college experience (from roommate disputes, to contesting grades or matters of conduct), they deprive their student of achieving competency by experiencing those challenges (Taub, 2008) and communicate a lack of faith in the student's ability (Schiffrin et al., 2013) as well as a sense of inadequacy or incompetence to the student by interfering. This in turn could have developmental consequences for the student if they do not learn how to deal with failure or handle situations on their own when they arise (Coburn, 2006; Schiffrin et al., 2013).

Yet the debate continues as to how parental involvement affects the development of competency in their college student. Some perspectives of the 'good parent'

(Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2011) see parental involvement as having a positive influence on their student's education while some condemn highly involved 'hands-on' parenting as responsible for negative development outcomes (Levine 2006; Marano 2008; Gibbs 2009), including increased levels of depression among students and a decreased satisfaction with life caused by their reduced autonomy and competence (Schiffrin et al., 2013). Other perspectives seek a middle ground, suggesting that students need to experience both challenge and support in equal part so as to positively develop competency (Sanford, 1962; Taub, 2008).

Findings from the National Survey of College Student Engagement (NSSE, 2007) showed that students who reported high parental involvement also reported much greater gains in personal competences, personal and social development, general education and greater satisfaction with their college experience than students who reported low parental involvement. However, these same students reported significantly lower grades than their peers with lesser parental involvement (Shoup, Gonyea, and Kuh, 2009). Of all surveyed students in the NSSE (2007), thirteen percent of first-year and eight percent of senior students reported their parent/guardian frequently (very often or often) intervened on their behalf. An additional twenty five percent of first-year and twenty one percent of senior students indicated their parent/guardian sometimes intervened (NSSE, 2007). A defining characteristic of the type of parental involvement deemed harmful to students developing competency is that parents interacted with college officials on behalf of their students and intervened to solve problems (Shoup, Gonyea, & Kuh, 2009).

Moving Through Autonomy toward Interdependence. This task, more than any aspect of psychosocial theory, represents the contention that college professionals have with the impact of parental involvement on student development. Moving through autonomy toward interdependence has three components. The first is emotional independence (which represents a detachment from the continual need for approval and reassurance common in the parent-child relationship dyad), instrumental independence (which represents the ability to solve problems, complete tasks and be flexible to one's needs) and the recognition of interdependence (an ideal state in which one realizes that neither absolute independence nor total dependence is optimal) (Chickering and Reisser, 1993).

The beginning of this movement toward autonomy is characterized by a disengagement from parental support and more reliance on peers and "non-parental adults" until an interdependence is established (Chickering, 1969; Chickering and Reisser, 1993). Parental involvement can hinder this transition by being either overly restrictive, unsupportive or domineering (Chickering and Reisser, 1993) or by providing an excess of emotional support (Taub, 2008).

Cullaty's (2011) study examining the role of parental involvement in autonomy development of traditional-age college students recognized the importance of supportive parental involvement over intrusive practices in developing autonomy in college students. Parents who established adult relationships with their college students, in which parents communicated to their college-age student the freedom to make their own decision and accept responsibility for their choices, helped them gain confidence in their abilities,

opinions and ideas (Cullaty, 2011). Conversely, maintaining parental control inhibited autonomy development. Over-involved parents exerted control over their student's choices when they disagreed with them, consequently causing the students to experience conflict and doubt in one's ability to make good choices (Cullaty, 2011).

Semi-autonomy and Emerging Adulthood. New concepts such as 'emerging adulthood' and 'semi-autonomy' may be more representative of today's college experience in relation to parental involvement. Being autonomous does not necessarily lead to student success (Garrison, 2013). Perhaps an interplay of supportive and challenging relationships may be more predictive of successful college outcomes. Semi-autonomy (Arnett, 2000) may describe a bridge between autonomy development and dependency on a parent which is more reflective of the traditional college experience in which students live away from their parents in residence halls but are dependent on them financially or emotionally. Emerging adulthood is a distinct period in which the individual explores identity in the areas of love, work and worldviews (Arnett, 2000).

It may be that students can develop toward autonomy without experiencing the detachment from parents as described in Chickering's theory (Taub, 2008); therefore the activities that characterize parental involvement (constant communication and involvement in student's lives) may not be of great concern, but rather the unwillingness or inability of students to engage in problem solving and meeting challenges that is of more concern for their development toward emotional and instrumental autonomy (Taub, 2008). In 1996, Dubas & Peterseen (as cited in Arnett, 2000) showed that in the United States, emerging adults in their early twenties with the most frequent contact with

parents, particularly those still living at home, tended to have poorer psychological adjustment. This was in contrast to 1995 study by Chisholm & Hurrelmann (as cited in Arnett, 2000) which found that emerging adults in Europe who lived at home were happier, had better relationships with their parents, but also enjoyed considerable autonomy within their parents' household showing that autonomy and connectedness can work harmoniously in the parent-student relationship.

'Millennial' Students and 'Helicopter' Parents

Another common argument about parental involvement and student development is that this generation of college-age students (millennials) has been socialized to feel special by their parents which may account for their heightened feelings of worth and self-esteem (Levine, 2006; Love & Thomas, 2014). This becomes problematic when these students transition to college and expect academic professionals to cater to their sense of worth and treat them as their parents did (Love & Thomas, 2014). Like a vicious cycle parents respond to this perceived threat to their student's sense of worth by intervening, sometimes calling college professors to contest grades, or reaching out to senior college administrators to discipline the faculty member involved.

The term 'helicopter parent' has gained popularity in discussions about education because it graphically depicts the type of parenting behavior (in which parents hover over their student, ready to swoop in at any sign of conflict) that student affairs professionals find concerning (Howe and Strauss, 2003; Taub, 2008). Although some of the accounts of parent behavior on college campuses are true to this depiction, it remains a perspective highly skewed as it does not characterize all parental involvement and also ignores the

role that the student (Taub, 2008; Garrison, 2013) and society (Rutherford, 2011) might have played in creating the phenomenon of ‘helicopter’ parenting as we know it.

Today’s college students are generationally closer to their parents and are in touch much more frequently and instantaneously thanks to technology like cellphones, e-mail, and instant messaging (Howe and Strauss, 2003; Carney-Hall, 2008). These students also tend to initiate contact with their parents over issues that arise in their day-to-day college experience (Howe and Strauss, 2003; Carney-Hall, 2008). Parents in turn reciprocate this paradigm and remain actively involved even as these students transition to traditional residential college campuses (Coburn, 2006; Taub 2008). A recent analysis based on the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE, 2007) found that seven out of ten students communicated with their parents very often via electronic media, phone, text messaging, and email, while away at college (Shoup, Gonyea, & Kuh, 2009).

It may very well be that some students are ready to cope without parental involvement while others are not. It is important therefore to view parental involvement and the parent-student relationship within the context of the student’s overall circumstance (Garrison, 2013) rather than make broad assumptions of all parental involvement at the college level.

Parental Involvement and College Student Wellbeing

An important part of transitioning to college is that students be able to adjust to their new college environment (Vianden & Ruder, 2012). This transition could either be highlighted by increased freedoms and new opportunities, or wrought with feelings of anxiety and insecurity (Hickman, Bartholomae, & McKenry, 2000). Levine (2006)

reveals an alarming trend of depression, anxiety disorders and substance abuse. She attributes this epidemic to a culture of affluence marked by materialism, parental pressure to succeed and other factors (Levine, 2006). For college and university officials, being able to adjust academically and socially is of equal importance to college students' wellbeing and indicative of a successful transition to college life (Hickman et al., 2000).

A mediating factor during students' transition to college is the attachment bonds they have or are able to form, of which the parent-student relationship is chiefly important. Students with supportive bonds to both their parents and peers are much more likely to psychologically adjust during their college transition (Tinsley, Albert, & Dwelle, 2014). The concern for students with actively involved parents is that they [student] might adjust poorly to college life in part due to an inability to function as adults because of parent over-involvement (Marano, 2008) or feelings of inadequacy caused by a frustration of their basic psychological needs for autonomy by over-controlling parents (Schiffrin et al., 2013).

The effects of such parenting practices continue throughout the college experience. David Garrison (2013) recently examined the effect of parental involvement (as defined in this study) on undergraduate college student experiences. He found that parental involvement could be a source of stress for some students while acting as a coping mechanism for others (Levine, 2006; Garrison, 2013). One participant in Garrison's (2013) study commented on her parent's supportive role saying "As much as I like keeping them [parents] involved in my life, my parents give me enough space to be myself and they respect my privacy. My parents never harass me to show them my

grades. They don't constantly check to see if I've been keeping up with my homework.” In the same study, another student complained about the added pressure he felt from his parents when they disagreed with his choice of study (Garrison, 2013). It is important therefore to consider the quality of the parent-student relationship when examining parental involvement in college. While it has become commonplace to blame parent ‘over-involvement’ as responsible for raising ‘teacup” students (young adults so fragile emotionally that they hardly are able to function as adults; Marano, 2008), a fragile student may not necessary be a result of parenting practice but rather other significant social, psychological and environmental factors (Garrison, 2013).

Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement

Results from the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE, 2007) showed that students who reported high parental involvement reported significantly lower grades than their peers with lesser parental involvement (Shoup, Gonyea, and Kuh, 2009). One explanation for this association is that students who depend on their parents turn to them when they struggle academically and those parents have always intervened, inhibiting the students’ growth and development evidenced by their poor academic adjustment in college (Harper, Sax, Wolf, 2012).

Yet not all students with considerable parental involvement perform poorly in college. This has led some commentators to wonder if so much parent-student contact is truly problematic. George Kuh (Pollock & Kuh, 2008) who coordinates the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE) commented on the 2007 NSSE findings that seven out of ten college students communicate very often with their parents: “The key

challenge is for faculty and staff to figure out how to work productively with both students and families in order to maximize the desired effects of college while allowing family members to support and encourage their student to perform at the highest possible level” (Pollock & Kuh, 2008).

For those students with considerable parental involvement who achieve academic success in college, their ability to seek help (‘help-seeking’, defined as “students’ level of comfort with, and intentions to obtain assistance when they encountered challenging course content or experience difficulties in a course”; Holt, 2014) may mediate the relationship between parent attachment and academic adjustment. Commenting on the association found in the NSSE (2007), Holt (2014) says “securely attached students likely perceive academic challenges as opportunities for engagement with others which in turn predict other effective academic behaviors including better organization, preparation and classroom engagement”. Also, research suggesting that parental involvement promotes social adjustment to university life may be explained by the quality of the parent-student relationship. A healthy attachment to parents can serve as a base from which students feel secure enough to launch into new social activities and goals (Harper, Sax, Wolf, 2012).

Parental involvement alone cannot explain academic gains as several other factors including class size, peer and student-faculty interactions etc. have shown to have significant impact on academic gains (Harper, Sax, Wolf, 2012). “The negative association between parental contact and academic gains, however, among the upper-middle class and wealthy students might reflect the “helicopter” phenomenon so frequently cited in the literature” (Wartman & Savage, 2008).

Parental Involvement and Institutional Structures

As opinions regarding the effect of parental involvement on college students vary, so do institutional responses to the phenomenon. Some institutions have a clear message on parental involvement. Universities like Princeton, Grinnell, and Colgate all emphasize orientation programs as being 'student-only events' (Gabriel, 2010) while some others have taken a more inclusive approach. Family orientations like at the Washington University in St. Louis (Coburn, 2006) are replacing the more traditional student orientation as parents want increasingly specific information from universities (Savage, 2005a). These institutional structures, defined as programs and services designed for parents and families of college students which may include handbooks, websites, orientation programs and newsletters (Scott & Daniel, 2001), can help moderate parental involvement. Moreover, parents of today's college students expect to be involved in their children's academic experiences and have listed parental involvement with faculty and the academic experience as top priorities (Bers and Galowich, 2002; Carney-Hall, 2008).

Some researchers oppose the belief that high parental involvement is detrimental for students and as such colleges and universities should embrace more opportunities to partner with parents (Shoup, Gonyea, & Kuh, 2009) through formal institutional structures (orientation programs, etc.) that allow institutions to educate parents about student development and appropriate ways to be supportively involved in their students' college experience (Carney-Hall, 2008; Wartman & Savage, 2008). Despite a lack of general consensus about how to appropriately engage parents and families of college students, researchers and practitioners agree that family involvement is critical to

students' academic success and "have moved from a stance that assumed parents were harmful to a child's welfare, to a position that assumed they were irrelevant, and now to a perspective that assumes that parents, siblings, and extended families play a central role" (Tierney, 2002, p. 590). As such, more colleges and universities are formally instituting programs specifically for parents such as parent orientation programs that target freshman students (Wartman & Savage, 2008) or fundraising ventures that engage parents throughout their student's undergraduate experience and beyond (Harper, Sax, Wolf, 2012).

Parental Involvement and Federal Government Regulations

College administrators often find themselves in a balancing act attempting to address parental involvement on college campuses while complying with federal laws like the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (also referred to as the Buckley Amendment or FERPA) which protects the privacy of student education records (White, 2007). The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) refer to a federal law enacted in 1974 that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all institutions that receive government funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

The FERPA "protects the privacy interests of parents and students with regard to education records", "enhance student achievement through greater parental involvement in their children's education" (20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). The FERPA was initially conceived to prohibit the release of education records to third parties without the prior written consent of the student's parents. Those rights transfer to the student once

they reach the age of eighteen years. The student is able to permit disclosure to parents via written consent. Some scholars go as far as to believe the mention of higher education in the Buckley amendment was entirely by accident (White, 2007). Regardless, higher education institutions are bound to respect students' privacy under the FERPA, which creates an obstacle when engaging parents.

Before FERPA, there was the concept of "In Loco Parentis" (which means, 'in place of parents') that implied colleges and institutions were responsible for the wellbeing of their students (Sweeton & Davis, 2003). Historically, the notion of in loco parentis was associated with a form of social control and monitoring of college students, often to safeguard the student's morality as well as ensure their safety. Along with the notion came strict codes that guided college life; there were dress codes for instance, sign in sheets for when students came and left the residence halls and regulations on having guests of the opposite sex (Sweeton & Davis, 2003). Students of college-age in the 1960s and 70s rebelled against the doctrine of in loco parentis advocating for students' right to privacy and freedom to live and make decisions without parental or institutional restriction (White, 2007). Ironically, that same generation, now parents, are opposed to the trend they fought for, pressuring colleges and universities to revert back to the doctrine of in loco parentis (White, 2007).

Parental involvement as witnessed today on college campuses can also be seen as a measure of behavioral control (Schiffirin et al., 2013). To a certain degree, parents (especially but not exclusively from upper-middle-class families) expect colleges and universities to take their place by recreating and enforcing the same reality that they

[parents] have nurtured for their student up until college (Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2011). These parents have sued colleges and universities with regard to choices their college students have made. Legal cases have raised the question of liability in circumstances of student death relating to substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) on college campuses, shifting parent's (and society's) view of the responsibilities and duties of care that institutions of higher education owe their students and their families (Sweeton & Davis, 2003).

As a result, the concept of "in loco parentis" seems to be re-emerging in which parents expect colleges to be responsible for their students' safety and choices and they [parents] won't hesitate to get involved when these expectations are not met (Sweeton & Davis, 2003). The notable increase in parental involvement may very well be less about 'millennial' students being unable to cope without their parents but more about 'boomer' parents wanting to remain in control. The students of the 1960s and 70s who fought for student rights are now sending their students off to college and lobbying for their rights to access and information as parents (White, 2007).

Parental Involvement as a Result of Parent Psychology

With regard to transitioning to college, just as students face the transition with all its opportunities and challenges, so do parents confront their own set of challenges as their student makes the transition. Although it is the same event (the transition to college), parents and students view and experience it from different perspectives. Coburn and Treeger (2003) discuss the college transition and years that follow from an academic and parental perspective. Both authors acknowledge the challenges that parents face

when their students are away in college and explain some of the actions parents take that are reminiscent of popular depictions of parental involvement. For instance, some parents who intervene in ways that college professionals might deem inappropriate usually do so out of their own anxiety (Coburn & Treeger, 2003). These interventions usually occur within heavy emotional contexts (Cutright, 2008) and with little or no awareness of how it affects their child developmentally (Coburn, 2006).

Examining parental involvement from the parent perspective sheds light on the motivations that drive parental involvement in their college students' lives. Parents today may also feel increasing uncertainty, societal pressure and anxiety about their role as parents (Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2011). A recent study examining the effect of college transitioning on parents found that "an overwhelming number of parents worried about how separation from students would affect their own transition as their student was leaving home" (Vianden & Ruder, 2012). While their students transition to college, parents might act to ensure their students are being left in 'good hands', endeavor to reconcile their need to act on their student's behalf with their student's desire for autonomy, and may attempt to help forge social connections for their students in their new college environment (Vianden & Ruder, 2012). Aspects of parental involvement that have been observed on college campuses may be better understood when viewed from the parent perspective.

Parent Obligation

Holmstrom, Karp, and Gray (2011) in one of the few studies to look at parental involvement in higher education from the parent perspective, sought to understand the

motivations for which parents made significant investments, emotionally and financially, in their students' college education. Their results showed interesting compulsions which, when viewed from the parent's perspective, illuminate the concept of parental involvement. For example, parental involvement such as we have seen on college campuses, when viewed from the parent perspective, may be a function of a much larger endeavor of being a 'good parent' (Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2011). This is reflected in the almost instinctual impulse some parents might have toward investing in their college student's education. One parent in the study who could afford to pay their student's tuition commented on the value of a college education by responding: "Worth it? Absolutely—what else would you spend it on?" and another, "We'll put all our money into [education] if we have to." (Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2011)

Reciprocity

Parents today expect to be involved in their student's college experience as they are considered consumers, involved partners and influential educators in their children's lives (Scott & Daniel, 2001; Carney-Hall, 2008). A common theme of parental involvement is one of reciprocity in which the parent pays for college and in return expects the student to get good grades, engage in a practical major of study, act responsibly and eventually gain commensurate employment. This is similar, but far more culturally advanced than the type of reciprocity between parents and children described in Homan's (1961) "exchange theory," typical of agrarian times when parents expected economic reciprocity (or physical labor) from their children (LeVine and White, 1987).

Holmstrom, Karp, and Gray's (2011) study also explored the idea of a type of transfer in which parents of upper-middle class status attempted to pass on their social status to their children by way of attaining a college education. Such a motivational perspective may explain the deep investment that parents seem to have in their college students.

Transference

Some parents unconsciously use the word 'we' when referring to their children. This raises the questions as to how much of parental involvement we observe on college campuses are as a result of parenting needy students or of parents living vicariously through their students (Gabriel, 2010)?

Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray (2011) in their study, looked at this exploratory notion by using Cooley's (1902) concept of the "looking glass self". They (Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2011) explained that just as Cooley described the perception of self as a reflection of how others see the individual, so perhaps do parents view their children as a reflection of themselves, hence any investment in their children's advancement (including a college education) may be to enhance that image of self as reflected in their child (LeVine and White, 1987; Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2011). This parent perspective may explain some of the parent behaviors witnessed on college campuses. For instance, a parent perceives the benefits of a college education based on his/her own experiences (Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2011), a perspective that their college student or an institutional representative (such as an academic advisor) may not share or agree with. Vexed by the frustration of trying to achieve their ideal for their college student and

emboldened by the financial commitment they are making, the parent may act in a manner that is characteristic of the type of parental involvement deemed intrusive or developmentally harmful to the student by college professionals.

Parental Involvement as a Function of Societal Changes and Expectations

The phenomenon of parent ‘over-involvement’ did not begin today; however, attitudes toward parenting seemed to elevate in the 1990s as more parents grew increasingly concerned about their children’s safety and became overprotective (Gibbs, 2009). The current trend of parental involvement in higher education is representative of a major societal shift in the relationship between the three parties: parents, students and institutions of higher education (Wartman & Savage, 2008). Concerns and criticisms about parental practices are not new. Before the term ‘helicopter parenting’ entered the mainstream vocabulary, there were the ‘mommy wars’ of the 1980s and 90s (Zimmerman, Aberle, Krafchick, & Harvey, 2008) and before that parents in the 60s and 70s were criticized for being too lax concerning their children’s upbringing (Rutherford, 2011).

The widespread criticism might be less about a concern for the welfare of the student and their development, but more about society’s anxiety over parenting practices and its impact on student success in an uncertain future. Markella Rutherford (2011) explains this relationship between societal expectation and parenting practices:

The intense anxieties felt by Americans about parenting in the early-twenty-first century are grounded in the uncertainties of work in a post-industrial and global economy. They also point toward the individualized responsibility that has come

to shape parenting in contemporary America, where cultural and community-level support for parenting are generally quite weak. This individualization of responsibility affects all parents, across the socioeconomic spectrum, but has led most intensely to a sense of isolation and status anxiety among the highly-educated and highly-credentialed professionals who make up the so-called 'knowledge class' or 'new elites.' It is these parents, in particular, who are often the focus of discussion when contemporary parenting practices come under critique in the media. (p. 407)

Parental Involvement, Socio Economic Status and Financial Commitment

It was once thought that parental involvement of the intrusive fashion (helicopter parenting) was exclusive to middle and upper-middle class families (Nelson, 2010). There is the sense among parents (in upper-middle class families) able to afford their students' tuition that they are expected to support and be involved in their students' college education (Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2011). Moreover, the associations between parental involvement and academic gains seemed limited to students from upper and upper-middle class (Holt, 2014) but no study to date has conclusively made that distinction.

Harper, Sax, and Wolf, (2012) in their study *The Role of Parents in College Students' Sociopolitical Awareness, Academic, and Social Development*, found that the nature and impact of parental involvement varied among students of different gender, socioeconomic classes, and ethnic and racial backgrounds. Parents' attitudes (and by extension their involvement) toward college may also be affected by their ability to pay

for it, with those able to pay more enthusiastic and committed to financing their student's education than those who cannot afford as much (Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2011). Parents are paying more for college due to increased tuition fees and steady decrease in government support for education. This in turn has cast parents in the role of parents-as-consumers, resulting in a sense of entitlement among tuition-paying parents (Harper, Sax, Wolf, 2012). As such, parents have become aggressive advocates as they are paying more for college. They expect better services and higher quality programs and facilities for their students, and "won't hesitate to pursue the solution they want for any issue, no matter how minor" (Carney-Hall, 2008).

Parents of today's college students also have high expectations of their students, and the colleges and universities their students attend (Coburn, 2006). As institutions expect parents to pay higher tuition, so will parents' expectations of colleges and college outcomes increase. Parents not only expect excellent programs, services and amenities for their students while in college, but also that they obtain a good paying job after graduation (Savage, 2005a). In response to this expectation, universities and colleges are doing more to engage parents of undergraduate students (Coburn, 2006).

Parental Involvement Post-College

An ongoing concern expressed in studies and articles written about the effects of parental involvement on college student development, is that college graduates will enter the workplace ill-equipped to face its challenges, be unable to act independently, think creatively or problem solve in unfamiliar situations (Taub, 2008). Recent reports of parental involvement in the workplace may confirm these fears. Parents have been

reported to attend career fairs with their students, contact potential employers and even accompanying students to job interviews, negotiating offers from employers and reviewing students' performance reviews with employers (Taub, 2008; Mueller, 2014).

A Michigan State University study surveyed 725 employers during the 2006-2007 recruiting cycle to determine to what extent parents were involved in the job hiring process. 32% of the companies surveyed reported the highest number of incidences with parents during the job search. Of these companies, 40% observed parents collecting information about the company for their children. 31% percent reported parents handing out resumes on behalf of their children. 4% reported that parents attended interviews with their children while 9% reported parents negotiated salaries and benefits on behalf of their son or daughter. 15% of companies surveyed reported that parents filed complaints if their son or daughter was not hired (Graham, 2012).

The response to this trend is perhaps more surprising. Rather than balk at the sight of parents of prospective employees, companies like Ernst & Young are engaging parents, handing out 'parent packs' for recruits since they know that parents would be involved in negotiating salary and benefits (Gibbs, 2009; Graham, 2012).

Conclusion

Gaining a better understanding of parental involvement, its impact on college student development and implications for higher education practitioners is important to institutions seeking to moderate these relationships (Sax, & Wartman, 2010). While parental involvement during a child's early age has been related to many positive child outcomes, parental involvement in later years, such as during a student's college

experience, tend to be developmentally inappropriate and have been associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression in students (Schiffirin et al., 2013). For institutions that hope to moderate parental involvement, an understanding of the expectations and concerns that drive parental involvement will be helpful in developing an institutional response to the phenomenon on college campuses.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

It was a premise of this study that to arrive at a better understanding of parental involvement in higher education, the expectations and concerns that drive parents to become involved in their son's or daughter's college experience should be explored. This chapter will discuss the research methodology used in this study, describe the setting and participants, as well as the procedures used to collect and analyze data.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

- What are the common concerns and expectations parents have as their student transitions to college?
- How do parents view their role during their son or daughter's college experience?
- How do institutional structures such as programs, policies, and practice influence these concerns and expectations?

Context & Setting

The site for this study was a small liberal arts university in the southeast region of the United States. There are a total of 1,771 undergraduate day students at this institution, which include 685 new undergraduate students added to the institution in the fall of 2014. The institution offers 35 undergraduate academic majors through five colleges: The College of Arts & Sciences, College of Business and Management, College of Education, College of International Communication and The Conservatory of Music. New students

may either declare a major upon enrollment or enroll as 'undecided'. The faculty to student ratio for undergraduate day students at the institution is 15:1. Of the total undergraduate day population, 54% are male while 45% are female. 24% of the total undergraduate day population are classified as international students studying in the United States. Of the total undergraduate population, the majority of students reported their race/ethnicity as White at 44%, followed by 14% of students reported as Hispanic of any race, and 9% of students as African American.

The average cost of tuition, room and board is \$43,700 with roughly 72.5% of students receiving some form of financial aid. The institution also offers an academic support program for students with learning disabilities. This program is offered at an additional cost of \$11,750 for the first year. 28% of all fall 2014 applicants requested admission into the academic support program offered by the institution. The current six year graduation rate for the institution (Fall 2008 cohort) is 41.5%.

