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Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs

THESIS



New State of Mind: A Living Learning Community
Intervention for Out-of-State Students

Molly Elizabeth Rorick

May 2020

New State of Mind:

A Living Learning Community Intervention for Out-of-State Students

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the

Department of Educational Foundations and Policy Studies

West Chester University

West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

Master of Science

By

Molly Elizabeth Rorick

May 2020

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Dedication

This is dedicated to those I have lost over my two-year period of this program. Each of you continue to mean so much to me in my journey to where I am now. I love and miss each of you every day. This also goes to November 2018 me who was ready to pack her bags and move back to New York. Look where you are now.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this time to thank my “good company.” To start off, this goes to Dr. Jacqueline Hodes who introduced me to the idea of good company. You have been a huge support system so thank you for always being in my corner. Next my parents: Mom and Dad, thanks to you I had the strength to get through my transition of living in Pennsylvania. You raised me to always follow my heart and because of that I am now graduating with my Masters. To Stephanie and Aunt Peggy: you are two of the strongest women I have the pleasure of having in my life and I owe my strength to you both. To Collin, Jaxson and Dustin: my three favorite men in the world, thank you for always putting a smile on my face.

Next would be my best friends, who are located from Ohio to Pennsylvania to New York to Massachusetts: I love you all so much and thank you for always pushing me to be who I am today. Having you all in my life has made me a better person. I can't begin to count the amount of times I said I couldn't complete this program and you all would build me back up with the confidence that I could. There are so many more I would like to mention but I fear it might take too many pages. Just know that you are all extremely important to me and I appreciate everything you have done. I have a lot of “good company” leaving the HEPSA program as it has opened so many doors and introduced me to so many people that I cannot imagine being without. It has ignited my passion in student affairs, and I cannot wait to see where I go from here.

Abstract

The term out-of-state resonates with any person who does not permanently live in a particular state but has visited from across state lines multiple times. In this case it is in relation to students who have decided to pursue their education at an institution that is located in a different state. This thesis examines the lack of resources for OOS students living within the university's walls using the lens of transition theory. With the lack of resources, this creates a barrier between the student and their potential for their success. *New State of Mind* is a proposed intervention, which opens a space where students can feel welcomed to expand their identity while the university gains new insight on who these students are and what they may be capable of.

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Chapter 1: Positionality

During my undergraduate experience, I had transferred from a community college to an out-of-state (OOS) small private college. Only moving two hours away from home, I originally didn't see how this distance would affect me. Unfortunately, it affected my college experience more than anyone would have imagined. I distinctly remember my first day on the campus during my first year. I was the only transfer student there and also the oldest during orientation. Even the activities they had for the first year move in were more geared towards those already familiar to the area. For one of the main tasks, we had to complete a scavenger hunt around town and it was safe to say my team came in last due to none of us knowing our way around the city. The frustrating part of this was that we were not allowed to google search any of the needed items. While I understand it is to help us get used to the area, returning back to campus well after the set time was humiliating to my twenty-year-old self. Within the first day, I felt isolated and alone. There were no programs or faculty/staff members to help me with my transition in living in a new state. There was a program for first year students that assisted them with their college transition but I was a transfer student therefore I wasn't placed within this class. I didn't feel as though I belonged and the connections I thought I had made began to disintegrate. This feeling of isolation didn't fade over a couple days. It had been about two weeks and I still didn't have that niche of friends that I could sit with at dinner or hang out with after classes. I truly felt alone in those moments, just wishing that I had someone to relate to.

This feeling of isolation that I mentioned continued on as I moved from a typical residence hall to a house that was located up the hill from campus. In this house I lived with 7 other females but held a room to myself. By living in this space, I felt as though I didn't have

anyone to understand what I was going through. All of my housemates had been attending my institution since their first year of college, therefore they were already situated. It had taken me roughly 2 months until I had my first campus friend, whom I am still best friends with to this day. This feeling continued through my first year of my transfer even though I had managed to find some friends who made me feel not as lonely. I had a plan to withdraw from the college at the end of the year but then I was offered a position as a resident assistant and that leads me to where I am today.

Out-of-state (OOS) students are brought onto campus and expected to integrate into college life without help of learning their space. I have first-hand experience of what it is like to be dropped off and expected to figure things out on my own. The first time I attempted to go to a local store, someone I was living with told me to take a backroad as it was easier to get to the center of town. What this person failed to mention is that it was shut down for construction and the alternative route took the person driving it all the way around towards a different entrance of town. I had begun to panic as I didn't have cell phone service and I was in an unknown location. I ended up backtracking till I recognized a piece of my campus.

I continually noticed the lack of resources for OOS students during my first official weekend staying on campus after moving in. I had attempted to go to the cafeteria on campus for lunch only to find out that it shut down between certain hours. I was absolutely frustrated because I didn't have a microwave yet to make food. I had called my mother in an absolute panic. My mom had told me to go buy something to eat. This is where I grew frustrated yet again as I didn't know the area well enough to go buy something to eat. Traveling to the closest fast food place should have taken me only 10 minutes but during that day, it took me almost 40.

Thinking back to this moment in today's day, it makes me wonder if I would have been as worried if I had someone to help me with my transition as a transfer student as well as someone who was from out of state.

The thematic concern that has gained my focus is that there are OOS students who experience a lack of campus help as well as a lack of support in exploring the neighboring area of the university. This concern has only heightened due to my current position working as a graduate assistant in Residence Life. I interact with many different students coming from states all over the country, some of which were on my staff as resident assistants. I could see the struggle, specifically in first year students, when trying to become accustomed to their new surroundings. Granted, my new campus did more to ensure their comfortability by handing out folders with some instructions on how to get to the closest mall and take out menus, but that still isn't enough to guarantee the transition to this new location is enough to keep them within the institution.

During this past year, we had a student move out the night after he had originally moved in. The first-year class hadn't even begun their orientation yet, which lasted from Friday until Sunday. When he was asked why he wanted to move out so quickly, he stated that the campus didn't feel like home. This student felt as though the residence hall was just a concrete block. It was foreign and made him uncomfortable. This is the moment that my perspective of this thematic concern increased. I had gone from being the student in the position to watching it happen to another student, nearly 4 years after my experience. By hearing this testimonial, it only increased my dedication to wanting to ensure there was a space and faculty on campus where

OOS students can have the understanding that they matter. My goal is to open this conversation that if the university is to understand how big the population for OOS students can be (Strayer, 2016), then they may recognize the importance of creating a space that feels like the student can relax and let others assist them in their campus transition.