Sampling and Description of Participants

Participants for this study were selected from parents of incoming students attending the site university in the fall 2014 semester. It was assumed that parents who attended the 'new student orientation' at the site university were involved in their son or daughter's education. Sampling for this study was purposeful and limited only to parents of incoming students at the site college. There were two phases in this study: the first phase required a larger unrestricted sample of parents while the second phase needed a smaller group of parent participants to allow for in-depth interviews. Participation was

voluntary and parent participants were reminded of their right to end their participation at any time throughout the study.

Research Design

This study used a sequential explanatory mixed methods design in which data collection and analysis occurred in sequential phases (Creswell, 2007), incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research methods to answer the research questions stated earlier. There are three issues to consider when designing a mixed methods study. They are: priority, implementation, and integration (Ivankova, 2004; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). Priority refers to which method (quantitative or qualitative) is given greater emphasis in the study. Implementation refers to the sequential order of data collection and analysis, while integration refers to how and when the 'mixing' of quantitative and qualitative data occurs (Ivankova, 2004; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

Priority was given to the qualitative portion of this study as this represented the major aspect of data collection and analysis. This study was implemented in two sequential phases. In the first phase, quantitative data was collected using a printed survey entitled the Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC), developed by Dr. Wayne Young in 2006. The results from Young's PECTAC survey would form the basis for further inquiry in this study. Also, an important goal of this first phase was to introduce the subject of study to potential participants for the second phase of the study. In the second phase, qualitative data was collected during two interviews: the initial interview was conducted at the start of the semester, while the second interview was conducted midway during the semester. Finally, the results of both quantitative and

qualitative analysis were integrated at the conclusion of this study during the discussion of the overall outcomes.

Design Rationale

An expected outcome of this study was to derive a better understanding of the concerns and expectations of parents of traditional-aged colleges students. The rationale for mixing both quantitative and qualitative methods is that neither is sufficient on its own to capture the scope of the subject being studied. When used together, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for a more rounded analysis of the subject being studied (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). Moreover, conclusions in research are more convincing when drawn from both quantitative and qualitative data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The sequential design was well suited for this study for the following reasons:

- I. The quantitative portion Young's (2006) survey was developed to assess parents' expectations of the teaching and caring functions of a college or university. It was anticipated that findings from Phase I of this study utilizing the PECTAC survey would outline what these expectations were relative to the participants in this study, and provide a baseline for which to further investigate how these expectations drove parental involvement.
- II. Phase II consisted of two interviews: an initial interview at the beginning of the semester (shortly after 'new student orientation' on August 22nd 2014) and a second interview scheduled later in the semester on or after October 18th which coincided with Parents Weekend at the site college.

The reason for this time lapse between the initial and second interview in Phase II of this study was to investigate how parent concerns and expectations had been influenced by their experience as parents of a college student at the site college. This was necessary to answer the third research question in this study.

- III. Finally, the qualitative portion of this study employed a grounded theory approach. There are not many qualitative studies that have explored parental involvement in higher education from the parents' perspective. A grounded theory approach was best suited to this endeavor because, unlike other studies involving theory, grounded theory does not seek to validate or disprove an existing theory but rather generate theory regarding the subject of study based on the findings of that study (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Instrumentation

The quantitative portion of this study employed the use of a survey entitled the Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC), developed by Wayne Young in 2006 (Appendix A) to measure the expectations of teaching and caring that parents have of higher education institutions toward their son or daughter. Young's (2006) survey had been assessed for reliability and validity by the author and has been used in other studies (Spearman 2010; Alger, 2011). Permission to utilize the PECTAC survey was obtained from Dr. Young on July 30th 2014 (Appendix B).

There are six domains within Young's (2006) PECTAC survey which measure a university's function of 'collegiate teaching' and 'collegiate caring' using a Likert scale ranging from Very Important (5) to Not Applicable (1). They are as follows:

1. *Collegiate Teaching: Technology Resources Provided in Supports of Learning.* Parents were asked to rate the importance of several university teaching functions. Some examples were 'Access to computer labs' and 'Training on the University library's digital resources'.
2. *Collegiate Teaching: Active and Team Learning.* Items under this domain included 'Learning via an online course' and 'consistent feedback on written work (research papers, journals, archival data)'.
3. *Collegiate Teaching: Out of Class Learning Opportunities.* Parents were asked to indicate the importance of several 'out of class' learning opportunities provided to their students. They included 'access to services and resources in the greater city area' and 'opportunities to socialize in group activities'.
4. *Collegiate Caring: A Caring Faculty.* Items under this domain characterized the interaction between students and faculty. Parents were asked how important it was to them that their students 'be known by his/her course instructors' and 'have access to his/her course instructor outside of class'.

5. *Collegiate Caring: A Caring University Community*. Some items under this domain included ‘care at the student counseling center’ and ‘opportunities to participate in community service’.
6. *Collegiate Caring: Being in Partnership with Parents*. This subsection addressed items where the institution is in partnership with parents (Young, 2006). An example is the institution’s ability to ‘notify parents of students’ academic success on a regular basis’.

The qualitative portion of this study relied on in-depth interviews with parent participants. An interview Protocol was used to guide parent interviews (Appendix C) with questions that were open-ended to allow for follow-up questions where necessary (Mertler, 2012).

Data Collection

The time frame to conduct this study was no longer than the length of a traditional college semester. Data collection for this study was conducted in two sequential phases.

Phase I. This was the quantitative phase of the study and involved a larger sample of participants. The goal of this initial phase was to:

1. Introduce the subject of study to potential participants at the site university.
2. Collect quantitative data using the PECTAC survey. Findings from this initial phase would provide descriptive information regarding parent participants as well as the common themes related to parents’ expectations as outlined by the PECTAC survey.

3. Recruit a smaller sample of participants for the qualitative portion of the study.

Phase II. This qualitative portion represented the major aspect of data collection and analysis for this study. This phase involved a smaller sample of parent participants, so a request for parents to further participate in this study was attached to the PECTAC survey (Appendix D). To ensure that participants in this phase were not exclusive to a specific group of parents (for instance, parents of students with learning disabilities), all parents who completed the PECTAC survey in phase I were encouraged to participate in phase II. Figure 2 noted below provides an outline of the sequential order of data collection and analysis for each phase of this study.

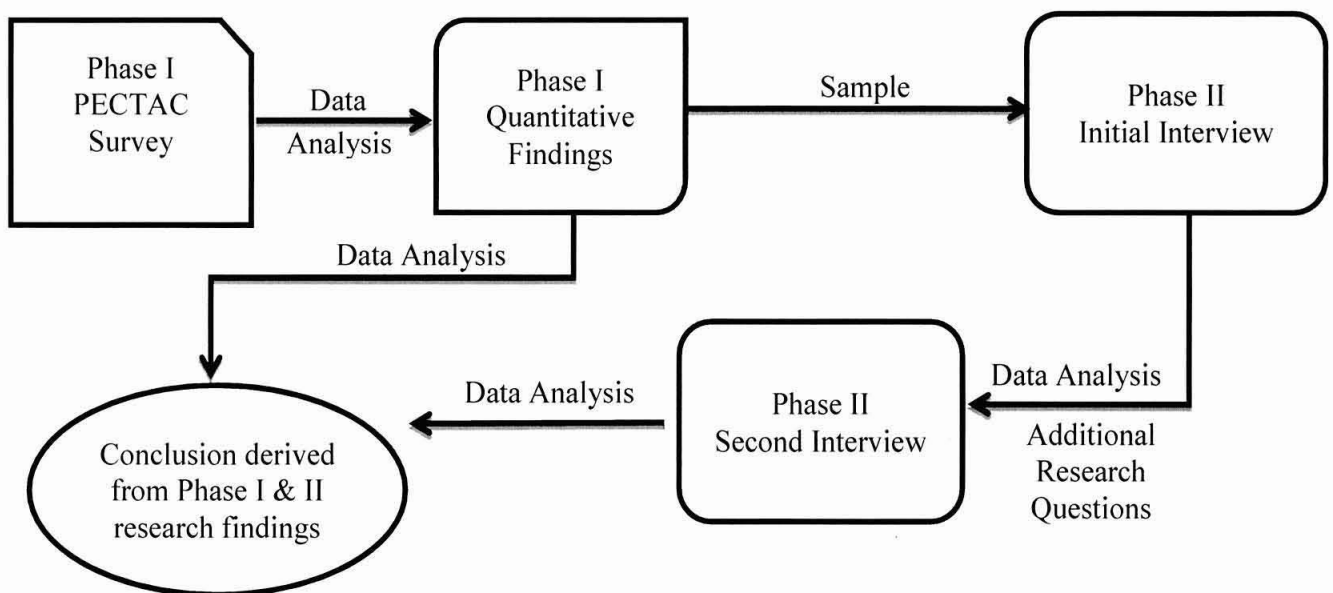


Figure 2. Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Phase II involved two guided interviews: an initial interview which was conducted shortly after the ‘new student orientation’ on August 22nd, 2014, and a second interview after October 18th, 2014 which coincided with ‘Parents Weekend’ at the site university. All interviews were recorded on an Apple iPad device using the Voice Record Pro 7 application developed by BejBej Apps©. and later transcribed for qualitative analysis.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC) is an 86 question survey constructed to “investigate parental expectations regarding the importance parents placed on a University’s ability to teach and care for students through various resources, programs, and services” (Young, 2006). Quantitative data analysis in this phase utilized SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to perform two functions. The first was to derive descriptive statistics which allowed for a clearer picture of the participants in this study (for example gender, level of education, and status as a first time college parent). The second was to identify which of the six domains in the PECTAC survey of ‘collegiate teaching’ and ‘collegiate caring’ were most significant to the participants in this study. This was achieved by a simple frequency distribution of parents’ responses to all 86 questions in the PECTAC survey.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis in this study followed the grounded theory approach. The grounded theory method was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a method of research in which the findings from a study drive the formulation of theory concerning

the subject being studied. The grounded theory approach does not begin with theory or well defined questions, both of which are derived inductively from the data being collected during the study itself (Strauss, & Corbin, 1990). During qualitative analysis, the researcher looked for patterns, themes, and discrepancies that emerged from the data collected. Qualitative data derived from both the initial and second interview transcripts were analyzed using a method called coding, which organizes data into categories (open coding) which are further subcategorized (axial coding) and then refined (selective coding) to inform a narrative of the subject being studied (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Yin, 2011).

Ethical Considerations

This study was conscious of the protection of human subjects and sought IRB approval from the site college prior to implementation. Because this was a relatively low-impact study, an expedited review was being requested from the site college. The following ethical considerations were made in relation to this study:

- I. To avoid any possible emotional distress about being identified as a parent of an incoming freshman prior to their arrival on campus, this researcher did not attempt to contact prospective parent participants prior to the 'New Student Orientation' on August 22nd, 2014.
- II. The PECTAC survey was printed on paper and administered during the new student orientation at the site university. There was no electronic communication with potential participants prior to the beginning of this study. It was important for the privacy of parent participants that no

identifiable information (name, email address, etc.) was collected prior to the beginning of this study.

- III. Parent participants were asked directly and in person for their participation. The researcher was available at the new student orientation to answer questions regarding the purpose of the study, the time commitment required, and the participants' right to confidentiality.
- IV. At the end of the PECTAC survey, a consent form (Appendix E) was attached requesting parent participants to engage in the second phase of the study. Parents who completed the PECTAC survey but did not wish to participate further in the study were no longer contacted. No identifiable information was collected during Phase I of this study (survey).
- V. Interview questions used during Phase II were respectful of participants feelings and free from any language that might have been perceived as discriminatory, hurtful or exclusionary in nature.
- VI. Parent participants in phase II of this study were informed of their right to end their participation at any point prior to or during the interviews.
- VII. To ensure confidentiality of parent participants in phase II, all identifiable information present in the parents' narrative relating to the parent and their student were removed from the interview transcripts during transcription. Also, pseudonyms were used to identify parent participants in Phase II of this study.

Threats to Trustworthiness

As with any study that relies heavily on narrative, the threats to validity in this study were mostly related to the researcher's bias. It may not have been entirely possible for this researcher to separate from his preconception during the collection and analysis of data as intended by the authors of the grounded theory approach (Thomas & James, 2006). To address this, the researcher employed the assistance of a fellow graduate student to act as a secondary reader during the coding process. Participation during phase II of this study was restricted to parent participants whose students were not advised or enrolled in classes taught by the researcher in order to ensure trustworthiness of the data collected. Also, the researcher used techniques to aid in collecting trustworthy qualitative data such as listening to participants, allowing for responses and building on responses for further inquiry (Yin, 2011). Furthermore, to minimize the possibility of attrition between interviews in Phase II, the researcher informed participants regarding the demands on their time by the study in a timely manner throughout the study.

Summary

The sequential explanatory mixed methods design used in this study was appropriate because the topic being explored (parental involvement in higher education) was highly subjective. A mixed methods study employing both a quantitative and qualitative approach would arrive at conclusions that were more convincing. Given the anticipated sample size of this study and the characteristics of the proposed site college in which this study was carried out, findings from this study are not generalizable to higher education institutions in the United States.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter will begin with a summary of the quantitative data collected for this study and then proceed to discuss the qualitative findings. Results from the qualitative portion of this study will then be outlined and analyzed. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a response to each research question stated in this study.

Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot of this study with two colleagues whose sons were freshman at the site university. The purpose of the pilot study was to ensure that the questions in Young's PECTAC survey as well as the structure and questions used in the guided interviews were suitable to the current study. As with Spearman (2010) and Alger (2011), a change was made for suitability to the site institution with regards to the PECTAC survey. An item in Young's (2006) original survey asked parents to rate how important it was for the institution to provide for their students, 'courses where he/she [the student] is instructed by a Jesuit priest'. As the site institution for this particular study has no religious affiliation, this question was excluded from the survey presented to parent participants. As with Spearman (2010), the question "Opportunities to be involved in community service" was used instead. A total of 85 questions from Young's (2006) original PECTAC survey, including demographic questions, were presented to participants in this study.

Quantitative Survey Implementation

The PECTAC survey was presented to parents by the researcher, in paper form, at the site institution's 'new student orientation' on August 22nd, 2014. At the end of the new student orientation program which lasted throughout the day, a total of 61 surveys were retrieved. Surveys with no participant responses beyond the demographic section were discarded, resulting in a final sample (n) of 55 parent participants for the quantitative portion of this study.

PECTAC Demographic Findings

Parent participants who completed the PECTAC survey responded to 12 demographic items. Table 1 below presents a summary of the demographic findings of the survey. Not included in the summary below are the number of parents who reported having DSL access to internet (n=50; 90.9%), and had five or more computers or tablets at home (n=35; 63.7%). Also, parents were asked to select their student's 'College of Major'. The majority (n=18; 32.7%) indicated their student would enroll in the College of Business and Management followed by a large proportion (n=16; 29%) whose students are 'undecided'.

A majority (n= 46; 83.6%) of parent participants reported having earned at least a Bachelor's Degree. There were slightly more mothers (n=31; 56.4%) than fathers (n=24; 43.6%) who completed the survey. A majority (n=41; 74.5%) of parents who completed the survey self-reported being 'very' involved in their son or daughter's college decision. Also, less than half (n=25; 45.5%) of parents who completed the survey were 'first time college parents'.

Table 1.
PECTAC Results: Demographic Information

Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC) Results			
Demographic Information			
Variable	Survey Options	Frequency <i>N</i>	Percent (%) of Sample
Parent Gender	Female	31	56.4%
	Male	24	43.6%
Parent Marital Status	Married	43	78.2%
	Divorced	9	16.4%
	No Response	2	3.6%
	Single Parent	1	1.8%
Gender of Incoming Student	Male	40	72.7%
	Female	15	27.3%
Parent Ethnicity	Caucasian	44	80.0%
	International	3	5.5%
	Mexican	2	3.6%
	American/Chicano	2	3.6%
	No Response	1	1.8%
	Pacific islander	1	1.8%
	Puerto Rican	1	1.8%
English as Native Language	Other Latino	1	1.8%
	Yes	52	94.5%
	No	3	5.5%
	Parent's Highest Level of Education	Bachelors	22
Masters		17	30.9%
Ph.D. or Terminal Degree		7	12.7%
High School		5	9.1%
Associates		4	7.3%
Number of Children	2	34	61.8%
	3	13	23.6%
	1	4	7.3%
	4	2	3.6%
	5	2	3.6%
First Time College Parent	No	28	50.9%
	Yes	25	45.5%
	No Response	2	3.6%
Parent involvement in College Decision	Very	41	74.5%
	Somewhat	10	18.2%
	A Little Involved	2	3.6%
	Not Involved at All	2	3.6%

A majority (n=44; 80%) of parents reported their ethnicity as ‘Caucasian’, followed by parents who were ‘International’ (n=3; 5.5%). A majority (n=52; 94.5%) also spoke English as a native language; the other two languages selected were Spanish (n=1) and French (n=1).

An important function of the demographic section of this survey was to provide this study with a clearer picture of the sample involved by identifying their common traits. These demographic findings reveal that the participants in the quantitative phase of this study were a homogenous group with regards to race and ethnicity. Furthermore, a review of the site institution’s 2014 Fact Book, suggests that this homogeneity (race and ethnicity) is reflective of the current student and parent population.

PECTAC Subsection Most Important Items Results

After parents completed the demographic portion of Young’s (2006) PECTAC survey, they were asked to answer a series of questions under two sections titled ‘Collegiate Teaching’ and ‘Collegiate Caring’. Each of these sections had three subsections which listed various questions relating to the university’s function of ‘collegiate teaching’ or ‘collegiate caring’. Parent participants were asked to rate each question according to importance using a Likert scale ranging from Very Important (5) to Not Applicable (1). The final question in each subsection asked parents “Out of these items, which two are the most important to you as a parent?” The results of those six final questions are discussed in this study. Also, comment cards were added to each subsection under ‘collegiate teaching’ and ‘collegiate caring’ that allowed parents to expand on their responses in each subsection. These parent comments will be discussed as well.

The frequency of items selected as most important under the ‘Collegiate Teaching’ and ‘Collegiate Caring’ subsections are presented in Tables 2 through 7. It is important to note that some parents who completed each of the subsections either declined or neglected to answer the final question in each section. In those instances, a value of ‘0’ was logged so as to indicate there was no response to the question. Some parents selected only one item as most important instead of two. In such cases, the item the parent selected was logged in, and a value of ‘0’ was logged in for the second item which was not selected. As a result, each table contains a frequency of items with ‘no response’ to indicate these occurrences.

PECTAC Collegiate Teaching Results

Collegiate Teaching: Technology Resources Provided in Support of Learning. For the first teaching subsection, Table 2 below shows the items selected by parents as most important. ‘Email access to his/her academic advisor’ (n=23; 41.8%) and ‘Email access to his/her faculty instructor’ (n=20; 36.4%) were the most selected items by a wide margin. The next item with the highest frequency (n=10; 18.2%) was ‘Wireless Internet access throughout campus’. The least selected item (n=1; 1.8%) was ‘Access to computer labs’. A likely explanation for this is that most students own personal computers or tablet devices.

Some parents commented on their selections. One parent noted: “our son (& most kids) are so technologically sophisticated it is critical to align that skill with professional & or career goals; have the Wi-Fi environment & training that promotes use of the technology”. Some parents rationalized their selections based on their student’s specific

needs. One such parent commented “I want him to learn ongoing digital resources that come for dyslexia/processing needs” and another said “our son uses assistive technology to communicate. Tailored supports may be necessary”.

Table 2.

PECTAC Results: Collegiate Teaching: Technology Resources Provided in Supports of Learning

Item No.	Variable	Frequency	Percent (%) of Sample
26	Email access to his/her academic advisor	23	41.8%
24	Email access to his/her faculty instructor	20	36.4%
21	Wireless Internet access throughout campus	10	18.2%
16	Specific academic advising information via a website for my student	9	16.4%
22	Training on the University library’s digital resources	7	12.7%
20	High-speed Internet access in his/her residence hall room	4	7.3%
14	Web access to register/drop/add courses and view tuition and fees	3	5.5%
23	A University-provided portable computer	3	5.5%
25	Academic content delivered via a course website	3	5.5%
13	General academic advising information via a website	2	3.6%
15	Web access to view tuition and fees and financial aid information	2	3.6%
17	Access to a University-provided email account	2	3.6%
18	Access to textbooks required and ordering via a website	1	1.8%
19	Access to computer labs	1	1.8%
0	No Response	20	36.4%

A parent who indicated ‘Spanish’ as a native language selected both ‘Email access to his/her academic advisor’ and ‘Email access to his/her faculty instructor’ as most important and made the following comment: “Because I think, she need have, somebody give all the help possible for she can be successful into her academic life and can keep if possible her honor roll trajectory”.

Collegiate Teaching: Active and Team Learning. Table 3 presents the findings for the ‘Active and Team learning’ subsection. Under this subsection, the majority (n=28; 50.9%) of parents indicated it was most important that their student ‘Be given consistent feedback on written work (research papers, journals, etc.)’. One parent who selected this item as most important, noted it was “because most workforce uses this type of continual learning for their employees”

Table 3.

PECTAC Results: Collegiate Teaching: Active and Team Learning

Item No.	Variable	Frequency	Percent (%) of Sample
37	Be given consistent feedback on written work (research papers, journals, etc.)	28	50.9%
28	Discuss and critique ideas from readings with other students and the instructor during courses	18	32.7%
36	Leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise	18	32.7%
29	Present in front of peers and the instructor using technological means	7	12.7%
34	Use the Internet to research an assignment	6	10.9%
30	Outperform the faculty instructor’s expectations	5	9.1%
33	Participate in community-based or service-based course projects	5	9.1%
35	Complete assignments via a course website	2	3.6%
32	Learn via an online course	1	1.8%
31	Participate in group projects outside of class using instant messaging	0	0.0%
0	No Response	20	36.4%

‘Discuss and critique ideas from readings with other students and the instructor during courses’ and ‘Leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise’ each had the second highest frequency (n=18; 32.7%) in this subsection. One parent who selected the top two items in this subsection (i.e. items 37 and 28)

mentioned they “are most important because they go to how my son learns”. The parent who indicated Spanish as a first language selected item 28 and 30 as most important “...because she [student] can get more successful academic grades and be more motivated”.

The item ‘Participate in group projects outside of class using instant messaging’ was not selected. Among the items in this subsection which were selected as most important, ‘Learn via an online course’ had the least frequency (n=1). One parent, who did not select this item as most important, commented on it all the same: “Don’t need to learn online, i.e. take an online course but to use/gain skill sets needed to work in the ‘real world’. Our son particularly needs a great deal of feedback as he isn’t always self-aware academically.”

Collegiate Teaching: Out of Class Learning Opportunities. The last subsection under ‘collegiate teaching’ focused on learning outside the class. Table 4 presents the findings from that subsection. Some parents noted difficulty in having to choose which of these items was most important. “All of these are very important & hard to choose most important😊” one parent commented (emphasis added by the parent), and another mentioned “all of the above are valid, and so be considered fundamentally as parts of the ‘whole’ college experience”. The top two items selected in this subsection as most important were ‘Access to student tutoring and academic support’ (n=22; 40.0%) and ‘Receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested’ (n=19; 34.5%). A parent who selected both these items as most important explained: “I chose these because [of its] emphasis on academic success. The voluntarism and good moral[s] she brings

with her and I hope she never forget what she learn from home and her old high school teacher and friends.” (The parent who made this comment also indicated Spanish as the native language).

Table 4.

PECTAC Results: Collegiate Teaching: Out of Class Learning Opportunities

Item No.	Variable	Frequency	Percent (%) of Sample
47	Access to student tutoring and academic support	22	40.0%
41	Receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested	19	34.5%
46	Be provided with remedial or disability services if needed	15	27.3%
39	Be provided with training on how to be more responsible	12	21.8%
50	Have access to career counseling and placement services	9	16.4%
42	Be provided with opportunities for internships	6	10.9%
49	Complete a practicum or internship using technology	4	7.3%
51	Be provided with information on developing good morals	2	3.6%
40	Have opportunities to join a variety of clubs and organizations	1	1.8%
44	Be provided with opportunities for service and volunteerism	1	1.8%
45	Have access to services and resources in the greater city area	1	1.8%
48	Have opportunities to socialize in group activities	1	1.8%
43	Have opportunities to learn about someone from a different race/culture	0	0.0%
0	No Response	17	30.9%

As with previous subsections, some parents rationalized their responses based on their student’s specific needs. The item in this subsection with the third highest frequency (n=15; 27.3%) was ‘Be provided with remedial or disability services if needed’. One parent who selected this item as most important explained, “...Due to his [students] learning & psychiatric disabilities he requires a great deal of academic and coaching

support”. Another simply stated: “We came here for the Institute program” (the Institute program refers to the site University’s program for students with learning disabilities).

PECTAC Collegiate Caring Results

Collegiate Caring: A Caring Faculty. For the first caring subsection, table 5 shows the items which parents considered most important. That students ‘Have regular contact with his/her academic advisor’ was considered most important by a majority (n=22; 40%) of parents, followed by ‘Develop plans for a major with his/her academic advisor’ (n=14; 25.5%) and ‘Be known on a personal level by at least one faculty member’ (n=10; 18.2%).

One parent who selected two of the top three items in this subsection (i.e. item 53 and 55) explained: “[student’s name] has a very strong sense of fairness, justice, etc. The ability to feel the faculty sincerely cares is important to him and to his understanding of their decisions.” As with some other subsections, parents noted difficulty having to select ‘most important’ items. One parent noted “Many of these are highly important” and another explained “Again, all of the above are critical in the academic and course work, especially these are THE REASONS for choosing a small university environment” (emphasis was added by parent).

Table 5.
PECTAC Results: Collegiate Caring: A Caring Faculty

Item No.	Variable	Frequency	Percent (%) of Sample
53	Have regular contact with his/her academic advisor	22	40.0%
54	Develop plans for a major with his/her academic advisor	14	25.5%
55	Be known on a personal level by at least one faculty member	10	18.2%
61	Be instructed by a faculty member rather than a teaching assistant	9	16.4%
56	Be known by his/her course instructor(s)	8	14.5%
60	Receive information on additional tutoring from his/her course instructor(s)	8	14.5%
57	Be treated fairly by the course instructor(s)	5	9.1%
58	Have access to his/her course instructor(s) outside of class	5	9.1%
59	Be provided the opportunity to give feedback on his/her course instructor(s)	1	1.8%
	No Response	28	50.9%

Collegiate Caring: A Caring University Community. Table 6 below presents the findings from this subsection. ‘Opportunities to explore his/her leadership potential’ had the highest frequency (n=14; 25.5%) followed closely by ‘A university community that appreciated the uniqueness of each student’ (n=12; 21.8%). ‘Care at the student counseling center’ had the third highest frequency’ (n=10; 18.2%). One parent who selected this item as most important explained: “We chose [Institution’s name] partially due to the environment that we felt excels in personal attention & engagement w/staff & faculty”.