Introduction

My concern is the struggles experienced by OOS students who are facing the strain of not knowing who to turn to when moving to a new state and living in a new environment. The term OOS students is being defined as any students who had grown up outside of state lines. OOS students are being marginalized and grouped with their incoming classmates, meaning they are not given a fair chance at adjusting to their new surroundings. While they are in orientation with their in-state counterparts, it does not hold the same value of trying to dissect their current situation. They are expected to become accustomed to their elements as if nothing has changed for them. Students coming from in-state already have the idea of what their new home may be like, maybe not to the extent of a local student but they understand what that state is all about in terms of grocery stores, driver's licenses, doctor's offices, or even fun things to do in the area. In my experience, I witnessed firsthand classmates that knew people from different years because they were friends before college or they had graduated school together. For OOS students, this is a new factor in their life that they are expected to just accept and then move into their college life.

Yet when researching institutions that were doing things specifically for their OOS student population, I had come up basically empty handed. The main thing I had discovered was that a couple of institutions had created a virtual online orientation that would take place over the

summer months for the residents that lived too far away to participate. However, it was only two universities that I had found that had implemented this kind of activity into their first year welcoming to students from OOS. These universities have the understanding that students who will be traveling 3+ hours may not have the time or ability to come to the campus just for the day. This program, International and National Orientation (ION), was created with two phases of online communication and then in person once it was closer to the school year. Having developed this program has opened opportunities to students whereas years prior students may have had to miss orientation or struggle just to make it to the campus for a day.

The reason my concern has come to light is because I first had experienced this lack of resources and have viewed other students go through these struggles as well. I had an experience with a resident assistant at my undergraduate college that has truly helped me see that this kind of concern needs to be discussed more in depth. I had prepared myself to withdraw from my college but because of this conversation I had with her, my perspective was changed. During my conversation with this resident assistant, she told me that she wished she had someone to rely on when making that transition to a new state. A lot of what she did was trial by error. If there had been a program that assisted her with figuring out where everything was, there wouldn't have been as many errors as she would have hoped for as a first-year student. It also comes down to the personal connections. Perhaps if she had the advantage of getting to know OOS students, it would have made her transition into her new state a little easier. Having this kind of personal experience is where my concern truly started but it has grown tremendously throughout my 5 years as an OOS student.

There could be a plethora of reasons as to why others should care about this kind of topic but there is one in particular to think about when investigating the lack of campus resources for OOS students. Picture a relative of yours attending their ideal university out of state. They are excited to go there but also extremely nervous to be in a new location. They arrived on campus only to find out that there is no one to help them find their way around the neighborhood and the campus. Sure, there might be orientation but that only lasts a couple days and then they are on their own. After their initial weekend, they are struggling to adjust and eventually decide to withdraw as attending a university in their home state has more of a comfortable feeling. After keeping this picture in mind, think of the same scenario but instead, there is a system in place at the university that helps them to grow accustomed to their new surroundings. Before you know it, they are finishing with their honors and going on to do great things. The big picture behind thinking about this concept is that these students might be able to achieve great things if they are given the proper resources within

Thesis Preview

The goal of this thesis is to start a dialogue about the needs of OOS students. While there isn't a lot of research based around OOS students, authors have written pieces that can be related to this demographic. There are even pieces that focus negatively on OOS students, which are disputed in this thesis. This lack of research highlights the lack of attention that OOS students get in higher education and student affairs. I believe, however, that OOS students should be the focus of study to highlight that they often face adversity on the university campus, even if it is not visibly seen. Numbers have shown that universities have recruited more and more OOS

students in the past years (Strayer, 2016); therefore, student affairs professionals must research and support this growing population of students.

Tuition for OOS students is often more depending on where the student is looking to attend. If these students are being made to pay above everyone else attending the institution, it would be best that, as higher education professionals, we attempt to take extra care to ensure that these students are prospering in their new environment. Universities are beginning to recognize this and have created special scholarships that are dedicated to OOS students. A college in Massachusetts, for example, has created a full tuition merit to 15 OOS students (Scholarship360, 2019). Though it may not be the true equality that OOS students deserve, it is a start to a new generation of students looking at universities out of their state.

Beyond this, universities have a need to enroll OOS students into their institutions as tuition is a main source of revenue for institutions. When the state begins to lessen its funding towards universities, specifically state run institutions, universities often need to up enrollment of not only in-state but OOS students. Having a constant flow of both categories is great but knowing that those from OOS will pay twice as much is basically getting a two-for-one, double the tuition from only one student. Though this is great for the university, what about the students that are having to pay this price? The student is trying to obtain a degree but is being straddled with a debt and the fear that they may not be able to financially afford the years needed to achieve their degree. If this student withdraws because they were not supported in their transition to college in another state, it doesn't impact the university nearly as much as it impacts the student, their opportunities, and their financial burden.

Being an OOS student, however, is more complex than paying higher tuition. Something that higher education practitioners may not fully understand is that being from a different state can also come with the feeling of having a separate identity. As a university, it should be about ensuring our students feel as though who they are matters. As argued by Groen and Michelle (2003) the university doesn't often care where the students come from as long as the institution is receiving money for the attendance of the student (p. 3). This could convey to OOS students that who they are doesn't matter to their institution and that they shouldn't talk about it. For my case, I had been picked on a bit for being from my home state of New York. I personally didn't understand the jokes about the new state I was living in and I couldn't connect when they would ask me about things that were particularly attached to the institution's state. In spite of this, I never once wished I wasn't from New York. I always viewed my OOS status as a unique part of my identity that set me apart from peers on campus. I was proud to say I was from New York, but it wasn't something that the campus community or my institution seemed to care about. This is something that can be changed as long as the university takes into consideration this aspect of students' identities. By opening this dialogue around OOS students, this thesis will shine light on an underacknowledged population and propose important solutions to better serving them in our colleges and universities.

Chapter 2: Thematic Concern

Since 1986 university attendance of OOS students has doubled in numbers (Strayer, 2016). While the university population of this demographic has grown, our institutions still have not acknowledged their unique presence on campus. By forgetting about these students, it implies that their identity as OOS students is not important in their new environment. OOS students move from their home state, whether it be an hour away or halfway across the country. In spite of this move, however, it doesn't change the fact that where they come from is a part of who they are. What the university is capable of is creating a space within the campus setting that will facilitate a more supportive community OOS students.

Conceptual Framework

When searching through the historical, current and relevant factors of higher education, it created the realization that while it is difficult to find research based around OOS students, it does still exist. The historical context puts into perspective the way the university came to be as it is today and how, due to defunding, the universities have slowly turned to recruitment of OOS students. The data collected was from 2019 but, when conducting the current research, it was shown that this recruitment started as far back as 1989. In current research, it creates the conversation of how OOS student numbers have increased by a large amount. With this increase, comes the need to understand what these OOS students are currently struggling to adjust with when moving in their new environment, which comes when going through the relevant factors for OOS students.

My Philosophical Perspective

In this thesis I will draw on my own unique philosophical perspective. I will draw on the works of Paulo Freire (1970), Rendon and Muñoz (2011), Schlossberg (1995), and Fraser

(2000), to construct my own understanding of higher education as it relates to OOS students. The university should be a place of discovery for students to learn who they are to become, as well as to continue with the identity that they had arrived with. It is about growing in a new environment. The students coming onto the university campus can be looking for a space that allows them to develop who they are while still keeping the part of them they had already arrived with.

Paulo Freire (1970) argued that while students should have the ability to extend their knowledge in the way they want, society has limited them to the banking model of education. The banking model of education, according to Freire (1970) adapts and conforms students to the status quo. While Freire had critiqued this model as far back as 1970, the university is still placing the students in the loop of coming onto campus and blending in with the rest of the students going about their education. What these students deserve is the chance to be who they are while also expanding into a new territory.

Historical Influences

In order to understand the current state of higher education with regards to OOS students, I will provide an overview of the history of higher education. In particular, I will discuss the different types of institutions (private, normal, land grant, public) and the students they served. While OOS students were a part of many of the first private institutions, their recruitment to public institutions is much more recent and connects with the longtime downturn in funding for public higher education. This will be explained in more detail in Chapter 3.

Current Research

Though current research is limited, there are a few key points that authors are making in relation to OOS students. Nick Strayer, for example, details how the OOS population has doubled in numbers since 1986 (Strayer 2016). This is important in the fact that it shows how these students are arguably an important number on college campuses and therefore their recognition is more important now than ever before. According to Teghan Simmanton, more recruiters have been leaning towards out-of-state students and “more than 240 public universities across the country admitted fewer in-state students in 2017” (Simonton, 2019). This shows the factor that universities were understanding what they could gain from these recruitments, increased tuition dollars, but are often not thinking about the students as people and instead dollar signs. As explained by Jeffrey A. Groen and Michelle J. White, universities are using OOS students in the effort to increase their financial situations. In fact, Groen and White described in their writing about how the modern university does not hold an interest in where the students come from (Groen & Michelle, 2003, p. 3). Groen and White are making the point that the university is only interested in one thing and that is what the student is willing to pay to become part of their institution.

Some authors are critical of universities heavily recruiting OOS students. Ozan Jaquette (2017) argues that state flagship universities are focusing more on these OOS students versus that of “the moderate- and low-income state residents who they were created to serve”(Jaquette, 2017). His point here is that the university was made to work on recruiting the in-state residents first and not the out-of-state students they are currently focused on.

Underlying Factors

When trying to think about underlying facts that might cause the decline of out-of-state student recruitment applications blends a lot with the current status of the world which is coronavirus. With the current spread of COVID-19, there has been a lot of talk about universities opening up in the Fall depending on what the status of the virus is. If this continues, a majority of students may not wish to return to this institution if it means that their classes will be moved online. This viewpoint comes from the idea that why bother paying more for an online class when the student can attend an online class at an in-state institution for less tuition. This would cause a major downfall in financial means for universities across the states.

A second factor that can become an issue, when dealing with COVID-19, is different departments not understanding the difficulty these students face when trying to get back to their in-state living when being asked to relocate out of their residence hall. It is a little bit tougher for OOS students in this situation, especially ones who have to travel by plane to get back to their home-state. If the faculty/staff members do not attempt to understand that these residents have to basically resituate their life after having just gotten situated, it can cause the student to be less invested in their work within the classroom.

Definitions

Recruitment: the process in which a potential candidate is evaluated to be brought into a organization

In-state Students: students in attendance to the institution that are residential to that state **Out-of-State Students:** students of an institution that do not originate from the state of this college; also know as non-residential

Affirmative Action: practice/policy for individuals belonging to groups known to have been discriminated against

Transition: the period of adjustment from one experience to another in a time period

Admission: the process of being accepted/admitted; in this case to a university

Living Learning Community: a space particularly designed for a certain group of students that have a commonality/theme

Displacement: to be moved aside; moved to a different location than previously placed

Identity: (n). the distinguishing character or personality of an individual (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Competencies of my Concern

When taking into consideration the ACPA/NASPA competencies with this thematic concern, Social Justice and Inclusion is the first that comes to mind when determining where this lack of integration falls. Students dealing with the lack of integration are facing the injustice of being ignored and not given that space of feeling as though the matter. The inclusion of these students is key because they might make up a larger percentage of the institution than one would originally think. Opening an inclusive space that is solely dedicated to these students opens the gates that the institution does care about them. This is primarily where my intervention intersects as the inclusion would be solidified the second a living learning community is created for out-of-state students

The second competency that this concern blends in with is that of Student Learning and Development. This is simple in the fact that by including out-of-state students identities as a key part of their growth on campus, they are able to develop more within that identity. Student development is constantly about discovering something new but also about taking something one already knows and expanding past those preset borders.