Table 6.

PECTAC Results: Collegiate Caring: A Caring University Community

Item No.	Variable	Frequency	Percent (%) of Sample
64	Opportunities to explore his/her leadership potential	14	25.5%
65	A university community that appreciated the uniqueness of each student	12	21.8%
72	Care at the student counseling center	10	18.2%
63	Programs welcoming your student to campus life	9	16.4%
66	Programs orienting him/her to collegiate life	9	16.4%
67	Support and challenge like a parent might give	8	14.5%
73	Opportunities to participate in community service	6	10.9%
68	Health care at the student health center	5	9.1%
69	Opportunities to learn how to be in community with others	5	9.1%
71	Opportunities to grow in his/her faith life	5	9.1%
70	A friend in his/her floor RA (Resident Assistant), if living on campus	4	7.3%
	No Response	23	41.8%

Collegiate Caring: Being in Partnership with Parents. The last subsection under ‘caring’ asked parents to comment specifically on their desired interaction with the university. These findings are represented in Table 7. It is noteworthy that the top two items in this subsection selected by parents were academic in nature while the third involved safety. ‘Notify me of my student’s academic success on a regular basis’ (n= 20; 36.4%) and ‘Provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested’ (n=18; 32.7%) were the top two items selected as most important by parents. ‘Provide a safe and secure campus’ (n=16; 29.1%) had the third highest frequency. The fourth item (n=8; 14.5%) selected as most important by parents was ‘Have my calls returned by members of the faculty or administration within 24 hours’. One parent who

selected this item simply noted: “I am not a pest or unreasonable. If I call, there is a very good reason”.

Table 7.

PECTAC Results: Collegiate Caring: Being in Partnership with Parents

Item No.	Variable	Frequency	Percent (%) of Sample
75	Notify me of my student’s academic success on a regular basis	20	36.4%
81	Provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested	18	32.7%
78	Provide a safe and secure campus	16	29.1%
77	Have my calls returned by members of the faculty or administration within 24 hours	8	14.5%
84	Provide my student unlimited visits at the student counseling center, if needed	7	12.7%
80	Discipline my student fairly if he/she breaks University policies and procedures	5	9.1%
76	Contact me if my student is caught cheating or plagiarizing	4	7.3%
79	Provide me with my student’s major and degree progress information via a website	4	7.3%
82	Notify me if my student is using illegal substances	1	1.8%
83	Orient me as to how I will be involved in my student’s education	1	1.8%
85	Notify me if my student is drinking illegally	1	1.8%
	No Response	25	45.5%

In this subsection also, at least one parent provided a rationale for her response based on her student’s specific need: “We love the focus on independence, especially in the [name of university’s program for students with learning disabilities]. This is what he needs. At the same time it is critical to be on the same page and partners: we need information to do that effectively” (emphasis was added by parent).

Finally, a look at items in this subsection that were not in the top five of items selected by parents as most important shows at least one parent’s unique perspective on

the university being in partnership with parents. This parent selected the items 'Provide me with my student's major and degree progress information via a website' (n=4, 7.3%) and 'Discipline my student fairly if he/she breaks University policies and procedures' (n=5; 9.1%) as most important and made the following comment: "Overall the success of my daughter is well within her grasp, should she decide to excel & proceed onward without limitations; her abilities are unending and willingness to reach for the stars".

Quantitative Analysis Summary

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the purpose of the quantitative phase of this study was to identify the items under the PECTACs six domains of 'teaching' and 'caring' that were most significant to the sample in this study. Young's (2006) PECTAC survey was developed to "investigate parental expectations regarding the importance parents placed on a University's ability to teach and care for students through various resources, programs, and services" (pg. 64). These common expectations would then form the bases for this study's qualitative inquiry.

An analysis of the results from the PECTAC six domains did not reveal any distinguishing concerns or expectations among the parents in this study. Tables 8 and 9 show a compilation of the items that parents in this sample selected as most important under 'collegiate teaching' and 'collegiate caring' respectively. The differences in frequency among the items in each subsection were not significant enough to establish any common concerns or expectations across the parents in this sample. An explanation for this may be due to the small sample size (n=55) in this study. Young's (2006) study which developed the PECTAC survey had 476 respondents, Spearman's (2010) had

1137 and Alger's (2011) had 351 respondents. Also the size and nature of the site university in which this study was being conducted differs significantly from those in previous studies that utilized the PECTAC. Young's (2006) study was conducted on the campus of Creighton University, a "Jesuit Catholic university in the Midwest...with over 6,100 students" (pg. 8). Alger's (2011) site college was the University of Buffalo, a "research-intensive public university" with an undergraduate enrollment of 19,400 students (pg. 38). Spearman's (2010) study was conducted at a large public university in the south with an enrollment of 27,677 students at the time of the study. The site university for this current study is a small private liberal arts university with an undergraduate population of 1771 students.

Table 8.
PECTAC Results: Collegiate Teaching Most Important Items

Item No.	Variable	Frequency N	Percent (%) of Sample
37	Be given consistent feedback on written work (research papers, journals, etc.)	28	50.90%
26	Email access to his/her academic advisor	23	41.80%
47	Access to student tutoring and academic support	22	40.00%
24	Email access to his/her faculty instructor	20	36.40%
41	Receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested	19	34.50%
28	Discuss and critique ideas from readings with other students and the instructor during courses	18	32.70%
36	Leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise	18	32.70%
46	Be provided with remedial or disability services if needed	15	27.30%
39	Be provided with training on how to be more responsible	12	21.80%
21	Wireless Internet access throughout campus	10	18.20%

16	Specific academic advising information via a website for my student	9	16.40%
50	Have access to career counseling and placement services	9	16.40%
22	Training on the University library's digital resources	7	12.70%
29	Present in front of peers and the instructor using technological means	7	12.70%
34	Use the Internet to research an assignment	6	10.90%

Table 9.

PECTAC Results: Collegiate Caring Most Important Items

Item No.	Variable	Frequency N	Percent (%) of Sample
53	Have regular contact with his/her academic advisor	22	40.00%
75	Notify me of my student's academic success on a regular basis	20	36.40%
81	Provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested	18	32.70%
78	Provide a safe and secure campus	16	29.10%
54	Develop plans for a major with his/her academic advisor	14	25.50%
64	Opportunities to explore his/her leadership potential	14	25.50%
65	A university community that appreciated the uniqueness of each student	12	21.80%
55	Be known on a personal level by at least one faculty member	10	18.20%
72	Care at the student counseling center	10	18.20%
61	Be instructed by a faculty member rather than a teaching assistant	9	16.40%
63	Programs welcoming your student to campus life	9	16.40%
66	Programs orienting him/her to collegiate life	9	16.40%
56	Be known by his/her course instructor(s)	8	14.50%
77	Have my calls returned by members of the faculty or administration within 24 hours	8	14.50%
84	Provide my student unlimited visits at the student counseling center, if needed	7	12.70%

Although none of the items selected represents a majority among the parents in this study, while comparing these results with those of Young's (2006), Spearman's (2010) and Alger's (2011), a distinction emerged. The nature of the items selected as most important by the participants in this study differ from those of previous studies that have used the PECTAC. For example, under the caring subsection 'Being in Partnership with Parents' (Table 7 above), the item that a majority of parents (n=20; 36.4%) in the current study selected as being most important was 'Notify me of my student's academic success on a regular basis'. This is in contrast to Young's (2006), Spearman's (2010) and Alger's (2011) studies that found parents "overwhelmingly" (Young, 2006; Alger, 2011) selected the item 'Provide a safe and secure campus' as most important under this subsection.

There are several possible explanations for distinctions such as this. It may be that the sample used for this study is too small to be representative of the larger concerns and expectations of parents at the site university. Alternatively, this particular distinction may point to a significant concern among parents in this sample about their student's academic success (n=20; 36.4%); the fact that the item 'Provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested' had the second highest frequency (n=18; 32.7%) in the same subsection (Table 7) lends to this notion. Another possible explanation is that since many of the parents within this sample reported being very involved (n=41; 74.5%) in their student's college choice, concerns about safety may have already been mitigated during the college search process, possibly during a visit to the

site university or after extensive research on the surrounding area in which the site university is located.

A detailed comparison between the results in this study and those in Young's (2006), Spearman's (2010) and Alger's (2011) revealed further distinction. Table 10 and 11 below show the comparisons for items selected as most important under 'collegiate teaching' and 'collegiate caring' respectively. The top items in each section selected by parents to be most important in the current study were almost exclusively academic in nature. With the exception of the item 'Provide a safe and secure campus', the top five items under 'collegiate teaching' as well as the top five items under 'collegiate caring' selected by parents as most important, related to the university's academic function. A possible explanation for this distinction might simply be that the larger samples in previous studies allowed for a wider distribution among the items selected by parents. However, the comment cards that were attached to the PECTAC survey for the current study provided further insight into this distinction. Some parents based their selections on the specific needs of their students (e.g. learning disabilities) while some others revealed a specific reasons for choosing the site college.

Table 10.

PECTAC Results Comparison: Collegiate Teaching Most Important Items

Variable	Researcher				Item Rank	Sample (%)
	Young*	Spearman*	Alger*	Current		
Be given consistent feedback on written work (research papers, journals, etc.)	1 62.20%	1 60.95%	2 49.70%	1 50.90%		
Email access to his/her academic advisor	10 21.50%	10 25.68%	- -	2 41.80%		
Access to student tutoring and academic support	9 26.90%	5 36.78%	8 26.70%	3 40.00%		
Email access to his/her faculty instructor	7 31.20%	6 34.21%	- -	4 36.40%		
Receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested	3 44.10%	4 39.93%	4 44.00%	5 34.50%		
Discuss and critique ideas from readings with other students and the instructor during course	8 27.00%	15 15.22%	9 23.40%	6 32.70%		
Leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise	2 45.80%	2 58.93%	1 52.60%	7 32.70%		
Be provided with remedial or disability services if needed	- -	- -	- -	8 27.30%		
Be provided with training on how to be more responsible	- -	- -	15 9.40%	9 21.80%		
Wireless Internet access throughout campus	14 16.40%	13 16.27	10 22.80%	10 18.20%		
Specific academic advising information by way of a website for my student	- -	16 13.54%	13 18.40%	11 16.40%		
Have access to career counseling and placement services	5 34.30%	3 43.10%	5 42.50%	12 16.40%		
Training on the University library's digital resources	- -	- -	- -	13 12.70%		
Present in front of peers and the instructor using technological means	- -	- -	14 17.80%	14 12.70%		
Use the Internet to research an assignment	12 17.40%	- -	- -	15 10.90%		

*Results for Young (2006), Spearman (2010) and Alger (2011) were extracted from their respective studies. The *Sample (%)* for each study were calculated by dividing the frequency of each item by the total number of respondents in the item's subsection.

Table 11.

PECTAC Results Comparison: Collegiate Caring Most Important Items

Variable	Researcher				Item Rank	Sample (%)
	Young*	Spearman*	Alger*	Current		
Have regular contact with his/her academic advisor	2 41.10%	2 43.89%	4 39.10%	1 40.00%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Notify me of my student's academic success on a regular basis	3 41.40%	5 37.03%	8 31.10%	2 36.40%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested	5 35.60%	6 34.74%	2 44.40%	3 32.70%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Provide a safe and secure campus	1 73.20%	1 72.56%	1 71.90%	4 29.10%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Develop plans for a major with his/her academic advisor	7 32.20%	7 33.95%	9 31.00%	5 25.50%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Opportunities to explore her/his leadership potential	8 31.00%	9 23.13%	11 27.10%	6 25.50%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
A university community that appreciates the uniqueness of each student	11 25.50%	16 13.46%	12 19.30%	7 21.80%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Be known on a personal level by at least one faculty member	- -	- -	13 16.60%	8 18.20%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Care at the student counseling center	- -	- -	- -	9 18.20%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Be instructed by a faculty member rather than a teaching assistant	6 32.60%	11 20.32%	10 27.80%	10 16.40%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Programs welcoming your student to campus life	- -	10 22.78%	5 36.30%	11 16.40%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Programs orienting her/him to collegiate life	10 27.20%	10 22.78%	7 33.00%	12 16.40%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Be known by his/her course instructor(s)	- -	- -	13 16.40%	13 14.50%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Have my calls returned by members of the faculty or administration within 24hrs	14 11.00%	- -	- -	14 14.50%	Item Rank	Sample (%)
Provide my student unlimited visits at the student counseling center, if needed	- -	- -	- -	15 12.70%	Item Rank	Sample (%)

*Results for Young (2006), Spearman (2010) and Alger (2011) were extracted from their respective studies. The *Sample (%)* for each study were calculated by dividing the frequency of each item by the total number of respondents in the item's subsection.

Some of the comments made by parents are as follows: “I chose these because [of its] emphasis on academic success...”. “I want him to learn ongoing digital resources that come for dyslexia/processing needs” and another said “our son uses assistive technology to communicate. Tailored supports may be necessary”. “...Our son particularly needs a great deal of feedback as he isn’t always self-aware academically.” “[student’s name] is an experiential learner so he needs as many opportunities as possible to have volunteer jobs, internships, etc. Due to his learning & psychiatric disabilities he requires a great deal of academic and coaching support”. “We came here for the [name of university’s program for students with learning disabilities]”. “Again, all of the above are critical in the academic and course work, especially these are THE REASONS for choosing a small university environment” (emphasis was added by parent). “We chose [Institution’s name] partially due to the environment that we felt excels in personal attention & engagement w/staff & faculty”. These comments made by parents suggest that parents’ expectations were aligned with the programs and services that the site university offers.

Qualitative Phase Participation

On August 29, 2014, the researcher sent an email (Appendix F) to parents who completed the PECTAC survey inviting them to continue participation in the second phase of this study. Out of 38 parents who had provided their names and contact information eight parents responded to this email indicating their interest to participate further; however, before the interviews began, one parent had to withdraw due to scheduling conflicts and another became ineligible to participate because the researcher was also her daughter’s academic adviser in the University’s academic support program

for students with learning disabilities. In the end, a total of six parents took part in both rounds of interviews. Table 12 shows the procedure and dates for interviews with parent participants during the qualitative phase of this study. To protect the confidentiality of parent participants, aliases are being used to identify them throughout the rest of study.

The qualitative phase of this study involved two separate interviews with parent participants. An interview protocol (shown in Appendix C) was used as a guide during these interviews; however, as parent participants began to elaborate on their expectations and experiences, the interviews became less structured. The questions in the interview protocol were open-ended which allowed the interviews to take on a conversational tone.

Table 12.

Phase II: Parent Interview Procedure

Parent Name	1st Interview Date	1 st Interview Duration	1st Interview Method	2nd Interview Date	2 nd Interview Duration	2nd Interview Method
Mrs. R	30-Aug-14	29:50mins	Over the Phone	18-Oct-14	59:22mins	In Person
Mrs. L	29-Aug-14	35:42mins	Over the Phone	17-Oct-14	38:48mins	In Person
Dr. K	29-Aug-14	32:14mins	Over the Phone	10-Nov-14	50:45mins	Over the Phone
Mrs. G	29-Aug-14	43:13mins	Over the Phone	17-Oct-14	33:50mins	In Person
Mrs. V	29-Aug-14	49:04mins	Over the Phone	17-Oct-14	36:12mins	In Person
Mrs. B	28-Aug-14	41:12mins	Over the Phone	17-Oct-14	20:40mins	In Person

Yin (2011) explains that an interview protocol can be useful as a guide and should represent the researcher's "mental framework" (pg. 139) for a study. The essence of a

qualitative interview is “to have participants use their own words, not those predefined by the researcher” (Yin, 2011). As such, even though all the parents interviewed were asked a common set of questions, each parent narrative was unique. A complete transcript of one parent participant’s initial and second interview can be found in Appendix G.

Qualitative Participants Demographics

All the parent participants in this phase of the study were mothers, married, spoke English as a native language, and reported their ethnicity as Caucasian except for one who described her ethnicity as ‘Caucasian’ and ‘Puerto Rican’. All the parent participants had attained at least a Bachelor’s degree, indicating they had all been through a college experience themselves. Table 13 below outlines the demographic information of the parent participants in this phase of the study.

Table 13.

Phase II: Parent Participant Demographics

Parent Name	Gender of Student	Parent Ethnicity	Parent's Highest Level of Education	Number of Children	First Time College Parent	Parent involvement in College Decision
Mrs. R	Male	Caucasian	Masters	1	Yes	Very
Mrs. L	Male	Caucasian	Masters	2	No	Somewhat
Dr. K	Male	Caucasian	Ph.D.	2	Yes	Somewhat
Mrs. G	Male	Caucasian	Bachelors	2	No	Very
Mrs. V	Female	Caucasian /Puerto Rican	Bachelors	2	No	Very
Mrs. B	Male	Caucasian	Masters	2	No	Very

Qualitative Participants PECTAC Survey Results

Since parent participants in this phase of the study had previously completed the PECTAC survey, the researcher compiled a list of the items they had selected as most important in the survey to see if the common concerns of parents in the qualitative phase matched those of the larger quantitative sample. Table 14 below shows the items that parent participants (n=6) in this phase of the study had selected as most important. This list shows that parent participants in the qualitative phase had more diverse expectations regarding their children's college experience. All the parent participants selected the item 'Be given consistent feedback on written work' as important which relates to the academic function of the site university.

Table 14.
Phase II: Parent Participants PECTAC results

Variable	Frequency N
Be given consistent feedback on written work (research papers, journals, etc.)	6
Care at the student counseling center	4
Provide my student unlimited visits at the student counseling center, if needed	4
Email access to his/her faculty instructor	3
Leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise	3
Receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested	3
Be provided with remedial or disability services if needed	3
Have regular contact with his/her academic advisor	3
Be known on a personal level by at least one faculty member	3
Programs welcoming your student to campus life	3
Be instructed by a faculty member rather than a teaching assistant	2
Be known by his/her course instructor(s)	2
Wireless Internet access throughout campus	2
Email access to his/her academic advisor	2

Access to student tutoring and academic support	2
Notify me of my student's academic success on a regular basis	2
Provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested	2
Have my calls returned by members of the faculty or administration within 24 hours	2

Four of the six parents selected 'Care at the student counseling center' and 'Provide my student unlimited visits at the student counseling center, if needed' as most important which relates to the caring function of the site university. Knowledge of these common expectations among parent participants in this phase of the study proved useful during qualitative data analysis.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Parent participants in this qualitative phase of the study provided an enormous amount of data such that the initial coding process was lengthy and quite cumbersome. The structure and conversational tone (open-ended questions) of the interviews allowed parents to give rich detail about their experiences, their feelings toward their son or daughter, their involvement and expectations during their son or daughter's high school experience, their involvement during the college selection process, and their experience as parents during their son or daughter's first semester at the site university.

For the first cycle of the coding process, I employed two coding processes suitable to the grounded theory method in order to capture the essence of the narrative that parents provided: 'open coding', which involves breaking down data into discrete parts in search of similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and 'in vivo coding' which captures terms used by the parent participants themselves (Saldaña, 2012). These codes formed categories during the second cycle of coding known as 'axial

coding' which involved comparing and reorganizing the codes in a manner that allowed for "the synthesis of a central or core category" (Saldaña, 2012).

Being a novice qualitative researcher, it was a constant challenge not to "code everything that moves" (Saldaña, 2012) but instead to be intentional in my search for the "meaning of what was said" (Yin, 2011) in the data. Therefore, during the second cycle of coding (axial coding) I had to constantly revisit my research questions in order to limit my search for patterns, themes and discrepancies as they related to the purpose of this study. For this process of 'theming the data' (Saldaña, 2012), I isolated the initial codes that involved parents 'concerns' and 'expectations' as they related to parent's 'involvement' in their student's education. The themes that did emerge from parent participants' narratives but did not relate directly with the research questions in this study were put aside. The themes that remained after the first and second cycle of coding were related to parent involvement, which for the purpose of this study is defined as parent's interactions with their student (Cullaty, 2011) or an institutional representative regarding a specific university issue or concern (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). Three categories relating to parental involvement emerged during qualitative analysis: Parent Involvement Prior to College, Parent Involvement During the College Search Process, and Parent Involvement During the College Experience.

Parent Involvement Prior to College Enrollment

As part of each initial interview with parent participants, I asked parents to describe their involvement during their son or daughter education experience prior to enrollment at the site university. All except for one parent mentioned that they had

enrolled their students in schools with a learning support program at least once during their education experience prior to college. Parents described their involvement in different aspects of their student's high school, middle school, and even elementary school education. Common themes relating to parental involvement prior to college enrollment became apparent while coding parent's narrative. They are as follows.

A History of Involvement. All six parents described having a history of involvement in their son or daughter's education. Five out of six parents indicated their involvement in their child's education began from as early as elementary school. What emerged from analyzing the parents' narrative was that each parent described their involvement in relation to a specific need concerning their child. These needs were coded and grouped together under the subcategory INVOLVEMENT PRIOR TO COLLEGE as shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15.
Qualitative Results: A History of Involvement

Category	Code (number of occurrences)
A History of Involvement	INVOLVEMENT PRIOR TO COLLEGE: 504* (1)
	INVOLVEMENT PRIOR TO COLLEGE: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (2)
	INVOLVEMENT PRIOR TO COLLEGE: ACADEMIC SUPPORT (2)
	INVOLVEMENT PRIOR TO COLLEGE: EMOTIONAL SUPPORT (2)

*504 This refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which "spells out the modifications and accommodations that will be needed for students with disabilities" (Mauro, 2009).

This showed that parents in this qualitative phase of the study became involved in their son or daughter's education based on a specific concern. Mrs. G, in her first interview, described how her involvement in her son's education varied based on her concern for his academic performance. Her narrative is shown below:

Mrs. G 1st interview (excerpt) [INVOLVEMENT PRIOR TO COLLEGE, 504, LEARNING DISABILITIES, TUTORING]:

Researcher: Yes. You mentioned his diagnosis and you put that as the starting point for his involvement perhaps? Maybe we can go from there, after the diagnosis, what your involvement has been like up until now.

Mrs. G: I would say, at the schools that were not focused on learning disabilities, it would be closer to maybe 70% involved. Two of those years in 3rd or 4th grade, he went to a school called [Name of High School], that had teachers to focus on that, and I did not have to advocate, I had maybe 15% involvement in those two years. And then in high school I was involved maybe 50%.

Researcher: I see

Mrs. G: Middle school closer to 75% again I had to get him tutoring, 60% let's say. And then high school maybe 50%

Researcher: Okay. So involvement, could you describe that? Would that include maybe following up perhaps with his teachers if there was a problem or maybe just keeping in touch to know what was due? Would you describe your involvement?

Mrs. G: Most involvement was making sure that his psycho-educational evaluation were up to date.

Researcher: Okay.

Mrs. G: And then, tutoring, reading tutoring, when he started to fall below grade level significantly

Researcher: I see.

Mrs. G: And then, I would say some teacher interaction but limited because he didn't show, most teachers he didn't show his disability.

A History of Concern. The wording for this category came from Mrs. B's second interview in which she said "...you know, I have a long history of concern with my son" while talking about her interaction with an institutional representative at the site university. The word 'concern' appeared in all six parent narratives while talking about their student's education experience prior to enrolling at the site university. Table 16 shows the codes that emerged from the data and grouped under the subcategory CONCERN.

Table 16.

Qualitative Results: A History of Concern

Category	Code (number of occurrences)
A History of Concern	CONCERN: LEARNING DISABILITIES (6)
	CONCERN: ACADEMIC SUPPORT (2)
	CONCERN: ACADEMIC WORKLOAD (1)
	CONCERN: MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES (2)
	CONCERN: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (2)
	CONCERN: SOCIAL PRESSURES (1)
	CONCERN: CLASS ATTENDANCE (1)

Parent Involvement Directly with High School. Three of the six parents were directly involved with their students' high school either through the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or a similar program at the school. The codes PTA, PTA PRESIDENT, and SCHOOL BOARD PARENT MEMBER were grouped under this common theme. This category was relevant because it helped explain the nature of some parental involvement prior to college. All the parents who mentioned they were involved directly with their son or daughter's high school had no prior relationship with the school.

Through their narrative, parents revealed the reasons for their direct involvement. Mrs. G explained: "...I did have to get quite involved in...it was an inner city high school, and at the time there was no sort of parent involvement so I had...I eventually became PTA president. There were about 3 people on our board so there wasn't a lot of parent involvement". Mrs. L, whose profession required a lot of travel still ensured she was involved with the school and because of her direct involvement with various "pilot programs and projects" at the school was voted to be a parent member of the board of the school. "I've always been very involved" she explained, "...given his learning differences he had a lot of classroom support so we were always - we always followed his studies, both through his teachers or instructors".

Mrs. V, who's daughter's boarding school was an hour and a half away still ensured to get involved with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at the school for very specific reasons. Excerpts from her narrative are shown below:

Mrs. V 1st interview (excerpt): [PTO, INVOLVEMENT PRIOR TO COLLEGE, STUDENT'S INTERESTS, CONNECTED]

Mrs. V: Yes, and I was there a lot. I got involved in their auction, and so I did make that trip a lot. Very often I would pick her up for the weekend, and one of the reasons we chose that school was its proximity to home.

[Break]

Mrs. V: ...which were many meetings and a lot of hands-on being up there and being involved. I got close with the faculty, some faculty people, some administrators. Maybe not as close as one of the day parents who had been there longer and spent more

time with the school, like some... I've done that for my other daughter in our home school, was involved in the school.

[Break]

Mrs. V: I felt it was important for my daughter to see me there involved. There was a sense to feel connected for her, that she wasn't abandoned by her family. It was a great school and an opportunity to go to a really good school that had an equestrian program. That's one of the things she was interested in that they were unique in.