Chapter 3: Narrative & Literature Review

My Philosophical Perspective

A university is a space designed to give anyone willing to learn the chance to increase a possibility for a successful future. Anyone who walks through the doors of a university, whether it be big or small, deserves the chance to find out who they are and where they wish to go in the world. This is why it is important to keep opportunities open to every demographic walking on to campus. Students who graduate have the chance to better the neighboring communities as well as any space located around the world. Education is an open book as it is willing to accept anyone willing to put forward the effort. There should be no discrimination against anyone, no matter where they come from, as their identities help the university develop in a positive light.

The university should be a place of discovery for students to learn who they are as well as to continue with the identities that they had arrived with. College is about growing in a new environment. For many students, it is more than a transition from a high school environment to campus life. It is about the transition into their new location. For many students that means moving from one state to another to pursue education. This should be viewed as brave, as it takes courage to move away from the security of one's home. This move provides students with the opportunity to make new friends and connections within a new state, but in order for them to get to this point, there has to be a supportive figure helping them along the way. This, unfortunately, is where the university is lacking.

At the end of the day, education should be creating an environment where students feel they are being given the best opportunities. If we are marginalizing one group that makes up a

percentage of the campus population, then what about the even smaller groups that are being skipped over entirely.

Freire and My Philosophy

A way to view this concept is by taking into account Paulo Freire's philosophy within *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, more specifically, the misfortune of the banking concept. The banking concept is a process in which the educational system has "allowed the students to extend only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits" (Freire, 1970, p. 72). The banking concept is that of traditional education, primarily with elementary and secondary education. This follows the standard structure of come in, sit down, learn, don't question anything and leave. In the translation to higher education, it is about coming onto the campus and going through the motions of the campus life, never seeking out assistance for something that would break the created structure. In other words, the students shouldn't be looking for help for things that the university doesn't acknowledge.

What this translates to for OOS students is they are given only the smallest amount of information, in this case moving into a new area, and basically left with that information. They are expected to conform to the knowledge of the campus as it stands. From a personal perspective, I was handed a pamphlet with local food options in the surrounding area and that was it. While this is helpful, it only goes so far. What needed to be given was a map of the area with spots marked off that would be useful to college students. Being given a list that holds the location of common places that the instate students visit, such as the local shopping center, a doctor's office, the hospital, etc. A simple map of restaurants is a clear example of what education should not look like as these students aren't given an equal chance to succeed. By only

providing the basic necessities as those given to in-state students, it does not generate the knowledge needed to succeed.

Freire believed that people need to have the freedom to be their best self while also learning how to grow from that point. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) argued, “no one can be authentically human while he prevents others from being so” (p. 85). In brief, a person cannot be fully themselves if they continually deny someone else from being in the same state. The university, therefore, may not reach its full potential to be a completely inclusive institution until it allows OOS students to have the space to feel as though they matter. By creating this space that allows them to grow, the university is giving the students the ability to keep their identity while also developing who they are becoming for their future selves.

Schlossberg, Transition, and My Philosophy

Something of critical importance for the field of higher education and student affairs is the student transitioning into their new life in a new environment. Much of this concern comes from Schlossberg's (1995) Transition Theory, which highlights that there are different types of transitions that everyone goes through, but for college students, there is one in particular. These students go through what is considered an *anticipated transition*, moving from high school to college. The definition of anticipated transition is events “that occur predictably” (Schlossberg, 1995). As stated previously, the transitions that everyone is going through range from graduating, to working a full time job, to getting married. These are considered strongly held norms in terms of what kind of transitions each person experiences (Tønseth, 2018, p. 3). The normativity of experiencing each of these points creates an alignment with everyone. It has the connection that we all go through these phases and we have no differences.

OOS students complicate this anticipated transition as they have to deal with the transition from high school to college in addition to getting to understand a new environment. They have more factors in becoming acquainted with their new living situation. Factors like finding new and trusted doctors, obtaining a new address and driver's license, figuring out where to vote or shop for groceries, and even understanding a new culture, dialect, or region of the country. From a personal perspective, I would have highly appreciated having someone showing me where the closest hospital was so when I had gotten hurt, it wasn't a scavenger hunt of trying to receive medical help. This is why, in my philosophy, I believe that these students need a stronger helping hand in their transition to living on campus and dealing with their new state.

The goal of those working in the field of higher education should always be to create services that will benefit any student currently residing within one's campus. My view of how student affairs and higher education should work is that there should be no stone unturned when it comes to serving our students. There are numerous students that need assistance every day on campus. By turning heads against a subsection of our campus community, in this case OOS students, it could cause that belief that they do not matter.

Validation, Recognition, Mattering, and My Philosophy

For OOS students, it is about being validated that they do belong and that they can succeed on the college campus. Because of this my philosophy has been informed by Validation Theory constructed by Laura I. Rendon (1994). Rendon's (1994) intention was to bring up that primarily low-class, first generation students should feel that the student affairs practitioners cared about their success. In the article *Revisiting Validation Theory: Theoretical Foundations*,

Applications, and Extensions, Rendon and colleague Susana M. Muñoz discussed the development of the theory along with the importance it holds in validating our lower-class first generation students. Something that was noted in the research was that students felt validation by the smallest of actions committed by the professor, such as learning the names of the students and encouraging them with words like “we can do this” (Rendon & Muñoz, 2011, p. 6). Take this into consideration for students coming from OOS. They want to be validated that they are as important as any other students coming into the residence halls and classrooms. By simply acknowledging where they come from, it opens the door to their wanting to connect with the campus.

Nancy Fraser (2000) also explored the idea of reconsidering what recognition is to many different people. Recognition is the “acknowledgment of something's existence, validity, or legality” (Oxford English Dictionary). In *Rethinking Recognition*, Fraser (2000) argued that “struggles for recognition can aid the redistribution of power and wealth” (para. 6). In this case, it is about recognizing who our students are. While student affairs professionals need to validate who our students are, one must also be able to recognize where they students are coming from before it is too late. Recognition and validation go hand in hand for OOS students. The recognition is that they have come a long way from home, making the trek to become a better person than before. The validation is about helping them use this identity piece to become the successful student that student affairs professionals know they can be. As Nancy Fraser stated, “to be denied recognition...is to suffer both a distortion of one’s relation to one’s self and an injury to one’s identity” (Fraser, 2000, p. 185). For students who are trying to find their place but

are constantly being oppressed by the schooling system, intentional or not, it becomes easy to lose who they were prior to attendance.

Schlossberg's (1989) Marginality and Mattering theory is a framework of how someone can start out and how they can end. A theme noticed by Schlossberg (1989) is that "polar themes of marginality and mattering connect all of us" (p. 2). What this refers to is that there are always two things that are on the opposite side of the spectrum and it is how the world views each aspect, i.e rich and poor. The rich are viewed as important while the poor are tossed to the side and forgotten about. Schlossberg uses this theory in comparison to how college students deal their time on campus by asking the question, "do others care about us and make us feel we matter?" (Schlossberg, 1989, p. 2). Are OOS students more than just a financial source for the university? As student affairs professionals, it should be an undeniable answer that these students are cared about and see more than just money signs.

Transition Theory and My Philosophy

For college students, it can be a bit scary to be transitioning from one mentality, such as high school, to another mentality, in this case college. This is why for this thematic concern, Schlossberg's Transition Theory is what fits the most in terms of OOS students trying to transition from their home state mind set to that of their new environment. Schlossberg (1995) has identified three different variations of transition: anticipated, unanticipated, and non-events. Anticipated is when someone knows something will occur while unanticipated is when someone does not know a transition will be coming. Non-events are things that are anticipated to happen but something else occurs that doesn't fit with the original description.

In the case of out of state students, they experience two specific transitions when moving onto campus: anticipated and unanticipated. Schlossberg (1995) defines anticipated transition as an event or period of time that is predictable, such as graduating high school. Unanticipated transition is seen as something not scheduled or planned out by the person experiencing it, such as a divorce. The anticipation is that of attending college out of state, even if they did have the intention of completing their degree at that specific campus. The transition is that of growing accustomed to the new surroundings. The unanticipated aspect is that of not growing comfortable with their surroundings upon arrival. With this unanticipated process of their transition, comes coping with the four S's: situation, self, support, and strategies. If the student is able to get through all four of these S's without doubting who they are, their chances of success couldn't grow at a larger rate.

The first of the four S's, the situation, is basic as it relates to what the student is experiencing in this anticipated/unanticipated event. In this case, it is OOS students moving onto a college campus in a state where they aren't sure of their surroundings. This is a question of will the student accept this new transition and continue past the first semester or year at the institution. This decision comes into perspective for the second S in which the student uses their own self to make the final choice. Within self, Schlossberg includes personal/demographic characteristics such as physical aspects as well as psychological resources including ego development, outlook, and commitment and values (Guido et al. 2016, p. 48). Here we question whether the students sustain themselves in their new environment. It is about the individual deciding.

The next step of the four is that of social support, which is where student affairs professionals come into play. This is the outside support that the students need in order to make their proper transition. The institution can be the biggest support system for students that helps them to develop into their own person. After assisting the transitions, the OOS students now have to deal with the fourth S to which they now need to make the decision of how they will handle their coping response in the long term. They have the choice between modifying the situation, controlling the meaning of the problem, or help in managing stress in the aftermath (Guido et al. 2016, p. 59). For these students, the identity developing process comes in these four stages, as they must go through a process. There isn't going to be an overall result because each case will be different in the long run.

Neoliberalism and My Philosophy

OOS students should be considered an essential part of our institutions, yet the trend of neoliberalism in the university has created an environment where OOS students are treated differently compared to the other groups of students. Neoliberalism, as an ideology, views higher education as a business. It is about fighting for the ability to stay separated from anyone trying to interfere with that business. It sees students as customers, not citizens who deserve education as a right. Stephen Metcalf (2017) argued that neoliberalism has turned into more than just an idea focusing on politics. Metcalf (2017) explained that neoliberalism is the “ideal of society as a kind of universal market,” which sees “human beings as profit-and-loss calculators” (para. 4). The projected concept is that neoliberalism was set in place to extract money from anyone possible. There are no exceptions to who can be used as a piece of profit and if that person cannot be utilized then it is on to the next.

One noticeable difference between in-state and OOS students is that of tuition prices. In this case, it would be the government encouraging the university to increase tuition of OOS students to make up for the fact that they are coming into a new state and using that state's goods. As state budgets for higher education dwindle, the extra revenue from OOS students is increasingly sought after by public colleges and universities. This creates that belief, however, that while education should be accessible to everyone, it is only by an expensive price tag that these OOS students are allowed to reach for it. In reality, for state universities in this case, a large chunk of financial support comes from OOS students due to their paying two or three times more in tuition to attend the university. OOS students, however, are much more than just dollar signs hanging over their heads and as student affairs professionals, we should value them as the intelligent minds that we are able to help shape.

My Philosophy of Higher Education and Student Affairs

Those working in this field should always have the desire to look for new ways to include students in campus life. My philosophy for higher education is to always keep trying by constantly being involved with the campus. If student affairs professionals only watch from the sidelines of the university, no progress will be made in increasing student performance. In order to have this increase, it would behoove these professionals to get their hands dirty in a sense by always reaching out to students.

When looking at my philosophical positionality, it should be clear that I value student affairs and higher education as a place of being more hands on. The approach of hands on means that we purposefully engage with our students to get to know them better, rather than just being a number. Rendon & Muñoz (2011), take on the idealization that professionals can benefit from

the approach first scenario. As stated by the authors, “it is critical that validating agents actively reach out to students to offer assistance, encouragement, and support, as opposed to expecting students to ask questions first” (Rendon & Muñoz, 2011, p. 8). This means that in order to ensure that all students are being granted the ability to succeed, student affairs must be willing to dive in head first into whatever waters these students are swimming in. It does not hurt a professional to take the first step in assisting a student. We should want to support them and give them challenges after we have gotten what they need from us.

For the context of my thematic concern, it is crucial that those working with OOS students know what it entails to move from one place to another. If we continuously forget about this demographic of students, the chances of retention rates for these students dropping have the probability of increasing. While retention rates should not be the only concern of student affairs professionals, it should be a motivational factor. My positionality comes from the fact that we are to be encouraging our students and if that includes creating special spaces for each demographic then it is a chance institutions should be willing to take.