Parent Involvement During the College Search

During the interviews I asked parents to reflect on their involvement during their son or daughter's college search. In their narrative, parents described their level of involvement and the concerns they had during the college search process. The level of involvement during the college search process varied significantly between parents. One parent for example, admitted to her substantial involvement during the college application process. "Yes, mother probably helped her get those forms in" she explained as she detailed her daughter's reluctance to attend the site university. The same parent later described her daughter's transition to college as the "...birth of a nation to get her to finally try it". Another parent, who had described her involvement as 'somewhat' involved, explained how even though she had concerns during the college search process, she gave up control to her son and his college counselor:

Mrs. L 1st interview (excerpt) [HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR]

Mrs. L: ... [High School College Counselor] made recommendations for schools to visit and we did in junior year. And it's quite a well-defined process and [Student's Name] asked us to very much step back from it and that he wanted to own the program with [High School College Counselor] and I said to - I mean I said - because there are parent meetings with the student, right, and the college counselor?

And I said okay. I said but if and when you need me and I said to [High School College Counselor] as well, you let us know. But he owned it, right, so.

It was important to ask this question of parents in order to gain more insight into the 'type of institution' they were searching for. Parents' response to this question shed more light on their expectations for their son or daughter's college experience. Since all six parents had indicated they were either 'very' or 'somewhat' involved in their son or daughter's college search process, certain patterns began to emerge. They are as follows.

College Criteria. While coding parent's response to this question about their involvement during the college search process, it became apparent that some of the concerns parents had during their student's education experience prior to college translated into important 'criteria' for colleges during their student's college search. One parent explained: "When he was still in high school we visited colleges, we knew that you know he needed a particular kind of environment that would be nurturing, small, and have supportive services." These 'college criteria' are shown in Table 17 below.

*Table 17.***Qualitative Results: College Criteria**

Category	Code (number of occurrences)
College Criteria	CRITERIA: LEARNING SUPPORT CENTER (6) CRITERIA: SIZE (3) CRITERIA: LOCATION (1) CRITERIA: SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT (2) CRITERIA: COST (1) CRITERIA: MERIT SCHOLARSHIP (3)

Although all six parents indicated it was important for the site university to have a learning support center, only four parents had their student enrolled in the support center. Five out of six parents indicated their son or daughter received a merit scholarship to the site institution. When asked if the merit scholarship was an important consideration in their final decision to enroll in the site institution, three of the five parents said ‘yes’ hence the code CRITERIA: MERIT SCHOLARSHIP shown in the table above.

College Search Activity. As parents described their activities during their son or daughter’s college search, the intentional nature of parent’s involvement during the search process became clear. These activities had a connection to parents’ concerns regarding their student’s education. Table 18 shows the activities grouped under the category ‘College Search Activities’.

*Table 18.***Qualitative Results: College Search Activity**

Category	Code (number of occurrences)
College Search Activities	ACTIVITY: COLLEGE VISIT (6) ACTIVITY: HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE PROGRAM (2) ACTIVITY: GAP YEAR (2) ACTIVITY: K&W GUIDE TO COLLEGES* (2) ACTIVITY: PRIVATE COLLEGE COUNSELOR (1)

*Kravets, M., & Wax, I. F. (1993). *The K & W guide to colleges for the learning disabled: a resource book for students, parents, and professionals.* Harpercollins.

All six parents visited the site university with their student during the college search process. Four of the six parents visited more than once or had their student visit with the college a second time with the spouse. One mother explained why it was necessary to have her spouse visit the site university as well:

Mrs. B 1st interview (excerpt): [COLLEGE SEARCH, COLLEGE VISIT]

Mrs. B: Well, this is going to sound possibly foolish to you but, when we walked up to the admissions department that day, he and I, I said to him 'so what did you think?' and he turned to me and said 'I loved it', and my decision was made at that point.

Researcher: I see.

Mrs. B: I wanted my husband to come and take a look because I am much more, you know I am much more likely to have an emotional response, and my husband is very black and white, very, you know, tell me the facts, how is it set up, how does it work?

Researcher: Yes.

Mrs. B: So about 6 weeks later I think, he went down with [Student's Name] again and they paid a second visit.

Researcher: Okay.

Mrs. B: And he felt pretty much the exact same way that I did coming out of it.

Two of the six parents mentioned that although they were involved in the college search process, the final decision to attend the site institution was made by their student.

Dr. K was one of the two parents. In her narrative, Dr. K talked about managing her son's interests with her concerns for his academic success in college. Although her son was interested in the site university from the beginning of his college search process, her involvement was related to the concerns she had previously expressed while discussing his high school experience and academic struggles.

Dr. K 1st interview (excerpt) [SUPPORT PROGRAM, COLLEGE VISIT, TRANSITIONS CONFERENCE]:

Dr. K: Yes. I called the [Support Program for Students with Learning Disabilities] to talk about the services, and when I was down there for the transition seminar, I actually got to tour the facility and speak with – I think I spoke with, like, three different people in three different roles within. I spoke to a tutor, and I spoke to one of the mentors, and I spoke to the head of the department.

[Break]

Dr. K: What I was trying to do is I had a list of questions that I was asking both institutions, and so my main one was the educational level of the coaches and how often the child meets with the coach, and then the educational level of tutors and how available are the tutors, and what environment are they tutored in. Is it in, like, a small setting, or is it in an area and – like a table in the middle of a room, or is it in an office? Then the other one was how do they take a test? What are the facilities for test-taking?

Researcher: Okay.

Dr. K: Those were the main issues. Then the correlation between the tutor and the writing center. Are they

one and the same, or is the writing center a separate place with a different person versus the tutor?

Researcher: I see.

Dr. K: So I tried to get the same questions to both places to see so that I could compare one to the other because one was closer to us, location-wise. The other one was farther away.

Researcher: Okay. Can I ask which was farther away, his current institution or the other one?

Dr. K: Current.

Researcher: Okay, the current one was farther away from where you are than the other one.

Dr. K: Right, so I was concerned about the amount of support – if he's going to be much farther a distance that he's not going to be able to come home.

Parent Involvement During the College Experience

The final category in the qualitative analysis contains many subcategories concerning parental involvement during the college experience based on parents' concerns and expectations. Codes under this category were drawn from both the initial and final interviews with parents. The themes that emerged are as follows.

Parents' Role During the College Experience. I asked parents in the initial interviews to comment on what role they hoped to play during their son or daughter's college experience. In response to this question, parent's described how they would get involved should the need arise. Some parents based their response on the concerns that

they had expressed earlier regarding their students' college experience. Table 19 shows the codes that were grouped under the category 'Parent Role'.

Table 19.

Qualitative Results: Parents' Role During College Experience

Category	Code (number of occurrences)
Parent Role	PARENT AS EMOTIONAL SUPPORT (2)
	PARENT AS FACILITATOR (1)
	PARENT AS INVESTOR (5)
	PARENT AS CONSUMER (4)
	PARENT AS ADVOCATE (2)
	PARENT AS MONITOR (5)
	COMPARED TO OTHER PARENTS (2)
	COMPARED TO PARENT'S COLLEGE EXPERIENCE (3)

Some of the 'parent roles' shown in the table above appeared in parents' narrative during their second interviews which occurred after their son or daughter had spent about 8 weeks at the site university. Below are some excerpts from parent interviews that captured some of these categories of parents' role during the college experience.

Mrs. G 1st interview (excerpt): [EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, PARENT AS FACILITATOR]

Researcher: Okay. Good. What role do you hope to play during this first semester? How do you see your role during this experience for this semester at least.

Mrs. G: [pause] probably just emotionally support if needed. If he started to complain, I would tell him to go to the [Support Program for Students with Learning Disabilities], I think it is [Name of Academic Advisor] who... So I would...my role would be to direct him probably to her, to his academic advisor.

Mrs. L 1st interview (excerpt): [EMOTIONAL SUPPORT]

Mrs. L: He was quite nervous. He's quite nervous and I think it's also been quite difficult for him because we left [Hometown] in May so he hasn't had a "home". I mean, of course, he has a home here with us, but it's not where his - so it's been a bit - so he's definitely taken this decision in a very - he's been in a very different place, right?

Researcher: I see.

Mrs. L: And we talk about it a lot. And we were back and forth and I said we Skyped yesterday, but he's happy. And it was - he was happy that I was there and was with him for the transition and I told him we would come back for parents weekend. I think he's happy about that.

Researcher: Okay, wonderful.

Mrs. L: But, yeah. But I think if he needs us he knows we're here.

Mrs. R 1st interview (excerpt): [EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, "HELICOPTER PARENTS", "RESCUERS"]

Researcher: Ok good thank you. What do you hope for yourself as a parent during this first semester? What role do you think or hope you will play during your son's first semester of college?

Mrs. R: I hope that—and this is something that because of his kind of social, emotional stuff we've always tried to be very supportive and not enabling and we need to continue that. And really our goal is to push his independence and not you know like let him know we're there, we love him, but that he needs to use the supports available to him there and not be kind of the rescuers.

I think that you know we'll continue to try to give him good advice. You know we're not helicopter parents you know haha so I don't envision us you know calling the school unless you know there's some crisis or something. You know we'll do all the things that we're supposed to do as parents. We'll come for Parent's Weekend and you know that kind of stuff. We'll you know we tend to kind of lay back and let him take the lead and you know telling us what he needs.

Researcher: Ok.

Mrs. R: And you know if he asks for our advice, we'll give it to him.

While describing their role during the college experience, more than one parent drew comparison to other parents who were present at the New Student Orientation at the site university. "I imagine you have a lot of families here with the same issue" one parent said after describing her concern for her daughter's reluctance to attend the site university. I felt the fact that parents did this without any prompt from the interviewer was of significance. Some excerpts in which parents compared their concerns with those of other parents are shown below.

Mrs. L 2nd interview (excerpt): [COMPARED TO OTHER PARENTS]

Mrs. L: "So much of it is communication and managing expectations. I think that I understood in the meetings that we had. I could see other parents struggling with that in the audience, just from the questions and so on. Everybody's got their journey, right?"

Mrs. V 1st interview (excerpt): [COMPARED TO OTHER PARENTS]

Mrs. V: ...I don't expect to be one of those parents that I felt in the meeting that they were talking about possibly a first time college student, first child going to college, who would be maybe way more nervous than I am. I felt so sorry for the woman sitting next to me who asked the question, "My child's in an online learning class." You know? "How do I..." I was like, "Oh, man." I would not do well with that.

Mrs. G 1st interview (excerpt): [COMPARED TO OTHER PARENTS]

Mrs. G: Yes. And I believe, I believe that I'm...as confident as you know, maybe half the parents there. There seemed to be some worries by some parents, and I do not have that.

The code PARENT AS INVESTOR was derived from combining two codes that appeared in parents' narrative: EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT and FINANCIAL INVESTMENT. Both codes appeared in four out of the six parent narratives. Some excerpts of parents discussing their emotional and financial investment in their student during the college experience are show below.

Mrs. V 1st interview (excerpt): [EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT, FINANCIAL INVESTMENT]

Mrs. V: As far as emotionally? Well, you know, we're spending a week down here. That tells you something. It's not... We're not taking this lightly, and we want to make sure she feels supported. We're not just dropping you off, goodbye.
[Break]

...It is a big investment, particularly having lived through... One of the semesters she left with a medical leave, which was covered, but the other semester was just gone. We don't want to do that again, and so it's a bigger risk. I look at it as a risk of money, not just the investment of it. If she leaves early or comes with no grades [nervous laugh], it's a lot of money down the tubes. We're done if this doesn't work out. Then we're done investing in college for her.

Mrs. B 1st interview (excerpt): [FINANCIAL INVESTMENT]

Mrs. B: Which was very nice of them [laughing]. We didn't anticipate it. To be honest, if he hadn't got that [merit scholarship], it wouldn't have been a factor for us. It was just a nice thing for his self-esteem that he was offered that.

Researcher: Okay. Okay, good. You just basically answered this question, whether or not it would have made a difference in the decision to attend Lynn University. You said it wouldn't have made a decision more or less.

Mrs. B: No. you know, I think each school does everything like it looks like it is going to do. It is a good investment. I don't have any problem with that.

Mrs. R 1st interview (excerpt): [EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT]

Mrs. R: So it's interesting because he did attend residential school, I didn't think it was going to be that big a deal but it was haha. And you know it's much farther away. He was always within driving distance before, now he's not you know we have to fly to where he is. And...it—it was...I think well first of all because of his—he also has some health

issues, so because of all of his kind of mental health and health issues, we were very anxious about him going away to school but felt that the experience he actually had this past year, his gap year you know really helped him be ready to—to go. And we felt that, or I you know my husband and myself I'm talking about, that we had really put everything in place that would support him and we felt very good about the decision about where he is. That they offer enormous amount of support for the students. But then you know when he dropped him off, I was incredibly sad! [laughs] You know? And you know I cried [laughs]

A prominent category in this phase of the study was that of PARENT AS MONITOR. This code appeared in five out of the six parent narratives but within different contexts. For instance, the site university has an online platform through which students can access their grades per assignment in each class they were registered in. This platform is a tool provided by the university to students and therefore can be considered an institutional structure. The name of the platform is called 'blackboard' hence the code BLACKBOARD appeared in all the parent narratives. What is of importance to this study is how parents used this institutional structure. Five out of six parents used this tool to monitor their student's academic progress, but even among these five parents there was a distinction: three of the five parents had direct access to the platform using their son or daughter's ID and password. The other two parents received information about their sons' grades either via text message or by having the student take a screenshot of the platform. The distinction was that these two parents monitored through their sons the other three retained control of their access to their student's academic records.

Each of the three parents who retained control of their access to the student's academic records expressed their reasons for doing so. Dr. K was concerned about her son's inability to advocate for himself. Mrs. B who had a "history of concern" regarding her son kept access to his academic records to monitor his class attendance. Mrs. V who admitted her daughter was at the site university "reluctantly anyway", had the same concern regarding class attendance. The excerpt below is from Mrs. V's second interview and it captures her frustration with having to play the role of parent as monitor.

Mrs. V 2nd interview (excerpt): [PARENT AS MONITOR, "MOM-COP", STUDENT CLASS ATTENDANCE]

Mrs. V: We ask occasionally, for many times I asked her, "Are you getting all of your work done?" "Yes, yes, yes." Honestly, since I came to find the fact that she did fail, I don't know if any of those answers were truthful. As I said, I didn't want to become the mom-cop anymore and go online, and check the blackboard and see if she's doing it. Then if she wasn't doing it, then what would I have done? Call her and say, "I see you don't have that done. You didn't hand in that paper. What's happening? Why aren't you doing that?"

I cannot do that anymore so if you guys can't find a way to kind of win your way into her academic heart to say, "You could be good at this. Come. Sit here with us. We're going to help you through it. Look how good you are." I don't know what it takes to change somebody's mindset about how they're going to turn themselves into a student when they have such difficulty. It can't just be the pressure of the parents are going to be disappointed or to some degree, she's here reluctantly anyway.

Another prominent theme in this phase of the study was that of PARENT AS CONSUMER. This code differed from FINANCIAL INVESTMENT which was used earlier to note parents' mention of their financial commitment to their son or daughter's education. The distinguishing factor for applying this code PARENT AS CONSUMER was that parents made mention of their financial commitments in relation to their expectations of the university. One parent, while discussing her frustration with not being able to reach her son's academic advisor about a class he was registered in said "this is a lot of money to find out that it's not what he is supposed to be in". Another parent's spouse who was present for her second interview voiced his frustration while the parent described her encounter with her son's advisor, who she revealed did not want to speak with her when she called with concerns about her son's course load for the semester. "If this [interview] is about satisfaction" he said very calmly, "chuck that down to major dissatisfaction". Another parent, who mentioned that she was "just really pleased" with the amount of information she had received from her son and the institution, said "...What more can you ask for? I'm fine. We'll continue to write the checks. That's fine...".

These comments reveal how some parents in this phase of the study view the nature of their relationship with the site university. Below is an excerpt from Mrs. L's second interview. Her narrative captures the essence of the subject of parents as consumers from a parent's perspective.

Mrs. L 2nd interview (excerpt): [PARENT AS CONSUMER]

Mrs. L: I think it must be difficult because when I look at my experience... I went to University of Michigan,

ginormous, in the late 70s. I graduated in 1980, my parents hardly had an idea of what I was doing. I'm the eldest of four. Still, we just weren't the helicopter parents that we are now, so you've got that going on. Right? Bless you. I don't know how you deal with us, frankly. [laughter] I also think the increasing price tag...

We, our generations of baby boomers, we expect, especially as American parents, quite different from a European parent, as you know... We expect a certain amount of customer support, customer service. When we pay, we expect something in exchange. I think that August, the drop-off, there was a lot of information given, a lot. I know there's a lot of opportunity this weekend, during parents' weekend as well. From a consumer's perspective, I think it's been great. I think it must be a challenge again, because I know in Britain as a parent you just deliver your child to the door. You're not expected...not necessarily encouraged right away to get involved so much.

Finally, two out of six parents described their role as ADVOCATE for their student. In the excerpt below, Mrs. V explained her 'need to meddle' in relation to the concerns she had for her daughter, and her reasoning behind it.

Mrs. V 1st interview (excerpt): [PARENT AS ADVOCATE]

Mrs. V: ...but I think I feel more comfortable having somebody here tell me to back off than be worried that I'm embarrassing my child by making that call or writing that email. I feel here an openness to parents, so that I'm ... If I were to email her advisor or whatever, and they wanted to handle something and not have me involved, I think they would tell me and I wouldn't feel at all put upon, you know, like, "Well, they said they don't want my advice."

[Break]

Mrs. V: My expectation is that it's going to be a nice match of my need to possibly meddle... [laughs] That's a bad word. You know what I mean. If I give you a heads up about my daughter, because she doesn't say things that maybe you need to know, it's okay. Like, that will be an okay thing to do here, and that will eventually benefit her.

Researcher: Okay.

Mrs. V: I wouldn't do it because I'm trying to control her or... I think sometimes she gives up too easily.

Researcher: Okay.

Mrs. V: If I were to say to [Name of Academic Coach]... you know, that she's nervous. I felt that I wasn't overstepping my bounds for her to know that, because she would maybe handle it a certain way with [Student's Name]. If she didn't know it, because [Student's Name]'s not telling her... Better that she knows it than not know it. I feel like there's that kind of communication here, where maybe it's one way, where I'm sending an email or something, but I don't feel uncomfortable about that at all.

Parent's Own College Experience. I asked parents to reflect on their own experience as college students. The purpose for doing so was to have parents differentiate their experience as college students with that of their son or daughter and to allow them draw comparison between their involvement now as parents and their own parents' involvement during their college experience. I asked one parent if looking back, she

wanted her own parents to be more involved in her college experience and she said “Possibly more involved only in maybe visits”. Other parents mentioned having little to no parent contact for extended periods during their college experience. “I never remembered having a parent weekend” one parent explained.

In Mrs. R’s second interview, she talked about confronting her expectations for her son’s college experience and compared it to her own college experience. Her narrative is shown below.

Mrs. R 2nd interview (excerpt): [COMPARED TO PARENT’S COLLEGE EXPERIENCE]

Mrs. R: Um so we felt better you know and but you know it’s just hard. It’s hard because we hear all the wonderful things that are going on here and of course, you know, I have to bring myself back to “ok well what was I like when I was in college would I have taken advantage of all these things?” Yes. You know haha but he’s different. You know. And so it’s hard, it’s hard, I said this to somebody recently it’s like when you have your kid, and they start going to school and at some point you realize, they’re not going to be like you were and you have to give that vision up. You know.

And I think that, that that’s the struggle for me is I want him to take all you know advantage of all there is here. I want him to want to like focus and go you know go to the career center like they say and go to these things and...But he didn’t do that. That’s not who he is. And I need to give that up.

Parents’ Expectation of their Student during the College Experience. While coding parents’ narrative data, it became apparent that parents in this phase of the study

had different expectations of their student and of the site university. Table 20 below shows the codes that were grouped under the category ‘Parent Expectation of Student’.

Table 20.

Qualitative Results: Parents’ Expectation of Student

Category	Code (number of occurrences)
Parent Expectation of Student	RESPONSIBILITY (2)
	ASK FOR HELP (2)
	BALANCE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL (2)
	BE A GOOD CITIZEN (1)

In discussing this theme, it should be noted that all six parents in this qualitative phase of the study expressed a desire to have information about their student’s academic and social wellbeing come from their student. The code REGULAR UPDATES appeared in all six parents’ initial interviews; however, because this code was expressed as a desire or, as one parent put it, a “hope” rather than an actual expectation, it was not included in the list of codes. Also, only two of the six parents received regular updates from their student. The following excerpts below show how parents expressed some of their expectations of their students.

Dr. K’s 1st interview (excerpt): [RESPONSIBILITY, “MAKE FRIENDS”, BALANCE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL]

Dr. K: My expectation is that he gets all of his work done and is able to pass all the classes, and from a social perspective, be able to make friends. He's, I think, the – balancing the workload and meeting new people are going to be both a challenge.

Researcher: Okay.

Dr. K: So growth in both areas.

Researcher: Okay. Have you communicated these expectations to your son?

Dr. K: Yeah.

Mrs. L's 1st interview (excerpt): [RESPONSIBILITY, "MAKE FRIENDS", BALANCE WORKLOAD, SEEK HELP, BE A GOOD CITIZEN]

Mrs. L: Well I can tell you what I told him. Just stay very focused on your studies. Just keep on your - keep current, keep up on your homework, don't fall behind on anything, make use of your resources and just stay healthy and that means, for [Student's Name] it means, eating properly, getting enough sleep and be sure you exercise. Figure out where you can - who you can play soccer with.

But don't overextend....

But the expectation for him is his job is to be the best student that he can be and to be resourceful and ask for help.

Researcher: Okay.

Mrs. L: Yeah, be healthy, be happy and be social. He's a social kid. Make friends, make friends, have a good time too. But be the best student you can be. And be a good citizen.

Researcher: Were you able to communicate these to him at some point?

Mrs. L: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. We spoke about it a lot.

One parent responded to this question with her expectations of her son during his college experience, but when asked if at any point she made her expectations clear to him, she directed her expectation to the site university instead . Her response is shown in the excerpt below:

Mrs. G 1st interview (excerpt): [RESPONSIBILITY, CLASS ATTENDANCE, TRANSFERENCE]

Mrs. G: “I never made my expectations clear to him. I had confidence in the [Program for Students With Learning Disabilities]. So having that, that was all I could do, so I did not make those expectations. He...because I was already confident of the [Program for Students With Learning Disabilities]...”

[Break]

Researcher: I see. Okay. And again, have you, has this expectation being communicated [to] your student? Or do you feel it has been heard by someone either your student or the university

Mrs. G: I feel like it has definitely heard by the [Program for Students With Learning Disabilities].

This transference of expectations from the student to the institution suggests a link between parent’s expectations or concerns for their students and parent’s expectations of the institution. The link was later observed in other parent’s narrative about their expectations of the site university, however since this TRANSFERENCE appeared so vividly in only one parent’s narrative, I did not include it in the group “Parent’s Expectations of Student” shown in Table 20 above.

Parents' Expectation of the Institution during the College Experience. While coding, it became apparent that some parents' expectation of the site university were in relation to their concerns regarding their students. Table 21 shows the codes that were grouped under the category 'Parent Expectation of Institution'.

Table 21.

Qualitative Results: Parents' Expectation of Institution

Category	Code (number of occurrences)
Parent Expectation of Institution	GUIDANCE (2)
	SUPPORT (3)
	OPPORTUNITIES (1)
	MONITOR (2)
	REGULAR COMMUNICATION (2)
	PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS (3)
	"CALL ME" (3)
"SEEK HER OUT" (1)	

The code REGULAR COMMUNICATION which applies to contact with the institution appeared in two of the six parents' narrative. One parent described the lack of communication with the institution as "nerve-wracking". Her concerns were mainly about her son's "emotional issues". In her second interview, she explained her feelings in comparison to her son's high school experience:

Mrs. R 2nd interview (excerpt): [REGULAR COMMUNICATION, "NERVE-WRACKING", HIGH SCHOL EXPERIENCE,]

Mrs. R: You know. And so it's sort of nerve-wracking to not know. And we talked about the fact that even though in high school he was away you know he was in a residential program Therapeutic Residential School. At least we knew we had more contact, like regular contact with the people we were [inaudible][01:35], we knew like we would know what he was doing every day. It's more structured it's you know there were limits,

whatever. Here of course, so it's like you know who knows what he's doing and that's ok but it's nerve-wracking. You know.

The code "CALL ME" was derived from one of the parent's narrative in which she said "My expectation of the institution is that if he's falling flat on his face, that somebody calls me [laughs]". The code appeared in three of the six parents' narrative. Another parent simply stated, "if he's failing, I wanna know." Two of the six parents in this phase of the study expressed the desire for a regular communication schedule with the institution regarding. One of the two parents explained: "...I don't necessarily need feedback back, you know. He [Student's academic advisor] doesn't need to contact me back, but I just want make sure that the concerns are being addressed." The other parent expressed her reservations when asking for regular communication with the institution about concerns regarding her son:

Mrs. R's 2nd interview (excerpt): [CALL ME, REGULAR COMMUNICATION]

Mrs. R: I don't really, you know I still kinda go back and forth about how much [communication] is realistic. You know I think I'm not a helicopter mom, I'm not you know we're not...helicopter parents and I think that you know there's some parents that want you know communication, communication, communication. That's not how I am and you know I look back at our experience in college I don't think my parents even talked to anyone at the school you know and I think there's sort of a middle ground that would be good.

Mrs. L's entire 1st and 2nd interviews can be found in Appendix G. Below is an excerpt in which she talks about the opportunities and challenges for her son and her expectations of the site university:

Mrs. L's 1st interview (excerpt): [GUIDANCE, OPPORTUNITY, SUPPORT]

Mrs. L: So I actually have very high expectations especially that were reinforced by the programs this past weekend and that is to be to challenge him but also to provide the support and guidance. But actually I believe that's part of what [Name of Site University] is about. And the opportunities, yeah?

Researcher: Yes.

Mrs. L: Yeah, I love that. [Student's Name] is so excited to see all those programs he could participate in or I guess they were like little info sessions sort of on Sunday?

Researcher: Yes.

Mrs. L: Yeah, he was really excited by that. So it's opportunity and guidance and support.