Historical Context

Start of Higher Education

The colleges found before 1781, such as Harvard, Dartmouth, Columbia, Brown etc., have created a great memory when digging into the history of Higher Education. These institutions have acquired a sense of prestige along with the longevity of time they have been around (Thelin, 2004). This meaning of prestige and longevity comes from the ideals that these institutions have already been around for a long time resulting in historical foundations to be built within the campus. Harvard, being around the longest, has created the rapport of being a

prestigious institution with only those of status/financial ability applying. Those outside of those aspects being considered lucky and going against the quo of the campus.

Each of these campuses had buildings that became pillars of their influence for being part of higher education's past. These earlier universities, in particular Harvard, had been created for those planning to become part of the ministry. The precedent for this being that these private institutions would prepare those going into ministry to go out and serve the local communities. Once these private colleges began to gain traction, they opened more to being focused around medicine and law as well.

In reality, while these are the starting points of higher education, there is little to no credibility with the lack of reliable students and no steady funding (Labaree, 2017). While this may have been seen as the negative in today's day, this actually assisted the universities learn how to work with turmoil of competition and financial help. This weakness became a strength going from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century (Labaree, 2017). By having to rely solely on student interest or location, it gave universities the ability to fight for their institution to stay open. While there is a lack of statistics for what the demographic was for these private institutions, it was marked that the first to attend an institution was men but they didn't just consist of rich men but farmers and working class as well.

In the nineteenth century, it became an opening point for everyday citizens to gain access to a public education. Ben Franklin, along with six U.S presidents who were in favor of national universities, was an advocate for separating the university/education from the religious aspects that it had previously been connected to (Snyder, 1993, p. 63). Unfortunately, the congress continually denied these requests for separation. While the public university may have not been

an option yet, there was a concept being created called normal school. The first normal school was founded in 1823 and typically hosted a two-year program (Snyder, 1993, p. 63). This institution was put in place to teach high school graduates to become teachers which would help with increasing the education system beyond what it already was.

Public Higher Education

According to Snyder (1993), “national education statistics were not collected prior to 1869-70” (p. 63) meaning it is a little difficult when trying to determine the actual facts of who was involved in the universities and when certain implementations were put into place. This is why, in order to find out what universities were historically accurate, it comes down to looking at current institutions and determining their founding date. When it came to the first public universities, it was often thought that it was University of Georgia but in reality, University of North Carolina opened its doors first (Snyder, 1993, p. 63).

David Labaree, author of *A Perfect Mess: The Unlikely Ascendancy of American Higher Education*, creates the argument that the higher education system in the United States of America did not have a plan to be created and instead just kind of happened (Labaree, 2017). What this insinuates is that the process of creating these universities was not set into motion because someone decided that this education was something that the people needed. Instead, it was more that people took an interest in increasing their educational value so the government began to open more universities, which out of the original 31, only 5 were public institutions (Snyder, 1993, p. 63). Though there were not a lot of public institutions and no way to track the number of enrollment, it can be shown by the amount of universities that began to sprout up all over the states. With the growth of the institutions came the growth of the academia being

offered. Once curriculum was being taken into consideration for these citizens attending these colleges, it vastly expanded from ministry, law, and medical. Soon enough, institutions were “extended beyond liberal arts to include medicine, law, engineering, military science, commerce, theology, and agriculture” (Thelin, 2004).

As stated by Labaree (2017) “by 1910, we had nearly a thousand colleges and universities with a third of a million students.” This kind of statistic shows how universities were beginning to open their doors to more students from different backgrounds. In fact, it was noted that institutions with the goal of enrolling those who were originally rejected had begun to surface more into the education world during the nineteenth century (Labaree, 2017). The demographic that was being given the chance to expand their education past high school creates the conversation that this isn’t just deemed for one specific group of people. Anyone can benefit from a college education and in the long run return the favor by giving back to society with the use of their college degree.

Labaree (2017) has created a tier system in explaining where each different university comes into play. Ivy league, Harvard/Columbia, have already been covered in the sense that they were originally put into place for those who could reach the opportunity, in this case being white men. The next tier is that of land-grant colleges which began to appear in mid- to late nineteenth century were created for the fulfillment of needs not being met by universities (Labaree, 2017). The reason for land-grant institutions was for a wider array of students with programs that can be easier utilized for students not in a position to get into a private university/college. With land-grant institutions came the Morrill Act which provided each state with 30,000 acres of Federal land which was then sold by the state (Morrill Act, 1862). The money that was received back

from being sold would go towards funding public colleges which promised to have agriculture and the mechanical arts as programs. With this act put into place, it opened the doors to sixty-nine different colleges.

After having already mentioned the third tier, the normal school, the fourth tier is community colleges, also known as junior college. These institutions came into play in the twentieth century to offer students at a lower level in terms of financial (Labaree, 2017). Though these institutions were not able to mimic that of a university in terms of academia, students often attend community colleges for their first two years. Once they have completed the two years, students will utilize the ability to transfer into a different school to move up the tiers. Labaree (2017) labels the community college as a “vocationally tinged, low cost, and easy access way to pick up the first two years of college” (Labaree, 2017) which translates that this education option at least creates this potential for students.

Defunding of Public Higher Education

It does not go unnoticed that the state has had an affinity for providing greater financial support when it comes to higher education. The way that state and federal funding worked was in two different ways. Federal funding was more on an individual basis for students, such as financial aid, whereas the state helped more in a general sense of the university, such as fixing a building (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2019). In the 90s, state funding per student was roughly 140% more than what the federal government had assisted with (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2019). While these are great statistics, the U.S has experienced great financial difficulties over the last two decades including the Great Recession. Jumping from the 90s to 2015, the state funding per

student dropped to only 12% above that of federal funding. This is a 128% decrease in funding per the state.

Policymakers running the institutions as well as the federal funding are often faced with making tough choices as they need to decide what is needed within the institution and what can be cut in order to preserve money. An example of this tough choice making is when they were in the middle of “debating renewal of the Higher Education Act, the law that governs most federal financial aid” (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2019). This had last been renewed in 2008 and had they decided to not renew this policy, it would have affected the pell grant which is the biggest federal grant made for higher education students. While the federal budget has not been as affected by higher education, only using about 2% to fund (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2019), the same cannot be said for state funding. In fact, state funding uses “under half of the U.S. Department of Education’s budget” (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2019) for the purpose of higher education.