The code "SEEK HER OUT" came from one parent's narrative. It is mentioned in this analysis because it relates to this parent's expectation of the institution. This code differs from other parents' expectation in this study such as SUPPORT or REGULAR COMMUNICATION because it relates to this parent's specific concern regarding her daughter. The excerpt from this parent's narrative in which she explains her concern and expectation of the institution is show below.

Mrs. V's 2nd interview (excerpt): ["SEEK HER OUT"]

Mrs. V: ...If you're not proactive with her, she's not going to be the one that easily who goes, "You know, I got a D on that thing and I don't know why." Do you know what I mean? She doesn't care enough. I think and I could totally see that you guys are not here to, my expectation is not necessarily that you will try to seek her out, but I thought maybe you would seek her out a little bit more than they did at [previous university] because she's in the [program for students with learning disabilities] after all and somebody might be following her progress and saying, "Whoa, what's happening here? This kid's not going to class. She's handing in no work. Let's have a conversation with her."

Finally, the code PARTNERSHIP appeared in three of the six parents' narrative. The distinction between this code and REGULAR COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS was that in using the term "partnership", parents seemed to be suggesting an ongoing relationship between the parent and the institution that entailed more than just information sharing. The following excerpts show how parents explained this partnership with the institution.

Mrs. L's 2nd interview (excerpt): [PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, INFORMATION, TRANSPARENCY]

Mrs. L: The university and the parents and the students. I see it as a three way piece. It's about communication and it's about information and it's about transparency. If I need information, I'll go to the website in the first instance. First, I'd talk to [Son's Name] unless it's just something I'm researching. If it's something I'm just researching, I'll just go online.

As an example, when does the term end? When does the term start? All of that kind of stuff. When does spring term end? What's the next te-? Those kinds of things. On Instagram, I follow that student group, so I see the things that are coming, that are going on.

[break]

It's a partnership. I think if I needed to ask a person, I'd know how to find out. I'd know the different people in [Student's Name]'s sphere and reach out.

Mrs. V 1st interview (excerpt): [PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS]

Mrs. V: What I recognized after she spent that time at [previous institution] was, without a good support program, I'm not sure that I would want to take the chance of sending her off to school again and having her just fall flat on her face again.

I think the jury's out on whether [Site University]'s program will... whether she takes advantage of it. I think that's the difficult part. I don't think any parent can push their child to make it happen. You can try, I mean, and I plan on asking for advice from the department in case she starts to not go to class or something, like "what can I do?" We talked about boarding school. I would have loved for them to have a partnership...

Parents' Concerns for their Student during the College Experience. All the parents in this phase of the study expressed concerns they had for their students while away at college. Table 22 shows the codes that were grouped under the category 'Parent Concerns for Student'.

Table 22.

Qualitative Results: Parents' Concerns for Student

Category	Code (number of occurrences)
Parent Concerns for Student	STUDENT WELL BEING (2)
	MENTAL HEALTH (3)
	PEER RELATIONSHIPS (2)
	BULLYING (2)
	ACADEMIC SUCCESS (4)

The code MENTAL HEALTH does not necessary imply a psychological issue with the student. One of the three parents in whose narrative this code appeared simply worried that her son was “lonely”, while the other two parents did have specific concerns relating to depression or anxiety. I grouped these codes together because an institutional response to any of these concerns would originate from the site university’s counseling office. Other codes such as BULLYING and ACADEMIC SUCCESS were based on concerns that parents had before their student enrolled at the site university. With regards to PEER RELATIONSHIPS, Mrs. R’s husband, who was present for her second interview, explains his concern in the excerpt below.

Mrs. R 2nd interview (excerpt): [PEER RELATIONSHIPS]

Mr. R: And as a parent you know you want him to, my kid’s not gonna be drinking a lot. My kid’s not gonna go to Miami and party all the time. You want a kid, you want him to be with kids that are balanced, socially, academically, and personally that they’re nice people. And that’s what we scare, I think that’s what scares I think all parents.

Institutional Structures as Mediator of Parental Involvement. An important outcome of this study is to understand how institutional structures such as programs,

policies and practices influence parent involvement. As part of both interviews, I asked parents about their contact with the university and to elaborate on the messages they received from the institution regarding their involvement during their students' college experience. The purpose of asking this question was to gauge from parents' responses to what extent institutional structures influenced their perceptions of their involvement. For parents in this study, institutional structures included visits to the site college prior to their student's enrollment, interactions with institutional representatives during the college search process, and programs like the new student orientation or other programs parents were involved in prior to their interview for this study.

At the site university, institutional structures also included various staff positions which appeared in some of the parents' narrative. One was that of a Mentor which the university assigns to every student through a Mentorship program aimed at boosting freshman retention. Another is that of Academic Advisor which every student is assigned to assist in course registration and advising within the students' major of study. Table 23 below shows a list of all the institutional structures that appeared in parents' narrative regarding their expectations.

Table 23.

Qualitative Results: Institutional Structures

Category	Code (number of occurrences)
Institutional Structures	NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION(6)
	COLLEGE VISIT (6)
	ACADEMIC COACH (5)
	PARENT SESSION *(5)
	ADMITTED STUDENT EXPERIENCE** (2)
	TRANSITIONS CONFERENCE (1)
	FERPA/BUCKLEY*** (3)
*This 'parent session' refers specifically to a session hosted by the University's program for students with learning disabilities	

**The 'Admitted Student Experience' is a program for incoming freshmen put on by the University's admission department in which incoming freshmen spend three days on the University's campus in March or April prior to enrollment in the Fall semester of that year.

***The FERPA Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law enacted in 1974 that protects the privacy of student education records. The FERPA is also known as the Buckley Amendment. It requires institutions to keep student records confidential except in the case of emergencies, court orders, or university officials who have a need to know. Students over 18 can grant access to other persons, such as parents, to view their academic records.

All six parents were present at the New Student Orientation on August 22nd 2014 and had attended various 'parent sessions' throughout the day. Moreover, all six parents had visited the university prior to August 22nd 2014 and engaged with various institutional representative prior to their student's enrollment in the site university.

Although all the parents described their understanding of the university's message about parental involvement during their students' college experience, there were no consistencies in how parents' expectations of their student or of the institution were mediated by institutional structures. One common institutional structure in all the parent narratives was the New Student Orientation held at the site university on August 22nd 2014. All the parents mentioned one or more 'parent sessions' they had attended and the message they received from the university about parental involvement.

Five of the six parents attended a parent session hosted by the site university's Program for Students with Learning Disabilities; Mrs. B was the only parent who did not attend this session. In this parent session, the executive director of the program spoke about the program's function and the role it expected parents to play during the students' college experience. Specifically, the executive director of the program asked parents not to contact their student's Academic Coach within the first two weeks of the semester; an

academic coach is the individual within the program who works with students on a regular basis and serves as the student's 'point person' while they are enrolled in the program. The director also encouraged parents to direct their students to the academic coach with any concerns the students had and while it was okay for the parent to contact the academic coach with their concerns, he cautioned parents not to have conversations about their son or daughter with the academic coach without the student present. I asked the parents who attended this session about the message they received regarding parental involvement. Three of the five parents who attended the session had similar messages. Excerpts from their interviews are shown below.

Mrs. L 1st interview (excerpt): ["CUT THE CORD", STUDENT INDEPENDENCE, PARENT AS SUPPORT]

Mrs. L: Yeah. I loved when he [Executive Director] said it's time to cut the cord -

Researcher: [laughter]

Mrs. L: - because it was from the early days when he was in what we called junior school at the [Student's High School], and teachers always said it's important that he be encouraged to do things that give him a good sense of self and keep his - I'm at a loss for words right now -

[break]

Mrs. L: Yeah, but the cutting of the cord thing we thought that it - we let the teachers who are the professionals teach, you know?

Mrs. L 2nd interview (excerpt): [INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES, STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY]

Mrs. L: His whole learning experience. What I have been helped to understand and certainly in all of my interactions here is that this is about my son taking ownership and keeping me apprised. When I dropped him off in August and attended the meetings, especially here at the institute.

It was really about us helping our children students be self-reliant and coming and making a plan with their advisor on their responsibility to communicate that plan to their professors. I know the head of the institute, I'm going to not remember his name right now...

Researcher: It's okay.

Mrs. L: ...how he said that by this time, by parents' weekend, your children students should know the names of their professors. They should be taking advantage of all that is here. I discussed that with Alex quite openly. I said, listen, here's what I've learned. Here's your responsibility and he heard me and he's doing it.

Mrs. G 2nd interview (excerpt): [STUDENT INDEPENDENCE, CONTACT WITH INSTITUTION, ACADEMIC COACH, SUPPORT]

Mrs. G: ...I got the feeling when you guys talked to us that it is really 'let the kids talk to us' and don't call [Academic Coach] for the first two weeks.

Researcher: Ok [laughing]

Mrs. G: That was kind of pushed in there. Don't be bugging like 'who is your academic coach' until everything

falls into place and because by two weeks, things had fallen into place and he liked [Academic Coach] that there is no concern

Researcher: I see

Mrs. G: Mmmhmm

Researcher: I see. And you felt that was sufficient?

Mrs. G: Yeah. I didn't feel at all the need...boy, you guys made it pretty clear that this was the kid's thing

Researcher: Okay. How was that two week period? Where we sort of banned you from...

Mrs. G: [parent made a clapping sound] Appalling

Researcher: [laughing]

Mrs. G: [laughing] but we knew that you guys would take good care of them...

Mrs. R 2nd interview (excerpt): [STUDENT INDEPENDENCE, CONTACT WITH INSTITUTION, ACADEMIC COACH, SUPPORT]

Mrs. R: And so it was very clear you know about you know what the expectations are. What the recommendations are. You know in terms of really helping him become independent, letting him seek out the resources that are there. And problem-solve on his own. Which he's pretty good at anyway but and that's what we felt good about this school! Because there are so many resources and supports for him to seek out to help him problem-solve. And to support him in his academic pursuits. And so we actually thought the orientation was fantastic in

every way. It really spoke to everything. And we were so impressed with that, really helped us feel good about leaving him there.

One parent who attended this same session in which the director of the program for students with learning disabilities spoke, heard the same message about the university's policy on contacting the student's academic coach but had a different interpretation as to her role during her daughter's college experience. An excerpt from this parent's initial interview shows her perspective on contact with the institution.

Mrs. V 1st interview (excerpt): [CONTACT WITH INSTITUTION, ACADEMIC COACH]

Mrs. V: In terms of what the question is, it isn't usually difficult for me to figure out who here would be the right person, but if it had to do with the concerns for my child, then I gather you don't want us to really delve into their coaches. Then maybe that's the person I would want to reach out to.

Researcher: Is that the impression you got after orientation?

Mrs. V: Um... I think I get that impression more from just the fact that my child at first, when I said, "Who is your coach?" and she didn't want to tell me. [laughs] I'm thinking, "Ah..."

Researcher: Okay.

Mrs. V: "...there had better be something seriously wrong before I reach out to her."

Researcher: I see.

Mrs. V: We haven't really gotten into the flow of things yet, so it may be that I would hear something and then let that coach know what I thought I heard.

Since four of the five parents who attended this particular parent session were able to reiterate the director's message about parent contact with the academic coach in their narrative, it shows that the institutional structure (in this case, the parent session) was effective. Mrs. V was one of those three parents and she reiterated the Director's message when she said "I gather you don't want us to really delve into their coaches"; however, her follow up statement of "maybe that's the person I would want to reach out to" suggests that, at least in Mrs. V's case, although institutional structures might be effective in communicating the university's policy on parent involvement, the 'concern for her child' was more the moderator of her involvement.

I observed this same connection in another parent's narrative. Dr. K was one of the five parents who attended the 'parent session' mentioned above. In her first interview, Dr. K described her understanding of the university's policy regarding parent involvement with her son's academic coach as "vague". In her second interview however, she did reiterate the director's policy based on a conversation she had with the academic coach. Just as in the case involving Mrs. V described earlier, Dr. K's concern for her son's academic success acted as moderator for her involvement. In the excerpts below, Dr. K explained her feelings toward the university's policy of contacting the academic coach and her rationale for doing so regardless.

Dr. K 2nd interview (excerpt): [STUDENT INDEPENDENCE, ACADEMIC COACH, HISTORY OF CONCERN]

Dr. K: Well, I talked to him [Academic Coach] briefly during move in, when we first moved in, and then I emailed him. He was pretty, “well he’s an adult, and he can make these choices”. So I’ve been trying to encourage go through my son, and encourage him to use his voice rather than me doing it since that was the impression I got from [Academic Coach] that he really doesn’t want to hear from me. He wants my son to be the one that’s initiating all the conversation.

Researcher: Can I ask you how that makes you feel in this setting? Do you have any thoughts on that?

Dr. K: I was a little put off by it at first, partly because my son has some learning issues, and if he doesn’t advocate, he’s going to struggle and he possibly could struggle even when he’s advocating. But to have a little background information, I don’t expect him to do everything I say, but just to have some background I thought would be helpful since he doesn’t know him at all. I understand what he’s trying to do, but on the other hand I also think that my major concern at that point was, he’s in the wrong major, and you know, here he is his first semester and if he falls flat on his face in an area that he really shouldn’t be in, so that’s where most of my anxiety was coming from was that, you know, this woman that he met for two and a half hours changed his major, set his whole curriculum up and didn’t really know him.

Qualitative Analysis Summary: Themes Relating to Parent Involvement

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, parents in the qualitative phase of this study gave rich detail about their experiences as parents prior to their son or daughter’s college enrollment, their expectations and concerns for their son or daughter, and the nature of

their relationship with their child and with the institution. Several themes appeared during qualitative analysis for this study that were not included in this chapter because they did not relate directly to the research questions in this study. For example, themes relating to the nature of the parent-student relationship emerged in almost every parent narrative. Also, the influence that institutional structures had on the student was a theme found in two of the six parents' narrative. Although these themes were present in the data, they were not useful when attempting to answer the research questions in this study. The following themes relating to parental involvement, parent's expectations and concerns regarding this son or daughter, and the influence of institutional structures on parental involvement are of importance to the research questions in this study.

Theme: A History of Concern. Parents who were very involved in their student's educational experience had a history of concern regarding their student. These concerns were either academic in nature or related to their student's social wellbeing. All six parents in this phase of the study expressed a concern they had regarding their son or daughter prior to enrolling at the site university. Although all six parents expressed prior concerns, the nature of their eventual involvement would differ. The nature of parental involvement (for example the frequency of parent contact with the institution or the use of parental control) was mediated by other factors.

Theme: Parent Involvement As a Necessity. Parents who were very involved in their son or daughter's education in terms of active monitoring and constant contact with the institution, did not necessary want to be as involved. This theme was found in three of the six parents' narrative. For these parents', their involvement were predicated on

specific concerns regarding their son or daughter. Mrs. R for example remained involved in her son's education because of his "emotional issues". In her second interview, she expressed her desire for a regular communication schedule with her son and his academic coach, but explained her reservation as well:

Mrs. R's 2nd interview (excerpt): [COMMUNICATION, HELICOPTER PARENT]

Mrs. R: I guess yeah I mean I think that you know I'd like to have that conversation about setting up some kind of regular communication schedule with him, with him and [Academic Coach], I don't really, you know I still kinda go back and forth about how much is realistic. You know I think I'm not a helicopter mom, I'm not you know we're not helicopter parents and I think that you know there's some parents that want you know communication, communication, communication. That's not how I am and you know I look back at our experience in college I don't think my parents even talked to anyone at the school.

Mrs. B who mentioned having a "long history of concern" with her son had remained very involved with his education. In her first interview, she explained why it was necessary to be very involved:

Mrs. B 1st interview (excerpt): [CLOSELY INVOLVED, CONTACT WITH INSTITUTION]

Mrs. B: ...I have been very closely involved with my son's education from the moment he went into pre-school and that wouldn't necessarily have been my choice. I don't see myself as somebody who needs to be that closely involved. I certainly wasn't with my daughter. I rarely set foot in her high school and when she was in middle school I was only in school

to volunteer and, you know, just keep involved. But with him, I was always in very very close contact because, he just had different struggles and different issues. And I felt that if I hadn't been quite so closely involved, there was a real possibility that he could fail.

In her first interview, Mrs. V explained her desire for less involvement in her daughter's education. "I didn't want to be the homework cop anymore" she explained. Mrs. V was looking forward to being an "empty nester" when her daughter went off to college for the first time and possibly reviving her former career as a performer. Below are excerpts from Mrs. V's first and second interviews in which she talks about having to remain involved in her daughter's education.

Mrs. V 1st interview (excerpt): [EMOTIONAL WELL BEING, "EMPTY NEST"]

Mrs. V: I realized at some point when I got one of those panic phone calls – you know, "I hate it here," whatever – I wasn't going to be able to leave town and really be in a... You know, if you're going to be a professional in that career, you've got to be willing to go out of town and travel, so I knew that. It's still high school, and I'm not really empty nest. We participated in the life of the school almost like a day parent, but not daily.

Mrs. V 2nd interview (excerpt): [RESPONSIBILITY, "SPOILED BRAT", EXPECTATION OF INSTITUTION]

Mrs. V: Take that responsibility and even if you don't like the teacher or you don't like the course material, there's a lot in life we don't like to do but we do it anyway. That's the lesson I want her to gain from this. She is refusing to pick up that lesson. "I don't

have to listen to you and I don't have to do anything." I said, "Geeze, it's too bad I'm not a welfare mother because maybe you wouldn't be squandering your tuition like this." This is what happens. I didn't grow up like this. I guess I don't know how to parent in that way. She's a spoiled brat. What can I say?

There are many people that were here that were like so happy to be able to be here. She just doesn't get it. I don't know. You guys have to come up with some magic. [laughter] I have to believe you've seen this before. I think just talking about some other students just crashing and burning at the same time.

Theme: Parents' Concerns become Criteria for Selecting College. Parents who were very involved in their student's college search process were very intentional in their involvement and the concerns they had regarding their student's academic or social welfare became criteria for choosing the site institution. This theme was present in all six parent narratives. Five out of the six parents had expressed concerns about their student's academic success prior to enrollment at the site college, therefore having a strong support program or a "supportive environment" was a criteria during the college search process for all five parents.

Theme: Institutional Structures as Mediator of Parents' Concerns. Parent concerns prior to enrollment were mediated by institutional structures, particularly the university's Program for Students with Learning Disabilities. This theme was present in three of the six parents' narrative. Mrs. G stated in her second interview that prior to

enrollment she had “a lot of confidence that this was the place and with this [Program for Students with Learning Disabilities] that things weren’t going to fall apart right away”. Dr. K was very intentional during the college search process. She visited the site university’s campus and had several phone conversations with the university’s admissions representative about the university’s program for students with learning disabilities. The “deciding factor” for her was that the site university’s program was more professionally staffed than any other institution she had considered for her son. In the excerpt show below, Mrs. B talked about her prior concerns for her son’s academic success and the site university

Mrs. B 1st interview (excerpt): [INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE, RESPONSIBILITY, “LET GO”]

Mrs. B: “I feel as though it would have to be a very particular kind of school for me to be relaxed enough to say, okay, you know, I am handing this over to you, he is now, you know, whether he stays upright, does really really well, or fails, I am handing that over to him and to the school.

I mean obviously, that’s, it is quite tricky for me to let go in that way because I feel as though the only school that I saw, the only school that I ever heard of that I feel like I could do this with, is [Site University].

Theme: Students’ Abilities As Mediator of Parents’ Expectations. Parents’ expectations were mediated more by their student’s abilities to address parent’s concerns than by institutional structures. This theme appeared in four out of the six parents’ narratives. Mrs. L and Mrs. G had similar experiences. In her second interview, Mrs. L

described her son's experience at the site university as being "so unbelievable for him and for his self-confidence as a student". In her initial interview she had expressed her expectations to her son. "I discussed that with [Student's Name] quite openly" she said during her second interview. "I said, listen, here's what I've learned. Here's your responsibility and he heard me and he's doing it." Mrs. G had expectations as well, but they were directed at the university instead of her son. "I never made my expectations clear to him" during her initial interview, "I had confidence in the [Program for Students With Learning Disabilities]." In her second interview, Mrs. G revealed that her son was taking advantage of the services offered by the University's support program.

Mrs. B and Mrs. V's experiences were not so positive. In her second interview, Mrs. B revealed that although things 'weren't going well' she had anticipated this very outcome. Mrs. V revealed that she had "hoped" for success for her daughter but the eventual outcome was "not surprising". Excerpts from Mrs. B and Mrs. V's second interviews are shown below.

Mrs. B 2nd interview (excerpt): [PARENT EXPECTATION, "LET GO", MENTOR]

Mrs. B: Well to be honest, I had anticipated that we would end up in pretty much where we are.

Researcher: I see

Mrs. B: I thought that perhaps we would have a longer honeymoon period where he would be more, you know, able to engage fully with what he is meant to be doing

Researcher: I see

Mrs. B: But it hasn't been shocking to me that we are where we are....

Mrs. V 2nd interview (excerpt): [“HOPE”, PARENT EXPECTATION, FERPA]

Mrs. V: Not surprising, my expectations, I probably had my real best hopes for our first interview and I probably did, I don't remember what I did tell you, but my daughter coming in, being second chance to try this out. Unfortunately some of the same issues cropped up and she started to stop going to class.

Theme: Effective Institutional Structures As Mediator of Parental

Involvement. Although institutional structures were effective in communicating the site university's policy on parental involvement through its programs and institutional representatives, they did not necessarily mediate parental involvement. Institutional structures were only able to mediate parent involvement in as much as they were effective in addressing parents' concern.

In her second interview, Dr. K described having a concern about her son's course load. She initiated contact with his Academic advisor at the start of the semester but was told that her son had to take a math course in his first semester. She relented, but remained concerned because of 'a gut feeling' she had. Midway through the semester, she looked on the 'Blackboard' portal and discovered her son was doing poorly in that subject. She then got involved and contacted her son's Academic Coach with the same concern. Her son ended up having to drop the class. Mrs. B had a similar experience. She

had initially contacted her son's Academic advisor with a concern about his course load as well, but had a very negative experience with the individual. Mrs. B, who was very calm and soft spoken throughout both her interviews for this study, commented that she felt "shut down" by the interaction she had with the academic advisor. She then hesitantly reached out to her son's Mentor at the site university who became involved after which she and the mentor agreed that she would "back off" and let her son and the mentor address the issue. An excerpt from Mrs. B's second interview is shown below. In it, she describes the interaction with the Mentor and how it influenced her involvement.

Mrs. B 2nd interview (excerpt): [MENTOR, PARENT INVOLVEMENT]

Mrs. B: Well, [Mentor] responded instantly. And he was very proactive in trying to set things up for [Son's Name] and trying to manage his workload. At that point, *we agreed that I would back off a little bit because [Son's Name] wasn't aware of the fact that I had been talking to [Mentor]...*

Researcher: To [Mentor]. I see

Mrs. B: ...and it just put him in a difficult position

Researcher: Put [Mentor] or your son

Mrs. B: Oh no, I felt it put [Mentor] in a difficult position because if he was going to have a completely open relationship with [Son's Name], then, you know, I shouldn't be interfering

Researcher: Well, it is interesting you use that word, but did [Mentor] give you that impression...

Mrs. B: No, not at all.

Researcher: This is your...

Mrs. B: It is my knowledge of our son and how he...I can tell from what [Mentor] has told me and how [Son's Name] has communicated with me that [Son's Name] feels better if he can tell me he is doing something but no necessarily that somebody has suggested that to him

Qualitative Analysis and Grounded Theory

An important outcome of this study was to gain a better understanding of parental involvement in higher education in light of the concerns and expectations that drive parents to get involved in their son's or daughter's college experience. The grounded theory method seemed ideal for the qualitative phase of this study since it involves analyzing data "from the bottom up" (Yin, 2011) to formulate theory concerning a subject of study. The process involves coding qualitative data into categories (open coding) which are further subcategorized (axial coding) and then refined (selective coding) to inform a narrative of the subject being studied (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Yin, 2011). Data from the qualitative phase of this study yielded categories and themes relating to parents' expectations and concerns for their students as well as the influences of institutional structures on parental involvement in higher education; however these themes did not generate a unifying concept of parental involvement in higher education. Moreover, parents in the qualitative phase of this study gave rich amounts of data which shed light on several dimensions of parental involvement not considered by this study. These dimensions include parent's professional experiences as mediator, students'

academic ability and college readiness, and also the nature of the parent-student relationship and its effect of parental involvement. All of these dimensions were a part of parental involvement during the college experience and therefore important to the formulation of theory about parental involvement in higher education. This study was not designed to explore these areas and although many of these dimensions did surface in the data, this study could not properly incorporate them as part of its analysis. As such, the results of this study alone are not sufficient to generate a unified theory regarding parental involvement in higher education.

Summary of Analysis

This chapter will conclude with a response to each research questions based on the results of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the rationale for mixing both quantitative and qualitative methods was to allow for a more rounded analysis of the subject being studied (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). Both quantitative and qualitative methods used in this study yielded results that can be applied toward answering the research questions stated earlier.

Research Question One

What are the common concerns and expectations that parents of traditional college students have during their transition to college? The expectations and concerns expressed by parents in both phases of this study were too varied to establish a commonality. Overall, parents had as many expectations related to the ‘teaching’ as well as ‘caring’ function of the university toward their student. Although parents’ expectations of the institution were varied, they were based on specific concerns regarding their son or

daughter. These concerns were mostly academic in nature and were aligned with programs and services offered by the university such as academic advising and a program for students with learning disabilities. One theme which was prominent in both quantitative and qualitative analysis was the desire from parents for regular communication regarding their students' academic progress. Parents who completed Young's (2006) PECTAC survey selected "Notify me of my student's academic success on a regular basis" as the second most important item under the university's caring function toward the student. The desire for "regular updates" was a central theme in parents' narrative during the qualitative phase of this study; however, that expectation was mediated by their student's ability or willingness to keep the parent informed. Parents who received regular updates from their student did not make it an expectation of the university, while parents who were "shut out" as one parent put it, expressed a desire for regular communication with the university concerning their student's academic progress.

Research Question Two

How do parents of traditional college students view their role during their son or daughter's college experience? Parents described themselves in many roles during their children's college experience. Many parents drew comparison to other parents they had observed, including their own parents when they were college students. Parents described themselves as emotional and financial investors in their children's futures. Parents also saw themselves as supporters and advocates for their students, as well as monitors of their students' academic progress. In relation to the university, some parents viewed

themselves as customers when discussing their expectations and concerns while some viewed the relationship with the university as a partnership.