Recruitment of Out-of-State

Federal and state funding has rapidly decreased because of the state of the economy and the neoliberal mindset that sees college as an individual business decision. With this decrease happening, universities have begun to rely on recruitment of OOS students, specifically those from wealthy, predominantly white, high schools. Scott Jaschik (2019) explained, “leading public universities contribute in a significant way to these advantages with their recruitment of out-of-state students” (Jaschik, 2019). With this being said, it provides the insistence the universities are seeing the benefit in financial status by recruiting OOS students due to the tuition and fees being higher. Jaschik even supports this tuition incentive by stating that this

“out-of-state strategy is seen by many public higher education leaders as a way to bring in high out-of-state tuition rates to support the overall operation” (Jaschik, 2019). This strategy is a sure way to bring in students from out-of-state and have them paying the increased tuition, which will only increase the financial stability for institutions across the United States.

Conclusion

While it used to be private colleges resorting to out-of-state recruitment, it is now the state universities who are using this tactic to their advantage. With the steady increase of OOS students being brought onto campus, it is most important that student affairs professionals bring their brain power together to create equal opportunities for this demographic. If they are continually ignored as the years go or just used as a money token, it may not be long till OOS students decide to only attend in-state universities which would save them money in the long run. From the statistics shown above, OOS student populations are on the rise and it is time to give them the space and energy that they deserve, similar to their in-state/international counterparts.

Current State

While it might not be widely known, the enrollment of OOS students at public colleges and universities has increased while in-state student enrollment has been receding. As explained by Nick Strayer (2016) “the number of out-of-state freshmen attending them has nearly doubled since 1986, according to Department of Education data” (p. 1). Pennsylvania, for example, has received more students coming from another state to attend a Pennsylvania institution than it has sent Pennsylvania students to attend college in another state (Strayer, 2016). According to Stayer

(2016), 8,751 students came to Pennsylvania for public college while 6,995 residents left Pennsylvania for other states, mostly moving to Ohio to attend school (Strayer, 2016).

The statistics given by Strayer were from the 2014 school year and yet those statistics have only risen as admissions officers continued the agenda of recruiting more and more OOS students. As detailed by Simonton (2019), many institutions have begun hiring recruiters to work primarily out of state. Chelsea Marsh, a regional recruiter for the University of Alabama, for example, detailed how this has become a driving force within public universities (Simonton, 2019). Marsh has the job of tabling at high school events in South Carolina in hopes that students will choose the University of Alabama when their time of college selection arrives. As explained by Simonton (2019), recruitment of OOS and international students is rising to an all-time high to the point where “more than 240 public universities across the country admitted fewer in-state students in 2017” (para. 7). Connected to this is the fact that in-state student enrollment has decreased by approximately 10 percent (Simonton, 2019). As numbers of in-state students decline, public universities are focusing less on recruiting their in-state population to make up for this lagging enrollment. By bringing in OOS students that pay higher tuition rates, these institutions increase the money the university is gaining.

In the case of Chelsea Marsh, the University of Alabama alone has had an increase of OOS enrollment of more than 28 percent from 2012 to 2017 (Simonton, 2019). Because of this increase, in-state students have begun to request universities limit their number enrollment of OOS students. The purpose of this request being that the university ensure it holds enough space for the students that are residential taxpayers of the state. While OOS students may not be paying

those taxes, they are making up the financial burden by paying twice the amount of tuition when it comes to attending the institution.

Some states that are in need of recruitment for these OOS students have now created scholarships specifically for them. These scholarships can pay for half of the tuition or more depending on what the institution is allowed to offer. An example of this can be found in a college in Massachusetts that has offered a full-tuition merit scholarship to 15 OOS students applying to the college (Scholarship360, 2019). These students don't need to fill out any extra forms, but they do have to be a part of the early application process.

As argued by Groen and White (2003), there is often a tension between states and state universities regarding priorities with student enrollment. The authors explain that “states have an interest in using their public universities as tools to encourage economic development,” such as preparing a workforce that will live (and pay taxes) within the State (p. 2). Universities, on the other hand, “have an interest in attracting high ability students” and “in maximizing revenue from tuition” but often “have little interest in where their students come from or where they go after graduation” (p. 2). Instead, it is more about what the student can bring to the university whether that be prestige or higher tuition.

Often then, in the modern era, public state institutions will open more non-resident spots to attract OOS students. Most universities will hold a limited number of spots for OOS candidates and by allocating more slots, it becomes increasingly possible for more OOS students to apply. If students notice that an institution that is out of their state is opening more spots, then they are more likely to go for those spots, which increase the traffic of the university. A goal of a

university is to get the word out that the administrators want more people from different areas to gain traction in different states.

Some, however, do not view the increase of OOS student admissions in such a positive light. Ozan Jaquette (2017) is one such critic of increasing OOS enrollments. Jaquette argues that OOS enrollment has played a role in excluding in state students from state colleges and universities. As Jaquette (2017) contends, in previous years public institutions were the perfect setting for students of lower income to achieve their goals in becoming professionals, but now these flagship universities are choosing OOS students “over the moderate- and low-income state residents who they were created to serve”(p. 2). Jaquette (2017) even suggests that the push to enroll higher paying OOS students has sometimes led institutions to lower academic standards for their enrollment. This is a result of the neoliberalization of higher education, which treats students, particularly OOS students as customers instead of students that deserve quality education.

While state colleges and universities were created to primarily serve in-state students, it is important to recognize universities as changing entities that have always sought to adventure into new territory, whether that be with scholarship or student enrollment. Cutting off OOS students, in today’s climate, would have serious implications for state institutions. What if, for example, an institution that relies heavily on their OOS student population ceased enrollments for these students? There is a university that was in this exact position in Oregon. At this institution, 46.1% of the undergraduate class in 2016-2017 was OOS students (Hubbard, 2017). If that is taken away from the university, they would lose a little less than half of their population creating financial ripple effects for even the in-state students.

For student affairs professionals, however, the focus should be on supporting the student experience no matter where the student may come from. We should look at OOS students not as dollar signs, but as new members of our campus community. At the end of the day, students attending an institution are trying to gain an education to make our society a better place. It should never be about the institution's standing but instead about what we, as higher education professionals, can do to ensure these students are successful. OOS students should have the ability to pursue what education they want to have in their life and to the best of their ability.