Research Question Three

How do institutional structures (programs, policies, and practice) influence the concerns and expectations of parents of traditional college student? Institutional structures such as programs and services served to mediate parents' concerns regarding their students' academic success and social wellbeing prior to enrollment in the university and in some cases these institutional structures formed the basis for parents' expectations of the university. Although institutional structures were effective in communicating the site university's policy on parental involvement through its programs and institutional representatives, they did not necessarily mediate parental involvement. Institutional structures were only able to mediate parent involvement in as much as they were effective in addressing parents' concerns. Parents' expectations of students' success were mediated more by their student's abilities to address parent's concerns than by institutional structures.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings in this study, the implications for practice, and recommendations for future research. It has been a premise of this study that to arrive at a better understanding of parental involvement in higher education, the expectations and concerns that drive parents to become involved in their student's college experience should be explored. Terms such as 'meddling' and 'helicopter parenting' which have been used to describe parental involvement in higher education, do not provide university administrators with any workable knowledge on how to meaningfully engage parents of traditional age college students. This study set out to gain a better understanding of parental involvement in higher education by understanding the expectations and concerns that drive parental involvement as well as how these concerns and expectations are mediated by institutional structures (programs, policies and practice).

Summary of Results

The results from this study suggest that parents' expectations and concerns are specific to the needs of their student and aligned with the programs and services offered by the university. Parents also expressed having a history of concern and involvement with regards to their student's education. For some parents, involvement in their son or daughter's education has been a necessity based on specific concerns regarding their student's academic or social wellbeing. "I didn't want to be the homework cop anymore" one parent in this study explained. Parents who were very involved in their student's college search process were very intentional in their involvement and the concerns they

had regarding their student's academic or social welfare became criteria for choosing the university in which their son or daughter enrolled.

Parents who were very involved in their student's college experience seemed aware of the scope of their involvement. "We are not helicopter parents" one parent commented while explaining her involvement in her son's education due to his "emotional health issues". While describing their many roles during their child's college experience, parents drew comparisons to other parents they had observed, including their own parents whilst they were college students. Parents described themselves as supporters, advocates, monitors of their students' academic progress as well as emotional and financial investors in their children's futures. With regards to the university, parents viewed their relationship as one of partnership but also considered themselves as consumers.

Parents' expectations of the university were linked to institutional structures (programs and services) present at the institution. In most cases, these programs and services were "the deciding factor" as one parent put it, in selecting the university during the college search process; however, these programs and services were less effective in moderating parental involvement during their son or daughter's college experience. Although institutional structures were effective in communicating the university's policy on parental involvement through its programs and institutional representatives, they did not necessarily mediate parental involvement. Institutional structures were only able to mediate parental involvement in as much as they were effective in addressing parents'

concern. Parents' expectations were mediated more by their student's abilities to address parent's concerns than by institutional structures.

Discussion of Results

The sensational stories about over-the-top parental involvement in higher education have made the subject controversial. While these stories may be true, university administrators and faculty are more likely to encounter the kind of parental involvement observed during this study in which parents are driven by a specific concern for their student.

Early parental involvement has been especially encouraged in the United States (Mattingly et al., 2002) and so it is logical that parents may wish to carry on as involved partners and influential educators during their children's college experience (Scott & Daniel, 2001; Carney-Hall, 2008). Parents in this study described having a history of involvement in their son or daughter's education which began as early as elementary school, however their involvement was in relation to a specific need concerning their child. These needs were either academic in nature (learning disabilities) or social (emotional and mental health). An increasing number of college students are arriving at universities and colleges across the United States with "a history of mental health issues and learning disabilities for which their parents have actively advocated successfully with school administrators" in the past (Carney-Hall, 2008). These concerns do not necessarily diminish once students transition to college and neither does parental involvement, despite the expectations among college professionals (faculty, staff and administrators).

The apprehension that university administrators and faculty have with this kind of involvement in which parents act as advocates at the college level, is that it may interfere with college students' development toward autonomously functioning adulthood, which is an important outcome of the traditional residential undergraduate experience (Taub, 2008; Cullaty, 2011). But not all parental involvement at the college level is intrusive. Studies have suggested that some parents who intervene in ways that college professionals deem inappropriate may do so out of their own anxiety (Coburn & Treeger, 2003), within heavy emotional contexts (Cutright, 2008), and with little or no awareness of how it affects their child developmentally (Coburn, 2006). In this study, parents were very deliberate in their involvement prior to and during their student's enrollment in the university. Concerns that parents had relating to the academic or social welfare of their child while in high school became criteria for selecting colleges during their student's search process. This supports the notion that during students' transition to college, parents might act to ensure their students are being left in 'good hands' (Vianden & Ruder, 2012). Also, parents' expectations of the institution were not arbitrary but well-founded in the programs and services offered by the university.

Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray (2011) explored a notion about parental involvement based on Cooley's (1902) concept of the "looking glass self" in which parents viewed their children as a reflection of themselves. Any investment therefore in their children's advancement (including a college education) may be to enhance that image of self as reflected in their child (LeVine and White, 1987; Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2011). For parents in this study, the impulse to get involved seemed less about themselves and more

about the needs of their son or daughter. During most of the interviews, parents could hardly talk about themselves even when asked directly about their experiences as parents. Parents' narrative always seemed to revert back to the needs of their child. A question raised in the literature about parental involvement was how much of what we observe on college campuses, a result of parenting needy students or of parents living vicariously through their students (Gabriel, 2010)? Only one parent out of the six who were interviewed as part of this study used the word 'we' when talking about her involvement, and this parent used the term only once. Parental involvement in this study always seemed to revolved around a need or concern for the student.

Parents today expect to be involved in their student's college experience as they are considered consumers, involved partners and influential educators in their children's lives (Scott & Daniel, 2001; Carney-Hall, 2008). Parents in this study acknowledged their active role in their child's college education. Parents described themselves as supporters, advocates, and as emotional and financial investors in their children's futures. Parents also described their relationship with the university as one of partnership. The notion that parents have been cast in the role of parents-as-consumers (Harper, Sax, Wolf, 2012) is well supported by this study. As government support for education decreases, parents are paying more for college. This in turn leads to a sense of entitlement among tuition-paying parents who then have higher expectations of colleges in the form of better services and higher quality programs, and "won't hesitate to pursue the solution they want for any issue, no matter how minor" (Carney-Hall, 2008). Parents in this study made reference to their financial commitments in relation to their expectations of the university. Parents

used words and phrases such as ‘satisfaction’ and ‘this is a lot of money’, when talking about their expectations of the university. One parent who was “just really pleased” with her son’s experience still remarked “...what more can you ask for? I’m fine. We’ll continue to write the checks.”

As parental involvement is sure to increase due to changing dynamics in higher education in the United States, it has become necessary now more than ever for institutions to develop appropriate responses to parental involvement on their campuses. The literature suggests that institutions vary in their response to the presence of parental involvement on their college campuses. Some universities such as Princeton, Grinnell, and Colgate have maintained ‘student-only’ events during their orientation sessions (Gabriel, 2010). More colleges and universities however are formally instituting programs specifically for parents such as parent orientation programs (Wartman & Savage, 2008) in response to parents increasing demand for participation in their children’s academic experiences (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Carney-Hall, 2008). These programs alone are ineffective when it comes to mediating parental involvement. Parents in this study were able to repeat the university’s policy on parental involvement which they had heard during the university’s orientation program for new students, but these policies did not necessarily moderate parental involvement. Formal institutional structures such as programs and services were effective in mediating parental involvement only in as much as they were able to address parents’ concerns about their student.

Limitations of this Study

The limitations of this study concern the sample used, the context and site university for this study, and the procedures for implementing the methodology.

1. The sample size for both phases of this study were small; the quantitative phase involved 55 parent participants and 6 of those parents participated in the qualitative phase. A larger sample in both phases may have yielded more information for analysis and possibly different conclusions.
2. Samples in both phases of the study were a very homogenous group. As such, findings of this study are not necessary generalizable to all parents of undergraduate freshman at the site college.
3. Another limitation concerns the administration of the PECTAC survey. Young's (2006) survey was quite extensive and may have required more time for parents to complete than was allowed in this study. Other studies (Young, 2006; Spearman, 2010; Alger, 2011) which have used the PECTAC survey utilized web-based programs to collect survey data and allowed parents an average of 30 days to complete the survey. For this study, the PECTAC was administered in person to parents during 'New Student Orientation' at the site university and was not made available via a website. The reason for this was to ensure the confidentiality of the parent participants and avoid any possible distress parents might have about being contacted prior to their arrival on campus. As a result, some parents may have completed the survey in haste or perhaps if given additional time would have provided different responses.

4. As with any study which relies heavily on narrative, it is impossible to assume that the researcher was able to entirely separate from his preconception during the collection and analysis of data as intended by the authors of the grounded theory approach (Thomas & James, 2006).
5. The setting for this study was a small private university in the south east region of the United States. The university offers an academic support program for students with learning disabilities. Although this study was not intended to focus on parents of students with learning disabilities, a significant number of parents in both phases of this study indicated their son or daughter had a diagnosed learning disability. Findings from this study should therefore not be generalized to other parent populations and any attempt to draw comparisons should be done with significant caution.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study should certainly be replicated in a larger university setting with a much larger and diverse sample of parent participants. Themes relating to the nature of the parent-student relationship emerged in almost every parent narrative in this study, therefore the nature of the parent-student relationship should be explored further to understand how it may mediate parental involvement when students head off to college. In addition to students and parents, university officials are likely to benefit from an increased understanding of parental involvement at the college level. The opinions and attitudes of university administrators toward parents, as well as the effect of parental involvement on attrition among student affairs officials should also be explored.

Finally, during the course of this study I had regular conversations with my colleagues at the site university about my research. In one of those conversations, my supervisor mentioned students' college readiness as a possible contributor to parental involvement in higher education. College readiness includes not just academic readiness but also students ability to integrate socially into the college environment. Students with supportive bonds to both their parents and peers are much more likely to psychologically adjust during their college transition (Tinsley, Albert, & Dwelle, 2014). The concern for students with actively involved parents is that they [student] might adjust poorly to college life in part due to an inability to function as adults because of parent over-involvement (Marano, 2008). The relationship between parental involvement and student's college readiness should therefore be explored.

Implications for Practice

Attitudes towards parental involvement in higher education are changing in favor of building partnerships with parents (Shoup, Gonyea, & Kuh, 2009). Results from this study support the notion that institutions of higher education need to engage parents as opposed to merely instituting policy to discourage parental involvement at the college level. Policy is ineffective when it comes to mediating parental involvement because it does not necessarily address parental concerns regarding their son or daughter. Universities therefore need institutional structures that meaningfully engage parents of traditional age college students in a manner that is developmentally appropriate for the student and respective of the aims and ends of the institution.

These institutional structures should be purposeful and not simply to appease parents as 'consumers' but rather educate parents about student development and appropriate ways to be supportively involved in their students' college experience (Carney-Hall, 2008; Wartman & Savage, 2008). These structures could include but should not be limited to specific programs for parents such as parent session during student orientations, or even a special office or department that serves as a point of contact for parents. Since parents are more likely to get involved in relation to a specific need or concern regarding their student, an effective institutional response to parental involvement should be instituted campus wide so as to engage parents at the point of contact (with faculty, staff, and administrators) and in the context of the concern or expectation involved. An effective institutional response should represent an active agenda by the institution to:

1. Understand and address the needs of its students. Since parental involvement is likely to revolve around a specific student need, universities can ensure that the services they provide do serve the needs of students.
2. Opportunities for dialogue between parents and the institution should occur in which the programs and services offered by the university are discussed. This is also important to help manage parents' expectations of the institution and should occur prior to the student's enrollment. This can be achieved through extensive college visitation programs.
3. Acknowledge the roles that parents play as supporters and investors (emotionally and financially) as their sons and daughters transition to college.

4. Engage parents during their son or daughter's college experience but in a manner that is appropriate and mindful of student development goals.
5. Educate parents about student developmental goals and about how various forms of parental involvement may either facilitate or impede students' need to develop autonomy. Also encourage parents to begin to establish adult relationships with their students while they are in college.
6. Provide an avenue for parents to share their concerns and expectations with the university during the student's college experience.
7. Recognize parents' desire for partnership and provide avenues for parents to receive information about university events, curriculum, and any information that may pertain to their student, except for student academic records and any information protected by FERPA.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of parental involvement in higher education by understanding the expectations and concerns that drive parental involvement. Literature on the subject of parental involvement in higher education has been inconclusive due to varying conceptualizations of this social phenomenon (Catsambis, 1998) and popular terms such as 'hovering parents' or 'helicopter parenting' do not add to our understanding of parental involvement in higher education. These terms have become popular because parents' role during their students' college years remain largely undefined.

The effect of parental involvement on student's autonomy development (Cullaty, 2011), student engagement and educational outcomes (Shoup, Gonyea, & Kuh, 2009), overall student well-being (Garrison, 2013; Schiffrin et al., 2013), as well as student development outcomes (Spence, 2012) have been documented. To increase our understanding of parent involvement and to add to our 'knowing' of the phenomenon as Nietzsche (Nietzsche et al., 1998) explains, an examination from various perspectives is needed. This study joins others that have examined parental involvement from the parent's perspective (Young, 2006; Spearman, 2010; Alger, 2011; Spence, 2012), to add to our understanding of parental involvement at the college level. University officials stand to benefit from an increasing knowledge of this social phenomenon as universities work to meaningfully engage parents of traditional age college students in a manner that is developmentally appropriate for the student and respective of the aims and ends of the institution.

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Appendix A: Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC)

Parent Expectation of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC) Survey
Developed by Dr. Wayne Young (© Young 2005)

The following is a parent survey about your expectations toward your son or daughter's college experience. Participation is absolutely voluntary and your response to this survey is anonymous. Information about this study can be found at the end of this survey. Thank you for your participation.

Demographic Information

Please answer the following demographic questions.

1. Your Gender
 - Female
 - Male

2. Marital Status
 - Married
 - Divorced
 - Single Parent
 - Widowed

3. Gender of your incoming student
 - Female
 - Male

4. Are you (please mark all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> African American/Black	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native
<input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian	<input type="checkbox"/> Mexican
<input type="checkbox"/> American/Chicano	<input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Latino
<input type="checkbox"/> Other/Mixed Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/> International _____

5. Is English your native language?
 - Yes No If no, please state primary language _____

6. Education Level (please mark highest level completed)

- High School
- Associates
- Bachelors
- Masters
- Ph.D. or Terminal Degree

7. How many children do you have?
 1 2 3 4 5 or more _____
8. Is this your first experience as a parent of a college student?
 Yes No
9. Which college is your student entering?
 College of Arts and Sciences
 College of Education
 College of Business and Management
 College of International Communication
 Conservatory of Music
 School of Aeronautics
 Undecided
10. How involved were you in your student's college decision?
 Very
 Somewhat
 A Little Involved
 Not Involved at All
11. How many computers and/or tablets do you have at home?
 1 2 3 4 5 or more _____
12. What type of Internet access do you have at home?
 None
 Dial Up
 DSL/cable
 Satellite

For the remaining sections, please use the numerical value that corresponds to the following answers:

5 Very Important 4 Important 3 Neutral 2 Somewhat Unimportant 1 N/A Don't Know

Teaching

A. Collegiate Teaching: Technology Resources Provided in Supports of Learning

As a parent, please indicate how important it is to you that the University provides your student with...

13. General academic advising information via a website _____
14. Web access to register/drop/add courses and view tuition and fees _____
15. Web access to view tuition and fees and financial aid information _____
16. Specific academic advising information via a website for my student _____
17. Access to a University-provided email account _____
18. Access to textbooks required and ordering via a website _____
19. Access to computer labs _____
20. High-speed Internet access in his/her residence hall room _____
21. Wireless Internet access throughout campus _____
22. Training on the University library's digital resources _____
23. A University-provided portable computer _____
24. Email access to his/her faculty instructor _____
25. Academic content delivered via a course website _____
26. Email access to his/her academic advisor _____
27. Out of these items, which two are the most important to you as a parent? _____

Comments: _____

B. Collegiate Teaching: Active and Team Learning

As a parent, please indicate how important it is to you that at college your student will...

28. Discuss and critique ideas from readings with other students and the instructor during courses _____
29. Present in front of peers and the instructor using technological means _____
30. Outperform the faculty instructor's expectations _____
31. Participate in group projects outside of class using instant messaging _____
32. Learn via an online course _____
33. Participate in community-based or service-based course projects _____
34. Use the Internet to research an assignment _____
35. Complete assignments via a course website _____
36. Leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise _____
37. Be given consistent feedback on written work (research papers, journals, etc.) _____

38. Out of these items, which two are the most important to you as a parent? _____

Comments: _____

C. Collegiate Teaching: Out of Class Learning Opportunities

As a parent, please indicate how important it is to you that at college your student will...

- 39. Be provided with training on how to be more responsible _____
- 40. Have opportunities to join a variety of clubs and organizations _____
- 41. Receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested _____
- 42. Be provided with opportunities for internships _____
- 43. Have opportunities to learn about someone from a different race/culture _____
- 44. Be provided with opportunities for service and volunteerism _____
- 45. Have access to services and resources in the greater city area _____
- 46. Be provided with remedial or disability services if needed _____
- 47. Access to student tutoring and academic support _____
- 48. Have opportunities to socialize in group activities _____
- 49. Complete a practicum or internship using technology _____
- 50. Have access to career counseling and placement services _____
- 51. Be provided with information on developing good morals _____
- 52. Out of these items, which two are the most important to you as a parent? _____

Comments: _____

Caring

A. Collegiate Caring: A Caring Faculty

As a parent, please indicate how important it is to you that your student should...

- 53. Have regular contact with his/her academic advisor _____
- 54. Develop plans for a major with his/her academic advisor _____
- 55. Be known on a personal level by at least one faculty member _____

56. Be known by his/her course instructor(s) _____
57. Be treated fairly by the course instructor(s) _____
58. Have access to his/her course instructor(s) outside of class _____
59. Be provided the opportunity to give feedback on his/her course instructor(s) _____
60. Receive information on additional tutoring from his/her course instructor(s) _____
61. Be instructed by a faculty member rather than a teaching assistant _____
62. Out of these items, which two are the most important to you as a parent? _____

Comments: _____

B. Collegiate Caring: A Caring University Community

As a parent, please indicate how important it is to you that upon arriving at college your student finds...

63. Programs welcoming your student to campus life _____
64. Opportunities to explore his/her leadership potential _____
65. A university community that appreciated the uniqueness of each student _____
66. Programs orienting him/her to collegiate life _____
67. Support and challenge like a parent might give _____
68. Health care at the student health center _____
69. Opportunities to learn how to be in community with others _____
70. A friend in his/her floor RA (Resident Assistant), if living on campus _____
71. Opportunities to grow in his/her faith life _____
72. Care at the student counseling center _____
73. Opportunities to participate in community service _____
74. Out of these items, which two are the most important to you as a parent? _____

Comments: _____

C. Collegiate Caring: Being in Partnership with Parents

As a parent, please indicate how important it is to you that the University...

- 75. Notify me of my student's academic success on a regular basis _____
- 76. Contact me if my student is caught cheating or plagiarizing _____
- 77. Have my calls returned by members of the faculty or administration within 24 hours _____
- 78. Provide a safe and secure campus _____
- 79. Provide me with my student's major and degree progress information via a website _____
- 80. Discipline my student fairly if he/she breaks University policies and procedures _____
- 81. Provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested _____
- 82. Notify me if my student is using illegal substances _____
- 83. Orient me as to how I will be involved in my student's education _____
- 84. Provide my student unlimited visits at the student counseling center, if needed _____
- 85. Notify me if my student is drinking illegally _____
- 86. Out of these items, which two are the most important to you as a parent? _____

Comments: _____

Thank you for your participation

Appendix B: Permission to use PECTAC survey

Wilson Onu

From: Wilson Onu [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2014 3:38 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: The Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC)

-----Original Message-----

From: Young Jr., William W. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 30, 2014 9:58 PM
To: Wilson Onu
Subject: RE: The Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC)

Wilson,

I am sorry, I was in New Orleans at a NASPA National Board meeting...and am now catching up. I am happy to do this for you. I would ask that you make the normal citations in your dissertation referencing my study and survey, etc. (as I assume you would). I am honored you would like to use it!

Also, we have a group of 4-5 of us forming who have used it. We are thinking of presenting together...interested?

Thanks.

Wayne

W. Wayne Young, Jr., Ph.D., B.A. '93
 Associate Vice Provost for Student Life
 Division of Student Life: We Develop, Create, Partner, & Encourage Creighton University | 2500 California Plaza
 Omaha, NE 68178 | [REDACTED] phone | [REDACTED] fax

-----Original Message-----

From: Wilson Onu [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 23, 2014 10:57 AM
To: Young Jr., William W.
Subject: FWD: The Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC)

Hello Dr. Young,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am just following up with an earlier email regarding the use of your survey developed in 2006 titled The Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC). I would love to use your survey as part of my study beginning in August and require your permission to do so. If you have any concerns or require more information about my study, please do not hesitate to ask. Thank you for your consideration.

Wilson

Appendix C: Parent Interview Protocol

PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Provide and review "Parent Consent to Participate in Research Form". Discuss audiotaping and transcription, including confidentiality.

Interview I Questions

1. I'd like to start by learning about your experience while your son/daughter was in high school.
2. I'd like to discuss the college search process. What role did you play during the initial search process, college visits, and final college decision?
3. I'd like to discuss your involvement emotionally and financially? How much input was requested of you from your student and the college during the college search process?
4. I'd like to discuss your own college experience. Were your parent's involved during your college search and decision? Were your parent's involved emotionally or financially during your college experience?
5. At the beginning of this semester, what expectations do you have of the institution toward your student? What expectations do you have of your student regarding their experience? What role do you hope to play during your student's first semester at this college?

Interview II Questions

1. I'd like to review your experience so far this semester. Have you had any concerns so far during the semester?
2. Were your expectations as stated at the start of the semester met? Have your expectations changed, and if so in what way?
3. How often were you in touch with your student during the semester? How often were you in touch with the Institution during the semester?
4. Were there any incidents of concern to you regarding your student during the semester and if so how were you informed of the incident?
5. What kind of contact have you had with the institution so far this semester? Who initiated the contact?

Closing

Thank the parent for participating in the study. End the audio recording.

Appendix D: Request for Further Participation in Research (Phase II)

Dear Parent,

Thank you for completing this survey.

My name is Wilson Onu, I am a Doctoral student at Lynn University in the area of Higher Education. I am writing to request your further participation in this study examining parent's perspective of the college experience.

Specifically, I am interested in the expectations and concerns that drive parental involvement. To understand these expectations and concerns, I would like to interview you about your experience during your son or daughter's college search and through the first semester of their college experience. I am also interested in the expectations you have of the institution that your son or daughter is attending.

Participation is absolutely voluntary. Should you agree to participate, I will hold the data obtained from the interviews in strict confidence, and you will be identified through the use of a pseudonym. All identifiable information related to you or your student will be removed from the interview transcripts prior to my analysis. No one at Lynn University will know of your involvement in the study should you decide to participate.

I have attached a synopsis of the study and consent form for your review. I greatly appreciate your consideration. If you would like to participate in this study, please provide your contact information below. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to let me know at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

I will be happy to discuss the details of our interview should you agree to participate. Again, thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Wilson Onu.
E-mail: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Parent Name: _____

Parent Email: _____

Parent Phone number: _____

Appendix E: Parent Consent to Participate in Research

IRB Reference # 2014-072

Project Title: Parental Involvement in Higher Education: Understanding the concerns and expectations of the parents of college students.

Researcher: Wilson Onu

Faculty Sponsor: Suzanne King, Ph.D.

Introduction

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Wilson Onu for a dissertation under the supervision of Suzanne King, Ph.D. in the program of Higher Education at Lynn University. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a parent of an incoming college student enrolling at Lynn University for the first time.

Purpose

Studies suggest that Parent's role in their student's college education has changed over the last few decades. Parents are more involved financially and emotionally. Parents are often in contact with their student throughout the college experience. Research on parental involvement in higher education has predominantly focused on its effect on student development and the student's college experience. There is hardly any research that has examined the parent's perspective during this experience. This study seeks to examine parental involvement from the parent's perspective during their student's college experience. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the concerns and expectations that parents have as their son or daughter attends college.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in two 60 minute interviews discussing your experience as a college parent, scheduled at the separate times during the semester. The interviews will be conducted either in person or over the phone and will be audio-taped for later transcription. During this interview, you will be asked about your experience as a college parent, the concerns and expectations that you have of your son or daughter, and the institution he/she is attending.

Risks/Benefits

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study beyond those experienced in everyday life. Measures will be taken to minimize the possibility of any breach of confidentiality. All participants will be assigned pseudonyms. By participating, interviewees will provide valuable information about the nature of their involvement in their student's college experience. The result of this study will hopefully

lead to a better understanding of the concerns and expectations that drive parental involvement in higher education.

Confidentiality

All information collected during this study will be kept confidential and secure. The names of all participants will not be released. This study will transcribe the audio recordings of the interviews for analysis after which the audio recordings will be destroyed. Any identifiable information (your name, your student's name, etc.) revealed during the interview will be omitted from the transcription. The data collected will be analyzed and reported as part of my dissertation. A summary of the results of the study will be available upon request.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is absolutely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions

If you have any questions about this research project or interview, feel free to contact Wilson Onu at [REDACTED] or by phone at [REDACTED]. You may also contact Mr. Onu's faculty sponsor, Dr. Suzanne King at [REDACTED].

Statement of Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research at this time. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Participant(s) Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Consent to audio recording

All information collected during this study will be kept confidential and secure. This study will make use of audio recordings during interviews to better capture data. **All audio recordings will be transcribed for analysis and then destroyed.** Any identifiable information (your name, your student's name, etc.) revealed during the audio recording will be omitted during transcription. Your signature below indicates that you understand the procedure and your rights to confidentiality.

Participant(s) Signature
Date

Appendix F: Email Follow up For Further Participation in Research (Phase II)

Email

Subject: Parent Expectation Study: At Lynn University

Dear _____,

It was a pleasure meeting and speaking with you on Friday during Lynn University's New Student Orientation on Friday, August 22nd. Thank you very much for participating in the 'Parent Expectation' survey. Your responses will be helpful as we learn more about parent expectations of the collegiate experience.

I am contacting you as you indicated you might be interested in further participation in this study. I am interested in your experience as a parent of a college student. If you are able to participate further, I ask to conduct two interviews with you: once within the next few weeks and another later in the semester on or after October 18, 2014 (Parents and Family Weekend).

Please note that your participation is absolutely voluntary and will not impact your student's college experience at Lynn University in anyway. Please do not feel obliged to participate if your schedule would not allow it. I have attached a description of the study for your review including information about the confidentiality of this study. If you have further questions about the study, please do not hesitate to let me know.

The interviews may range between 25 - 60 minutes and will be conducted either in person or over the phone and audio-taped for later transcription. During the first interview, I will ask about your expectations as a college parent going into the first semester of your student's college experience. During the second interview (on or after Oct 18) I will ask about experience, any concerns that came up and your interaction with Lynn University.

If you are able to participate, please let me know and I will schedule an interview with you either over the phone or in person. I hope your orientation experience was pleasant and went smoothly. I wish your student a successful semester at Lynn University.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response.

Wilson

Attachment: Purpose of Study

Appendix G: Parent Interview

Parent Participant First Interview: Mrs. L**Interview Date: August 29 2014**

- Researcher:** Thank you again for participating. Like I mentioned, the purpose of this study is to learn about the parent perspective of the college experience. You just went through orientation at the institution your son is attending, and I'd like to talk about that, but first if I may go back. Can we talk about your son's high school experience? Where did he go to high school?
- Mrs. L:** He attended the United Nations international School in New York City.
- Researcher:** Okay. And was he there for his entire high school career?
- Mrs. L:** He was. From kindergarten through 12th grade and he got the international bachelorette.
- Researcher:** Wonderful. How was that experience for you as a parent? Were you close at hand or were you still - were you traveling at the time?
- Mrs. L:** Both. [laughter] Both.
- Researcher:** I see. [laughter]
- Mrs. L:** I've always been in the job that's required me to travel and - but I was also an involved parent so I was part of the parent's association and asked to participate in different pilot programs and projects at the school and then I eventually was voted to be a parent member of the board of the school -
- Researcher:** I see.
- Mrs. L:** - which is really cool because it was affiliated with United Nations, the UN, so -
- Researcher:** Yes.

- Mrs. L:** - yeah. So it was a - yeah, I've always been very involved. [Student's Name] has - given his learning differences he had a lot of classroom support so we were always - we always followed his studies, both through his teachers or instructors as well as through the - I think they were called additional classroom support - individuals.
- Researcher:** Okay.
- Mrs. L:** And then he's always been very resourceful and he would also meet with the counselors in high school.
- Researcher:** Okay.
- Mrs. L:** So, yeah. So we were involved - I wouldn't say that - I loved when - I'm not going to remember his name so I'm going to need your help.
- Researcher:** That's okay.
- Mrs. L:** Who's the head of the institute of -
- Researcher:** [Name of Director of University's Support Program]?
- Mrs. L:** Yeah. I loved when he said it's time to cut the cord -
- Researcher:** [laughter]
- Mrs. L:** - because it was from the early days when he was in what we called junior school at the UN school, and teachers always said it's important that he be encouraged to do things that give him a good sense of self and keep his - I'm at a loss for words right now -
- Researcher:** It's okay.
- Mrs. L:** - that reinforces, but yeah, positive reinforcement. He's very athletic and so he's always involved in soccer and excelled at soccer or football as they say here.
- Researcher:** Yes. [laughter]

- Mrs. L:** Yeah. So we made sure to keep him doing the things that made him feel good about himself because school is hard for him.
- Researcher:** Okay.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah, but the cutting of the cord thing we thought that it - we let the teachers who are the professionals teach, you know?
- Researcher:** Yes.
- Mrs. L:** And, yeah. But just we were there to help.
- Researcher:** I'm going to here. While he was in high school did you - I knew you were involved with the institution as a parent but when he started to look at colleges, what kind of activities were you involved in throughout that process and when did that process start if I may ask/
- Mrs. L:** So my - so I went to the University of Michigan -
- Researcher:** Okay.
- Mrs. L:** - in Ann Arbor, I'm from Michigan. My father went there, my sister went there. It's kind of one of those schools, right?
- Researcher:** Yes.
- Mrs. L:** And so every year I would take the kids back to Michigan for a football game so they'd always been exposed to a big ten school, right?
- Researcher:** I see.
- Mrs. L:** And so about in 10th grade I had - because I'm involved also at the University of Michigan as well as Kalamazoo College and other schools that I've been involved with and Johns Hopkins which is where my husband and I went to graduate school -
- Researcher:** I see.

Mrs. L: - and so somebody within development at U of M offered to give [Student's Name] and a friend of mine's daughter who was with us that weekend for the football team, like a football game, a tour and had them meet with students and stuff so it was early but it just worked out. As it turns out, the school's too big for [Student's Name]. He always knew that but it was just a cool thing to do.

You got to see inside of a dorm, went to different student programs and so on and the friend who was with us she's there now. [laughter]

Researcher: I see.

Mrs. L: She's at U of M so it did have a positive - but so he began to think about it in that way. And then I took him to visit schools. The UN school has a very good, well developed, well respected college program.

Researcher: [inaudible][5:34].

Mrs. L: Yeah, through [Name of High School College Counselor]?

Researcher: Yes.

Mrs. L: And so [Name of High School College Counselor] was [Student's Name]'s college counselor.

Researcher: I see.

Mrs. L: And so she helped prepare a list and she knew very well what his - she made recommendations for schools to visit and we did in junior year. And it's quite a well-defined process and [Student's Name] asked us to very much step back from it and that he wanted to own the program with Mrs. [Name of High School College Counselor] and I said to - I mean I said - because there are parent meetings with the student, right, and the college counselor?

And I said okay. I said but if and when you need me and I said to Mrs. [Name of High School College Counselor] as well, you let us know. But he owned it, right, so.

Researcher: Yes. Well let's - how did that feel for you? Was that a process stepping back during this college search process and did you feel involved or did you get a chance to get involved while he was looking at colleges? How would you describe your involvement during that time?

Mrs. L: Well I took him for visits at schools. We went - I probably should preface this by saying, [Student's Name] went for a year to Hobart and William Smith in Geneva, New York and that didn't work well for him so then he came back home to Brooklyn and worked for a year. So this here at [inaudible][7:20] he's an untrained freshman but with credits I guess I would say.

So just so you understand that, right, because that does have a view on -

Researcher: Sure.

Mrs. L: I mean does - yeah. But, so I took him to visit Hobart. He's been in at Auburn around the U of M which is ginormous and not for him and I took him to a number of other schools. And my husband also took him to schools. So we did a week of touring, [Student's Name] and I, and then my husband took him for another week of touring of schools.

So it was quite an interesting process for both of us as parents because it's almost as though your child has a visceral reaction [laughter] when they step in a campus and - I mean either it's going to work or it's not.

I'm trying to think what - like [Student's Name] really loved [inaudible][8:24] and he really did not like - oh, gosh, it was one right next door to it. I don't know. But then it was within one day because they were close by so you visit and tour one in the morning, they'll have lunch and then drive to the other one and it just - it almost cracks you up.

And just as a parent after that first day or two, you just step back and you just watch it, right? And, yeah, so it was - so it was good timing for him, you know what I mean? And it was [inaudible][9:00] and he's our oldest of two.

- Researcher:** I see. So -
- Mrs. L:** So - anyways, yeah.
- Researcher:** So this was - I mean not your first experience as a college parent but he's your first going to college, yes?
- Mrs. L:** Correct.
- Researcher:** Okay. I see. Well the - this college search process for where he went to college first before coming to Lynn, that decision - how was that decision made to go to college there?
- Mrs. L:** Oh by the way Lynn was on his first - he applied to nine schools I think and Lynn was one of those schools.
- Researcher:** I see.
- Mrs. L:** And he was admitted at that time too.
- Researcher:** Okay, good.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah, so he just had a really positive interaction with the students at Hobart William Smith and I think it reminded him of northern Michigan where we spent summers together because it was on a lake and I think it felt familiar to him.
- Researcher:** I see.
- Mrs. L:** And he had a really good rapport with the soccer coach there and he'd had really good interaction with the students there. And he had a connection and he felt it was directly for him. But, yeah.
- Researcher:** All right, good.
- Mrs. L:** And we respected that decision, right? He had a really good list of schools because he got in to most of them. He was waitlisted by a few but then he was admitted off the waitlist

for most of the ones that he was on the waitlist for, so. He did a good job of aiming, you know what I mean?

Researcher: Yes. [laughter]

Mrs. L: With - yeah. He had good counseling too. So, yeah.

Researcher: All right. That's good. Well he's here now and this college decision was - you were involved in the college decision to come to Lynn at the second go-around, correct?

Mrs. L: Correct. Absolutely. Yeah.

Researcher: Okay. Do you feel confident that you - that this was as much your choice as it was him or do you feel that maybe it's more you both have different feelings towards the college choice?

Mrs. L: That's a good question. So that's really a good question. I think that when things were kind of going off the rails at Hobart and he was very mature about it. He went to the dean and got us on a conference call pretty - he did well. But he already I think was deciding in his mind that he needed to take the gap year.

We encouraged the gap year [inaudible][12:03] but he wanted to go right to college and so when he was living at home again and working, after about four months of that he said I've got to figure out how to go back to university. I need to be with people my age. I know I need to - I want to do my undergraduate degree and so he started plugging back into Lynn through again, through students that - the nephew of one of my really good friends, which is how we actually - and he came down and visited and he went to - he was taking classes off [inaudible][12:49] so he spent some time with kids.

You know he really set out on his own to have a look at different schools with a different lens and he was very impressed with the support for the student support at Lynn.

And also the - and the soccer program again even though he probably won't play but he - and the sports management program.

Researcher: Yes. [laughter]

Mrs. L: So it all fit for him. When he was looking at it through this different lens now.

Researcher: I see. How many years difference was that his first go-around and this time? A year or two?

Mrs. L: So he went - let's see. So he went to Hobart for one academic year and then he took one academic year off and now he's at Lynn.

Researcher: All right. So that's about two years. Okay.

Mrs. L: Since high school. Since high school, yeah.

Researcher: Since high school, yes.

Mrs. L: Or since the last - yeah, since the last selection process, yeah.

Researcher: Yes. Yes, okay. All right, good.

He's here now and you're obviously [laughter] -

Mrs. L: Yup.

Researcher: - you obviously have expectations as to what the semester should be like. I'll come to that but before I do can I talk about the investment that you're making? You're making a significant investment both emotionally and financially. Is that correct to say?

Mrs. L: Yes, absolutely, yes. [laughter]

Researcher: Yes. Let's talk about your involvement. You're supporting your son going to college here. Is he getting any scholarships from Lynn or any assistance?

- Mrs. L:** No.
- Researcher:** Okay. So the burden is squarely on yourself.
- Mrs. L:** Yes.
- Researcher:** Okay. How involved do you think - I mean you're involved in the selection process the first time and the second time it sounds like he really took on the [inaudible][14:54] and he was looking at it through a different lens like you mentioned. How involved do you hope to be moving forward with this particular experience? Do you think you were involved during the selection process? Was your input sought by your son or the institution that he's attending now?
- Mrs. L:** It was not sought by the institution, it was absolutely sought by [Student's Name] because he is - yeah, I mean we speak, right? We're a family that talks a lot and he also has other adults that he speaks with and one of those adults - there are a couple actually because the woman who's the aunt of a current senior there and her sister, who's an acquaintance, but the aunt and her husband are adults that [Student's Name] likes to spend time with.
- He's very good friends - one of his best friends is their daughter, right? So there's a lot of connection there. That's a household he's in. We very much believe that it's good for your kids to have other adults that they can go to, you know what I mean?
- Researcher:** Yes.
- Mrs. L:** But they're - yeah, there are times when you're not [laughter] in the best of graces with your kids. I don't mean that facetiously necessarily but it's part of the like growing up thing?
- Researcher:** I understand.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah. So he definitely sought their opinion and, yeah, we talked a lot about it. He was nervous about going to school where we don't have really friends or family in the state. I

mean we have acquaintances but we can [inaudible][16:58] especially since we're on the other side of a -

Researcher: Exactly.

Mrs. L: - we were far away. Yeah, but he knows he has my siblings but they're in California, he has my parents in Michigan and he definitely has our friends up in New York City but - you know what I mean?

Researcher: Yes.

Mrs. L: He was quite nervous. He's quite nervous and I think it's also been quite difficult for him because we left Brooklyn in May so he hasn't had a "home". I mean, of course, he has a home here with us, but it's not where his - so it's been a bit - so he's definitely taken this decision in a very - he's been in a very different place, right?

Researcher: I see.

Mrs. L: And we talk about it a lot. And we was at back and forth and I said we Skyped yesterday, but he's happy. And it was - he was happy that I was there and was with him for the transition and I told him we would come back for parents weekend. I think he's happy about that.

Researcher: Okay, wonderful.

Mrs. L: But, yeah. But I think if he needs us he knows we're here.

Researcher: He knows it? Okay.

Mrs. L: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher: And you're comfortable with that arrangement? The fact that -

Mrs. L: Yes.

Researcher: - yeah. That you're - you're comfortable with the fact that you're far away but you can get in touch with him if need be.

- Mrs. L:** Yeah, I think that, I think that our kids were raised in a bilingual, bicultural home and we've traveled globally, internationally always because we have family and friends everywhere and then they have friends through the UN school everywhere. And the world is very small for them. And I think also because of just the internet their world is tighter, you know what I mean?
- Researcher:** Yes it's much smaller, yes.
- Mrs. L:** It's much smaller and so even though he knows we are a nine hour flight away, he knows that he can also get to New York quickly, he knows if we need to Skype we can. But he's also a resourceful kid. He developed a good bond with the admissions person who's been great by the way.
- Researcher:** Wonderful.
- Mrs. L:** And I think that was important to his decision. So he's a resourceful kid. So I think it's - we feel very good about this. And everything was reinforced through last weekend's program. It was only last weekend?
- Researcher:** It was last weekend. [laughter] Yeah.
- Mrs. L:** Oh. Yeah.
- Researcher:** Yes it was last weekend. Okay. Well good.
- Mrs. L:** Does that answer your question?
- Researcher:** It does. It certainly did. You did address the question "How do you feel about being far away and were you comfortable with the arrangement?" You answered that very well, so thank you.
- I'll just go over to the - can you draw a comparison to your experience last week when you dropped your son off at college and your experience when you went off to college?
- Can you talk about that? How was your experience when you went off to college for the first time?

Mrs. L: So it was a very different experience, right? And I tell my kids this, is that I'm the eldest of four and my parents kind of had no idea where I was applying to. I mean they did but they were not involved at all. They're a different experience.

And I went to a large public high school in suburban Detroit and yeah, we had counselors and college counselors but it was a very different thing. We had books [laughter][inaudible][20:59] like six inch books and you write away for your college applications and you'd write away for - what did we even call those things? College - gosh, you would think I'd remember.

But you'd get all this stuff in the mail, right? And you didn't visit things. And I look at - I applied to Smith College, I applied to University of Arizona, applied to University of Colorado, applied to - just random stuff so it was very different.

And then when my parents dropped me - my parents dropped me off. I started at Kalamazoo College and transferred to U of M, but they dropped me off with the whole family but it was a three hour car ride, right? But that was a big deal. Three hours in a car was - it was different right? So like a non-event but, yeah.

And I didn't go home and we wrote letters. You didn't make phone calls. Yeah, it was just a different gig. It was different. And the kids just look at me and like roll their eyes except they get it, right? But they get it, yeah.

Researcher: [laughter] I see.

Mrs. L: Yeah. And my husband's experience is different again because he grew up in Paris and he lives at home during his undergraduate experience. But that's just what that experience was.

Researcher: Was like. I see.

Mrs. L: Yeah.

- Researcher:** Did you get any support from your folks when you went to college financially and emotionally?
- Mrs. L:** Financially? Yes, absolutely.
- Researcher:** Okay. While you were in -
- Mrs. L:** Both.
- Researcher:** Both? Okay. You mentioned you wrote letters. Were you able to call at all from the university or were your parents able to call you while you were in college?
- Mrs. L:** Gosh, what a good question, right?
- Researcher:** Yeah. [laughter]
- Mrs. L:** Probably. We must have had phones in the hall. Isn't that funny? Listen, yeah, I think I probably called every weekend if I think about it hard enough, right?
- And so I would call them on Sunday - I think we called on Sunday afternoons but then I was an exchange student and when I was overseas I spoke with them maybe once every six to eight weeks.
- Researcher:** I see. Were they --
- Mrs. L:** It was different.
- Researcher:** It is. Were they able to reach you though?
- Mrs. L:** If they had to, yeah. You always knew that they could. But we wrote letters, right?
- Researcher:** I see, okay. [laughter]
- Mrs. L:** And then also - I mean, but yeah, you mean when I was in Ann Arbor?
- Also my parents when I was in Kalamazoo, yeah, if they needed to find me I always knew that they could call like

the university and the university could call me. You know what I mean? There was a different like network, right?

Researcher: I see. Yes, yes.

Mrs. L: Yes.

Researcher: Okay. Oh, that's good.

Mrs. L: Yeah, in Ann Arbor they would come to the football games every weekend so I could see them if I wanted to, but, you didn't really necessarily want to unless you wanted to go eat food, right?

Researcher: Yeah. [laughter]

Mrs. L: [laughter] It was that [inaudible][24:11], yeah.

Researcher: I see. I'm trying to draw a comparison from your perspective of your experience when you went off to college and that beginning for you. And now that you've dropped your son off to college, does anything stand out to you that was absolutely different from when you went off to college? Does anything stand out maybe in terms of the kind of activities that you were a part of when you first went to college or the communication that you received from the university? Things like that/

Mrs. L: So I remember my process just basically being you got a package saying - you get this thin envelope with the [inaudible][25:00] envelope, right?

Researcher: Yes. [laughter]

Mrs. L: And then when you accepted then you got a letter back saying congratulations and you'll get a package later this summer where they'll tell you where to show up and when and you basically showed up.

And I'm sure there were orientations. I think we went up on a Saturday or a Sunday and I think you started classes pretty quick. I mean you know there were programs but it

wasn't as extensive I think as what certainly is what I've experienced for [Student's Name].

And I was a pretty independent kid because I was an exchange student in high school too so I'd already kind of had the big break kind of I already want so, yeah.

I mean I remember my parents car being filled, the station wagon being filled and [Student's Name] came with four suitcases.

Researcher: I see. [laughter]

Mrs. L: But we went to Bed, Bath & Beyond a lot. [laughter] So, yeah. I know where those are and I know we weren't the only parents there because [Student's Name] was helping some other girl who ended up going to Lynn with her big buckets of stuff that she came [inaudible][26:24] to, yeah.

Researcher: Yes. [laughter] Understandable. Okay.

Mrs. L: Yeah. It was different. It was just different. My parents weren't - even if the parents weren't as involved, it's a different - it's not a value judgment, it just is different.

Researcher: Oh, yeah, of course.

Mrs. L: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher: I know I asked about whether or not your parents could get in touch with you. Today technology let's that happen easily, so the comparison is just to understand really what's available for you now and how that impacts your experience as a parent. So that's why I ask.

Mrs. L: Yeah. No. It feels very - listen, I feel like if I need to be in touch with someone I know who I can be in touch with. And if I don't, I know how to find out.

Researcher: Wonderful.

Mrs. L: I mean because there's - [Admission Representative] in admissions is amazing.

- Researcher:** I'm glad to hear it. Yeah.
- Mrs. L:** Right? Because [Student's Name] travels a lot this summer and [Admission Representative] was in touch with [Student's Name] and [Admission Representative] also knew that we were moving, so at a point in time he hadn't heard from [Student's Name] in a while because he was traveling through Australia and stuff and so he emailed [Student's Name] and my husband and me and so I just happened to be - I don't know where I was [inaudible][27:41] but I just picked up the phone and called [Admission Representative] and said hey listen, yeah, [Student's Name] is somewhere. We haven't heard from him either but you need - can I help you with something? Do I need something? Do I need to get something to you?
- So - and I made sure to shake his hand and reach out to him last weekend and [Student's Name] has been to see him. So I know he's someone that I could go to and I wouldn't hesitate to contact Marena who's [Student's Name] has already put us in touch. His academic [inaudible][28:13] so we're all resourceful I think or can be, right?
- Researcher:** Yes indeed. [laughter]
- Mrs. L:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Researcher:** Okay. That's good to know. Thank you.
- So moving forward and this is the last question I'll ask. He's here now, you're looking forward to a semester, can we talk about the expectations you have first of your son and then of the institution?
- What do you hope happens for your son this semester?
- Mrs. L:** Well I can tell you what I told him. Just stay very focused on your studies. Just keep on your - keep current, keep up on your homework, don't fall behind on anything, make use of your resources and just stay healthy and that means, for [Student's Name] it means, eating properly, getting enough

sleep and be sure you exercise. Figure out where you can - who you can play soccer with.

But don't overextend. Just get comfortable with your courses. He's only taking four this time, just to get that focus and balance and get, sort of - but as he says, [Admission Representative] put him in touch with someone named Hummy this summer that [Student's Name] could talk with about how many courses to take, what courses potentially could transfer and so on, so I think it may have been one of her suggestions to only take four courses instead of five. And so, yeah.

But the expectation for him is his job is to be the best student that he can be and to be resourceful and ask for help.

Researcher:

Okay.

Mrs. L:

Yeah, be healthy, be happy and be social. He's a social kid. Make friends, make friends, have a good time too. But be the best student you can be. And be a good citizen.

Researcher:

Were you able to communicate these to him at some point?

Mrs. L:

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. We spoke about it a lot.

Researcher:

Okay. [laughter] What about the institution? What expectations do you have from the institution? What do you hope the institution does for your son?

Mrs. L:

So I actually have very high expectations especially that were reinforced by the programs this past weekend and that is to be to challenge him but also to provide the support and guidance. But actually I believe that's part of what Lynn is about. And the opportunities, yeah?

Researcher:

Yes.

Mrs. L:

Yeah, I love that. [Student's Name] is so excited to see all those programs he could participate in or I guess they were like little info sessions sort of on Sunday?

- Researcher:** Yes.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah, he was really excited by that. So it's opportunity and guidance and support.
- Researcher:** Okay. You attended many of the sessions on Friday for parents. Do you feel that - did you hear the information you were hoping to hear at any of the sessions?
- I know you referenced the evening session earlier but from all the sessions you attended were your expectations met or addressed, I should say?
- Mrs. L:** Yeah.
- Researcher:** Okay.
- Mrs. L:** Absolutely. It surpassed actually. I mean it was well organized. I know a lot of people that you wanted to hear from.
- Researcher:** All right, good.
- Do you know who the dean of students is at Lynn?
- Mrs. L:** Do I know who the dean of students is? I'm sure that I did, yeah, before the Friday afternoon. It was a long, we had a long week. Mostly remember - probably because the names are easy. Listen I couldn't even remember but I remember being very impressed by - and see I've already forgotten his name.
- Researcher:** It's okay.
- Mrs. L:** The head of the institute.
- Researcher:** Sean Eckstein.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah, I really liked him.
- Researcher:** The dean.
- Mrs. L:** Obviously the president. Is it Cavenough -

- Researcher:** Yes, Cavenough, yes.
- Mrs. L:** - if I remember that correctly. Yes, yes I remember the dean of students. But my focus is really on the institute.
- Researcher:** I see, okay.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah.
- Researcher:** By the time you left Lynn did you feel confident that you could contact or you knew who to contact if you needed to, for any reason at all, if you just wanted information or if you had a concern about your son, do you feel now that you have a contact person or someone you could reach at this moment?
- Mrs. L:** Yeah.
- Researcher:** Okay.
- Mrs. L:** I have a couple someone's.
- Researcher:** Okay, good. [laughter]
- Mrs. L:** Yeah. [laughter]
- Researcher:** All right, good. Do you know them off the top of your head or do you have it written down somewhere?
- Mrs. L:** Well I have emails from Marlana, who's [Student's Name]'s academic coach, I have an email from [Admission Representative] in admissions who's just a young person who I would go to to point me in the right direction, depending on what the need was or what the question was and at a point in time I'm sure [Student's Name] will introduce me to his academic advisor. It just hasn't happened yet although I know he's met him.
- But I also think that he probably feels that his relationship you know what I mean? So at a point I'll ask him but I can't - I ask a lot of questions so I'm trying to [inaudible][34:10] them out.

And I know if I couldn't find him for awhile I would know how to find people who could help me find him but that's not an issue with my son, you know what I mean? Yeah.

Researcher: Sure. You're confident that if you needed to though you could? You have a contact person or you can get what you need?

Mrs. L: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

Researcher: Okay, okay, wonderful, good.

Those are the questions I have at the start. I'm very glad that orientation went well and you did answer all my questions about what you expect moving forward.

I can't thank you enough for the time you've taken out of your day to talk to me. I'm very grateful.

And when you do come over parents weekend I'd love to meet you and touch base and see what your experience was like and maybe have another talk where we can recap what your experience was like and you can tell me if your expectations were met. If maybe concerns, hopefully not came up and how they were addressed by yourself or the institution, okay?

Mrs. L: That sounds great.

Researcher: Wonderful.

Mrs. L: That's wonderful talking - it's been great talking with you --

Researcher: Thank you.

Mrs. L: - and good luck with your research.

Researcher: Thank you so much. I'm very grateful. Thank you.

Mrs. L: You're welcome.

Researcher: Have a great day. Okay. [laughter]

Mrs. L: Thanks. You have a good weekend. Bye.

Researcher: All right. You too. Bye.

Mrs. L: All right, bye.

Researcher: All right.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]

Parent Participant Second Interview: Mrs. L
Interview Date: October 17 2014

Mrs. L: His whole learning experience. What I have been helped to understand and certainly in all of my interactions here is that this is about my son taking ownership and keeping me apprised. When I dropped him off in August and attended the meetings, especially here at the institute.

It was really about us helping our children students be self-reliant and coming and making a plan with their advisor on their responsibility to communicate that plan to their professors. I know the head of the institute, I'm going to not remember his name right now...

Researcher: It's okay.

Mrs. L: ...how he said that by this time, by parents' weekend, your children students should know the names of their professors. They should be taking advantage of all that is here. I discussed that with [Student's Name] quite openly. I said, listen, here's what I've learned. Here's your responsibility and he heard me and he's doing it. He does his exams online. That's part of his plan. Then he'll take a shot...

Researcher: A screenshot.

Mrs. L: ...a screenshot and show me.

- Researcher:** Amazing.
- Mrs. L:** That's how I know what's going on.
- Researcher:** How often did he do that, just for major exams or was it per assignment? How often did he keep you informed?
- Mrs. L:** Per assignment.
- Researcher:** Wonderful. He would initiate that.
- Mrs. L:** He knows what my expectations are and my husband's expectations, by the way, since we're both involved, emotionally and financially.
- [laughter]
- I hear what you're saying. In my professional life, I had a large recruitment organization, globally. So much of it is communication and managing expectations. I think that I understood in the meetings that we had. I could see other parents struggling with that in the audience, just from the questions and so on. Everybody's got their journey, right?
- Researcher:** Indeed.
- Mrs. L:** Everybody's got their journey. Possibly because [Student's Name] has had one year already in university that had its own challenges and opportunities, that we've learned from that as well. It's what you take away from each of your experiences. It's helping your child to become an adult and be responsible, especially these kids who, from what I understand.
- I don't really know the other students here, but from what's been explained, is that it's a very unique bunch of students, really creative because of their various ways of seeing the world. It's just helping your child figure out what their responsibilities are within this community and their responsibility for their education here. It's all, as you say, happy days.

- Researcher:** [laughter] Happy days.
- Mrs. L:** Today I'll meet [Student's Name]'s advisor, coach, and he tells me... He's spoken with me about his economics tutor. I know when he meets and when he's cancelled, my son, when he's cancelled and why, and what's being done about that. This whole experience has been so unbelievable for him and for his self-confidence as a student, which for me is what it's about.
- Researcher:** Wonderful.
- Mrs. L:** He's doing really well.
- Researcher:** I'm glad. I'm glad to hear.
- Mrs. L:** Yes.
- Researcher:** You were aware of his performance throughout. Since we spoke 'til now, he kept you informed. Was there any point during the semester where you felt you weren't getting the feedback you were hoping for or expecting?
- Mrs. L:** I think as long as things are going okay that. He's telling me they're going okay. I haven't heard otherwise.
- Researcher:** Oh good.
- Mrs. L:** I think I would have.
- Researcher:** You would have.
- Mrs. L:** Yes.
- Researcher:** You mentioned that he sends you his screenshots. Are you able to see grades as well when they're in, or just that he submitted his assignments?
- Mrs. L:** He submitted his assignment and what the grade is.
- Researcher:** What the grade is.

- Mrs. L:** What the grade is. He explains to me the scale because sometimes it will be, I don't get it. I think it's on the score of 100 and it's like 110, and I'm like, what's up with this? He said, I did the extra credit, and I got the extra credit.
- Researcher:** Okay. These are full on conversations you're having about...
- Mrs. L:** They're this kind of conversation, the texting conversation thing. I could show you, but I'm not going to.
- Researcher:** It's fine.
- Mrs. L:** You know?
- Researcher:** Yeah, well that's good. The fact that you are informed, I think is important to managing your... You made it clear to your son at the start what your expectations were and he followed through.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah.
- Researcher:** Was there any pushback from him when you explained what you were hoping for this semester?
- Mrs. L:** No. Listen, honestly he was nervous and frightened and everything else because he really didn't know many people. He's quite a social person. We really established what the three things were that he was responsible for. He's a student, number one. He would like to play soccer here. My words, not the coaches words, he was invited to work out. He was one of four boys invited to work out with the team, but now that they're doing...
- I think they're really competing, then there's not as many of those opportunities. He said that's absolutely fine. We encourage him to start things. I said, why don't you get together with those other four boys? He said, no, we're continuing just to have pickup games and that's fine mommy. I don't need to be doing this. Right now I'm focusing on my studies. Then we've also encouraged him to become active in student groups here. He told me that he's not meant to in his first term. Is that true?

- Researcher:** It's not required. In fact, sometimes students are advised to shop around for the first semester perhaps the first semester, maybe not to commit to a group. By second semester if you have an idea of something you'd like to be involved in, then they are strongly encouraged to take part.
- Mrs. L:** Okay. Second term is coming up in January.
- Researcher:** In January, correct.
- Mrs. L:** That's what we've been discussing, what he's been attending.
- Researcher:** Okay.
- Mrs. L:** We believe very much in becoming a part of your community. He knows that.
- Researcher:** He knows that.
- Mrs. L:** Yes.
- Researcher:** You've impressed that upon him.
- Mrs. L:** He knows that. It's also part of what is required for the international baccalaureate.
- Researcher:** I see. That's good. That's very good.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah.
- Researcher:** It seems a lot of preparation had happened before [Student's Name] came in this year. You mentioned [inaudible] [08:30]. You mentioned his experience in upstate New York. I wonder if any of those made it easier for you or made the conversation you had...

[buzzing sound]

Go ahead if you need to take it, please.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah, just a second.

- Researcher:** No worries.
- Mrs. L:** Hi there. [Student's Name]?
- [Student's Name]: Hi mom.
- Mrs. L:** Hi honey, I'm just speaking with Wilson right now. Did you get my text?
- [Student's Name]: Yeah [inaudible] [08:54]] are going to go over to the learning center.
- Mrs. L:** That sounds great. That's where I am right now. This is the learning center, yes. Okay sweetheart, thanks for calling. See you. Okay. Bye. Bye. See?
- Researcher:** Wonderful.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah, I mean he's pretty responsible. He hasn't always been that way, but that's my life. It's part of the journey.
- Researcher:** This semester, would you say it has, at least as far as his communication with you regarding his academic and personal well-being?
- Mrs. L:** Yes.
- Researcher:** Okay good. I'm glad.
- Mrs. L:** To your earlier point, that the year in upstate New York at Hobart seemed to be going just fine, but I don't think the communication was probably... He was younger. He was in a different stage in his development. Certainly taking a year off and working... I don't know, did I tell you about what he was doing? We lived in New York at the time, in Brooklyn, and he worked at a very popular Israeli-owned café and bakery at Union Square, quite popular. In the interview process... Friends of ours know the gentleman who owns it, which is how he got the interview. He got the job, obviously because...
- Researcher:** He interviewed well.

Mrs. L: ...he interviewed well. In the interview, they said, listen, the second time you show up late, you'll be fired. You need to know this. You would say that kind of run it like the Israeli army a little bit.

[laughter]

It's quite strict, but it's a great business. They need to have people show up, obviously. [Student's Name], quite reliable, would always show up, even for a six a.m. start shift. He'd always be early. He was reliable. His first paycheck, when you expect an amount and you see minus the tax amount, he was like, what's going on here. He also saw people come in who were late the second time and they were kind of fired in front of everybody, not in a rude way. They just say thank you very much, and there's the door.

Researcher: It was a pleasure.

Mrs. L: Yeah, it was a pleasure and thank you. For young kids to experience this... He missed being with his age people.

Researcher: Yeah, his peers.

Mrs. L: His peers, his friends were in UNI...

Researcher: I see.

Mrs. L: ...which he was not. He took one course at Fordham. That was hard because he was just coming in once a week. He had all of these experiences that have added up to...

Researcher: Who he is now.

Mrs. L: ...who he is now.

Researcher: Wonderful. That's good.

Mrs. L: I think that I certainly note that we're in a different place from everybody else here. We all have our experiences, but I also see where it's been... [Student's Name] is probably about on average two years older than the...

- Researcher:** He's what, 20?
- Mrs. L:** Yeah, he's 20. He'll be 21 in March. I think socially that's been a little bit different for him too.
- Researcher:** I see.
- Mrs. L:** That's okay too.
- Researcher:** It is?
- Mrs. L:** Yeah. He's hell-bent on finding a house off campus for next year. We're meant to get a car this weekend...
[laughter]
...all kinds of things that are in the queue to happen.
- Researcher:** Is there? Indeed. [laughter]
- Mrs. L:** Does that help...?
- Researcher:** You said queue, very exciting.
- Mrs. L:** He's in the queue, in line.
- Researcher:** I know, in queue is right.
- Mrs. L:** In queue as our English friends would say.
- Researcher:** Amazing. Thank you. Well that's good to know. I wanted to get a sense of what your experience has been like and you've narrated that very for me, thank you. I wonder if there were any concerns at all during the past three weeks. Was there any time that you had to pick up the phone to call him or the school?
- Mrs. L:** No.
- Researcher:** No, so you...?

- Mrs. L:** No. I feel like the information, the flow is coming, and I know who the people are. I know who his coach is. I know he's got an economic tutor because that is, of course, he had some trepidation with that going into it. He's done really well. I know his academic advisor. I know the name. I don't have any... I see he's responsible for that. I know that he's meant to start looking at course selection for next term, for term two. We are talking about him staying through for, is it term one summer or something?
- Researcher:** The J term. Is it the J term? Oh the summer term. You're looking for him to stay for the summer term right after spring term.
- Mrs. L:** Yes.
- Researcher:** Okay, yes.
- Mrs. L:** It goes through the end of June beginning of July...
- Researcher:** Yes, indeed, very short.
- Mrs. L:** Yes.
- Researcher:** I think four or five weeks.
- Mrs. L:** Yes.
- Researcher:** Yes, okay.
- Mrs. L:** He's taking four courses this term. We're talking this weekend about what potentially of his courses from Hobart could transfer, if any, and what the next term, what spring term will look like. I'll ask those questions of his coach. There are things that I'll have questions about, but now, not before. No, I'm fine.
- Researcher:** You feel like you've been well informed up until...
- Mrs. L:** I know the names of his courses and what's going on...
- Researcher:** Happy days.

Mrs. L: ...just really pleased. He feels it's very practical. He's learning a lot. He's excited about it. What more can you ask for?

[laughter]

I'm fine. We'll continue to write the checks. That's fine. Honestly, yeah. One thing happened, socially, which I'll share with you, which is for [Student's Name] to figure out. It's been a good thing. He was just chatting after class with a fellow student just yacking away. [Student's Name] said, I need to go because I told someone I'd go help them do something. So they shook hands and he heard laughing behind him. He turned around and this kid was like making a not nice gesture towards him with another kid.

[Student's Name] looked back at him, and he's like, what's up with that? He's like you're the one in class who always knows the answers to all the teacher's questions. You're the class nerd. We don't like you. You're the class nerd. For [Student's Name] to hear something like that, he just was like, you've got to be kidding me man. We're in university, serious now? You want to be here? What's going on? He called me, he said, mom can you believe this? I said, listen, you never know, you just never know.

Researcher: That's interesting.

Mrs. L: Isn't it?

Researcher: Very much so.

Mrs. L: Stuff happens, right?

Researcher: It does.

Mrs. L: I am hearing things that are bumpy.

Researcher: Yes.

Mrs. L: More socially things like that that are bumpy.

Researcher: I see.

- Mrs. L:** Not academic. No.
- Researcher:** It is a social experience as well, being away here.
- Mrs. L:** Of course.
- Researcher:** He volunteers that information to you. You're up to date.
- Mrs. L:** Yes. He's coming now, with one of his friends and his friend's mom. There are certain people he wants me to meet this weekend.
- Researcher:** Wonderful. Happy days.
- Mrs. L:** May it continue Wilson, may it continue.
- Researcher:** That's amazing. I'm glad to hear it. You would say you've had a positive experience.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah.
- Researcher:** I know we talked about expectations before. Earlier in the semester you talked about what you wanted for this experience. You mentioned very positive things and how you wanted your son to be... I listened to the interview before, [laughter] so I remember how you mentioned that you wanted to continue being independent. You wanted him to have a good experience, and to not just to excel academically but also excel in his environment, find things that he wanted to do and have a real good experience. Those were your expectations in loose terms. Do you think that those have been, so far, met?
- Mrs. L:** Yes, absolutely. I think there will be another round of decisions that are made. [clears throat] One will be successfully finishing up this term because it's important to maintain the momentum...
- Researcher:** Of course.
- Mrs. L:** ...not take the foot off the pedal, as it were. I think the thing that we'll discuss also will be his courses, his course

load for spring term, and also what things thinks he wants to commit himself to. Is it S.A.B., the student union or something? I'm making this up. This is my language for university. They're the social things.

- Researcher:** The round table, knights of the round table.
- Mrs. L:** No, I think it's...
- Researcher:** There's student affairs...
- Mrs. L:** That must be it. I think it's student affairs.
- Researcher:** Student affairs. Okay.
- Mrs. L:** They plan things.
- Researcher:** Events, and trips and so forth.
- Mrs. L:** Yes.
- Researcher:** Okay.
- Mrs. L:** I think there's that. He's very interested in student government.
- Researcher:** Okay, the knights of the round table.
- Mrs. L:** Is that it? Okay, then you're right, yes. I'll ask him about the language. I don't know what he wants to do about soccer. I also don't think he needs to decide, necessarily right now.
- Researcher:** Okay.
- Mrs. L:** I just, I don't know. We'll see. He's keeping fit and that's one of the three things. I said, the important thing to be a successful student, make sure you eat properly, because that fell apart at Hobart, completely. Part of it was socially because he didn't like to eat alone.
- Researcher:** I see.

- Mrs. L:** He didn't want to go into the cafeteria on his own, so he ended up eating junk food.
- Researcher:** That's correct.
- Mrs. L:** Yes, with his friends, very bad. Getting enough sleep. It's taking care of yourself, right?
- Researcher:** Yes, indeed.
- Mrs. L:** That's all part of it.
- Researcher:** It is, indeed.
- Mrs. L:** Exercising, so he tells me, that he goes to the gym, he's enjoyed the pool here.
- Researcher:** He's keeping fit.
- Mrs. L:** he's keeping fit.
- Researcher:** He's taking care of [Student's Name].
- Mrs. L:** He is, which is important.
- Researcher:** It is, it is. It's very important being here, I agree. That's good. I'm glad.
- Mrs. L:** I think there's a next round of what happens next. I feel that all of this is a partnership and it's what the school has in place. It's up to our son, our student to understand the constellation of things here and balance it. I like how the school has said first term look around.
- He has cousins and friends who go to school where the Greek life is really important. First semester, they've landed, the poor kids hardly have their feet on the ground and they're rushing already. Imagine that whole thing. My niece just went through that. It was a terrible social experience for her.
- Researcher:** I can imagine.

- Mrs. L:** He's seeing all of these various things going on and he appreciates what's happening right here. Also having the car, he wants to be able to get off campus, and I get that too. He's a New Yorker, having the mobility.
- Researcher:** Being confined is not...
- Mrs. L:** So it's okay. He wants to learn to surf. I said great, but make sure your studies are fine, everything else you've committed to is going on. Surfing gets in the way. It's not going to be a good place. Surfing, okay. I'm fine.
- Researcher:** Relatively safe here.
- Mrs. L:** Yes.
- Researcher:** Not so crazy here. You mentioned partnership earlier, that you understand this is a partnership. Describe that a little more, partnership, do you mean between...?
- Mrs. L:** The university and the parents and the students. I see it as a three way piece. It's about communication and it's about information and it's about transparency. If I need information, I'll go to the website in the first instance. First, I'd talk to [Student's Name] unless it's just something I'm researching. If it's something I'm just researching, I'll just go online.
- As an example, when does the term end? When does the term start? All of that kind of stuff. When does spring term end? What's the next te-? Those kinds of things. On Instagram, I follow that student group, so I see the things that are coming, that are going on.
- Researcher:** I see.
- Mrs. L:** I try, I try.
- Researcher:** Amazing.
- Mrs. L:** I try and stay somewhat current.
- Researcher:** You're well informed.

- Mrs. L:** Information coming in.
- Researcher:** Yes.
- Mrs. L:** That's what I do also in recruiting. It's the same sort of thing and how do you use the tools? How do you use social stuff? That's what the kids are doing. That's what the students are doing.
- Researcher:** Indeed.
- Mrs. L:** It's a partnership. I think if I needed to ask a person, I'd know how to find out. I'd know the different people in [Student's Name]'s sphere and reach out.
- Researcher:** To go to. Have you had to... Well it's been six week I guess...
- Mrs. L:** No.
- Researcher:** ...so you haven't had to. So between what you hear from [Student's Name] and then your own research and information flow, you feel you've been well informed?
- Mrs. L:** Yes. I'm trying to remember if I've... I'm trying to remember if... I don't think I've received any e-mails.
- Researcher:** Okay. I was going to ask that next, if anyone has contacted you directly for any reason from the institution or even if it's just to give you an update, or any communication at all from the institution.
- Mrs. L:** No, but for the weekend. We got a lot of information from parents' weekend...
- Researcher:** Wonderful.
- Mrs. L:** ...which is great....
- Researcher:** Good.

- Mrs. L:** ...and then responded accordingly, all the events related to this weekend. With information, there's the push of information, it's pushed out, and then what I've pulled in, what I take in. I haven't received anything academically, regarding [Student's Name]'s academics. I wouldn't expect to need to, based on his information. Listen, he was at Hobart when he knew he was not faring well, academically.
- He reached out to me proactively and said we need to have a conversation with the dean. Then he arranged a conference call with himself and the dean and me to just basically say, things are heading south here. What do we do?
- Researcher:** Amazing.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah.
- Researcher:** So he put that together.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah, but that's from high school days.
- Researcher:** I was going to say...
- Mrs. L:** We're okay with failing fast. We all have our... You learn from it and take responsibility for it and try and get in front of it as best as you can, and also know as a young adult, there are certain things that you don't have to deal with things alone. That's why we're here.
- Researcher:** He's aware of that.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah. The principal at the kids' junior school, so their elementary school, she really impressed upon all of us as parents that we are our children's first teachers and we are always their advocates. You hope you can do that as a parent. He's the young adult, so he should be doing things.
- Researcher:** Is he your first?
- Mrs. L:** Yeah.
- Researcher:** Amazing. [laughter]

- Mrs. L:** Yeah.
- Researcher:** This is amazing.
- Mrs. L:** Two very different children. His sister...
- Researcher:** Him and your daughter yeah...
- Mrs. L:** Yes, whereas he's had... His learning differences were very early on because he was much more our truly bilingual child. We only spoke French with him until kindergarten. At their school, at Eunice, they begin to learn to read and write in kindergarten. It's more on the English system, so it's much more aggressive if you want to say, assertive. [Student's Name] was really struggling with putting a stake down in English. There's a lot that went into identifying exactly what that was throughout the next couple of years. His teachers were great in terms of reinforcing what he's good at and making sure that we did the same.
- We just understood that every child has things that he or she excels at. Right behind his sister, who is 20 months younger, but one year behind scholastically. They let kids start younger in school then. She's just one of these kids that school's super easy for, so she always excels, quite. There wasn't the, no competition, they're quite loving with one another. They both play soccer. They both do the things they do in the community. We've had two following one another, two very different experiences.
- Researcher:** Indeed.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah.
- Researcher:** Both are in college now, so you're true and true a college parent.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah, knock wood, today. Yes.
- [laughter]
- Researcher:** Happy days.

- Mrs. L:** They're both kind of in year two. Her program is three years and this one will figure out... Undergraduate programs are different.
- Researcher:** Oh yes.
- Mrs. L:** As you know.
- Researcher:** I am well aware.
- Mrs. L:** Yes.
- Researcher:** Three years indeed. It's intensive as well. I wonder if they do still have summer semester or if some do.
- Mrs. L:** In UNI.
- Researcher:** In UNI.
- Mrs. L:** Yes, they do.
- Researcher:** They have the summer semester?
- Mrs. L:** Yes. They also have foundation courses, so it seems like a lot of kids do that as kind of year one, then have the three year program after that.
- Researcher:** Three year program. I see, I see. Right after high school they can go and do that, or take advanced level courses?
- Mrs. L:** Right.
- Researcher:** Those will serve as foundation courses when they go on to university.
- Mrs. L:** Exactly, or do a gap year.
- Researcher:** A very underrated concept.
- Mrs. L:** A hugely underrated concept.
- Researcher:** Indeed.

- Mrs. L:** Really.
- Researcher:** It's super beneficial for many students.
- Mrs. L:** Super beneficial.
- Researcher:** It's amazing to hear, especially from a parent, about these things that maybe some of us in academia who might be hesitant to suggest, things like this that are very practical [inaudible] [29:56] for the well-being of the students. It's refreshing to hear parents say these things or have considered them for their students.
- Mrs. L:** We suggested it to [Student's Name] in his senior year. He just was, nope I'm doing it. There we go.
- Researcher:** Then he did do it after.
- Mrs. L:** Absolutely, he did do it, thank goodness.
- Researcher:** How long did he work?
- Mrs. L:** He did a full academic year. He lived at home. He didn't work that full time. What did he do? One of our friend's sons who graduated from Bowdoin in Maine, took a year between undergraduate and what's next, real life or whatever you want to call that. He was going to be a ski bum. He works in kitchens. He loves food. He loves the whole thing. He's worked in a lot of the big restaurants in New York. He was the pasta chef at this really great restaurant.
- Then he knew that, as of the new year, he was going to drive out west from New York. He wanted someone to drive with him, so he and [Student's Name] drove and skied along the way. [Student's Name] took off a bit of time and then came back and worked some and went to school and kind of cobbled together different things that he did.
- Researcher:** I see

Mrs. L: He worked in the fall at the bakery. When he came back he worked at the bakery, not as intensively as he had before. He babysat for neighbors and he was taking a class. He started doing soccer more. He started working out with one of his coaches.

Researcher: I see. That was his experience before...

Mrs. L: That was his experience and we said to him, it's fine if you want to travel in the summer. You've made some money so you use that and we'll help you out. He went to visit a friend in Australia. He came back. We did family stuff in Europe. He also helped me close down the house in Brooklyn, so that was huge.

Researcher: I see, I see.

Mrs. L: Mostly, emotionally huge, right?

Researcher: I can imagine, yeah, if he grew up there.

Mrs. L: Yeah. He was a big help.

Researcher: That's amazing.

Mrs. L: Yeah.

Researcher: I can't thank you enough for sharing your experience with me. We would never know what it's like on your end if we never hear or have these conversations. It's something we are lacking in higher ed. Our interactions with parents, as I may have mentioned before, has been strictly around an issue and less about the general experience. Maybe we couldn't do it because of time constraints or perhaps we didn't think it was relevant.

We tend to do that sometimes. We tend to go by what we think is absolutely relevant and no other... It provides context and more understanding of what parents expect or what their experience is, so that when we do interact with parents, we're aware of that and of the concern that perhaps we share surrounding their students wellbeing and success.

Mrs. L:

I think it must be difficult because when I look at my experience... I went to University of Michigan, ginormous, in the late 70s. I graduated in 1980, my parents hardly had an idea of what I was doing. I'm the eldest of four. Still, we just weren't the helicopter parents that we are now, so you've got that going on. Right? Bless you. I don't know how you deal with us, frankly. [laughter] I also think the increasing price tag...

We, our generations of baby boomers, we expect, especially as American parents, quite different from a European parent, as you know... We expect a certain amount of customer support, customer service. When we pay, we expect something in exchange. I think that August, the drop-off, there was a lot of information given, a lot. I know there's a lot of opportunity this weekend, during parents' weekend as well. From a consumer's perspective, I think it's been great. I think it must be a challenge again, because I know in Britain as a parent you just deliver your child to the door. You're not expected...

Researcher:

Maybe...

Mrs. L:
much.

...not necessarily encouraged right away to get involved so

Researcher:

Indeed. You mentioned, especially with the cost of tuition, in Europe, college is pretty much covered, a lot of it, unless you go the private road. Perhaps maybe when you do you have different expectations. Given this context that you just so eloquently described, being significantly different from your experience when you went to college, and also the cost, and also your role as a parent and as a customer, for lack of a better term, there are expectation there that are relevant to your experience.

It's refreshing to hear also how you have approached the experience. I asked if [Student's Name] was your first because the first go around is quite challenging but you seem to have thought this one through very much so. It's relevant to know that it is his second college experience, perhaps.

- Mrs. L:** Yes, absolutely. It's quite relevant.
- Researcher:** It is.
- Mrs. L:** Yeah.
- Researcher:** Still, very thoughtful or very intentional, your approach has been as to where you get your information from, your interaction with the school, your interaction with [Student's Name], verbalizing your expectations, not just to, yes to [Student's Name], the most important person, and knowing where to go when you needed something. That seems to have defined, or at least structured your experience, which has been positive.
- Mrs. L:** Honestly, I've got to say that, interestingly, because of our two children's experiences, [Student's Name] has always been extraordinarily resourceful. He always had what they called at his school, additional classroom support. There was always a group of students that would go and work with an additional classroom support person in school, so he always knew how to go to them. They also would go with him if something was not working in the classroom.
- This has been quite a part of his existence. I think their school, the kids were very supportive of one another. They were never made to feel different or what have you because they had this additional support. There were points, those flexion points. After junior school, after elementary, after middle school, when we talked with both kids about changing schools... Is this the right time to change schools? Do you want to continue on? [Student's Name] was very committed to his school, very committed to the resources. I think in terms of being, of our two children, he's much more resourceful than his sister, who has never had to be resourceful.
- Researcher:** I see, I see.
- Mrs. L:** I see this because I made sure I was in London for Claire's...

- Researcher:** Move-in.
- Mrs. L:** ...move-in and all of that. They completely messed up her computer registration and they said they didn't see her in the system. She completely lost it. Whereas [Student's Name] would have said, well I'm sure it's got to be somewhere. I know we paid a check. Can we get a little more involved here? She melted down, called me, I need your help. I'm like, what's happening here? You see? I think he's a different kid. I think because I work, I can take my experiences from my professional life. We're not mind readers, right? Usually if you talk to people...
- Researcher:** You hope.
- Mrs. L:** ...you hope. I hope that's helpful.
- Researcher:** It is. Thank you so much...
- Mrs. L:** Is that it? Do I not get to talk to you again?
[laughter]
- Researcher:** We can talk any time. I just can't record you anymore.
- Mrs. L:** Next time I...

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