When taking into consideration the students that decide to make their own path and travel outside their home, there is a factor that can cause their downfall: homesickness. Homesickness is a component of primarily first year students, which hinders their ability to adjust to life on campus. It is crucial for students to adjust to campus efficiently in order to retain them in the university. English, Davis, Wei and Gross (2017) conducted a study to see if homesickness is something that continually decreased as the semester continued. As the research came to a close, it was determined that the students that experienced homesickness were those that were having a hard time adjusting to campus life, thus making it harder to retain these students on campus. For OOS students, homesickness has the potential to be more pronounced. They do not have the luxury of returning home for a quick stay after a tough week. Likewise, their family and friends might find it hard to visit. Without proper support on campus to make up for the lack of support nearby campus, OOS students are put at higher risk of leaving their chosen institution.

Relevant Factors

Religion

Religion has been embedded in the history of Higher Education since the beginning (Thelin, 2004). The practice of religion is that of conflict, especially when it comes to a residence area or on the campus in general. Institutions that are of religious affiliation have a lot less to be concerned about when it comes to student practicing as there are spaces for these students, i.e. campus ministry or prayer room. Public institutions face a little more of a challenge as the need to ensure the law is being followed while students are still expressing their freedom. These universities have to face what is called the Establishment Clause. This is a supreme court order put into place in which public education settings are forbidden from “school-sponsored prayer or religious indoctrination” (ACLU). This means that no matter the situation an institution that serves a public setting cannot allow a specific religion to be commonly practiced.

In terms of residence halls, it gets a little trickier. Harvey, Moran, Roberts and Tobin (2008) discussed the connection of religion within residence halls. The authors explain that “in the context of residential life, the question of how to allow free expression of religious beliefs without "establishing" a religion is a common one” (Harvey et al., 2008, p. 4). The meaning behind this is that the university is constantly in battle to determine how they can permit students to practice their beliefs without letting one religion be continuously seen. In the terms of my concern, this comes with students from OOS who possibly come from a religiously affiliated background. It comes down to assisting these students with local spots surrounding the campus where they can practice or having that conversation of connecting them with someone on campus who can assist them due to having similar associations.

Social

OOS students not only have to endure the transition of environments but also the aspect of meeting new people and dealing with learning how to socialize from the beginning, specifically if they are of an introverted personality. Bethea, DeAngelo and Weidman (2014) emphasized that the social aspects lie within a couple different groups. Bethea et al. (2014) explained, “primary socialization processes include interpersonal relationships (peer and faculty interaction), intrapersonal/learning activities (studying and attending lectures), and integration (incorporation into campus academic and social life)” (p. 3). For OOS students, they will rely more on gaining connections early on in their time on the campus. A key point being made is that students need to create connections with peers and faculty. The other facets would fall into line as the student gains a relationship with these specific areas.

My thematic concern lies around the prospect of students gaining resources on campus and this also means making connections with students living within their community. Bethea et al. (2014) highlighted that intergroup learning “was directly related to gains in pluralistic orientation skills”(p. 5). The understanding behind pluralistic is the process of advocating for groups to co-exist together; also meaning the recognition of more than one ultimatum. In this instance, it can be taken for the understanding that there is more than one group of students that will need the assistance in getting comfortable within the college environment. While in-state and OOS students may not be different in both transitioning to college, it is about the location that makes the split happen. By having these two groups interact with the understanding that one is slightly different in terms of coming onto campus, the understanding begins to evolve and create the connections in which one hand helps the other.

Increased Debt

OOS students face higher tuition than in-state students. With in-state tuition rising, it will undoubtedly lead to higher out-of-state tuition (Greene, 1994, p. 2). This, however, means that these students are facing higher debt when leaving the institution. A positive factor that Green discovered in his research is that “when state residents will face bigger net fiscal gains from the attraction of high-income residents that they charge lower tuitions to out-of-state students” (Greene, 1994, p. 8). This means that if a university receives a high influx of funds due to a recruitment of wealthy in-state students, the tuition rates of OOS students will be lowered to make it more affordable. While this can be used as a positive for future reference, it is still a factor that OOS students are paying more when attending institutions. For my thematic concern, it relates to making sure this is being noticed as a harsh factor OOS students have to deal with during and after they finish their education.

Graduate Assistantship Perspective

Because my graduate assistantship/internship was working within Residence Life, I had the most amount of interaction with students from different locations. Even within my staff of resident assistants, I had a handful that were OOS students. This meant that when it came time to go home or when they wanted to let me know that they would be leaving for the weekend, most would notify me so I knew they were no longer in the state the campus resided in but instead in their home state.. When I had discussed with them about their jobs as resident assistants, most of the time they would reply that they had applied for the job as it granted easier access to housing rather than attempting to pay. OOS students have a bigger concern when it comes to housing stability because they have a smaller chance of being able to commute from home. Paying for

housing is also an additional cost for OOS students who cannot commute like many in-state students can. For my campus alone, a majority of the students are from the surrounding area, meaning it is easier for them to commute from home. The small amount of resident assistants on our campus are primarily from surrounding states, therefore housing is a necessity. By being a resident assistant, their housing is guaranteed and covered meaning their cost isn't as much as it normally would be. Hearing my staff state that this provides a guaranteed placement eases my heart knowing they will be able to continue their education with one less burden, but it showed me this extra challenge faced by OOS students.

The other thing I learned is that one must be ready for the unexpected when it comes to OOS students being on campus. Due to the coronavirus, many campuses were forced to close for at least two weeks, my own university included. My biggest concern in those moments was how our OOS students would get home if they didn't have a car or the money to fly home or catch a train. I had brought these concerns up to my supervisor and he stated that we would keep that in mind, but that students must leave campus by any means necessary. This is when my concern was made more prevalent in how universities don't take every student into consideration. If we did, there would have been more of a thought process when telling students to evacuate campus and only giving them a two-day warning. While it is understandable that there wasn't a chance to give these students special attention, it would have been better to grant them an extra day's stay or give a list of off campus resources that they could utilize until they were able to go home.

My biggest piece that I learned from my position is that OOS students should never be seen as weak or incapable of being successful within their college environment. Having interacted with OOS students so much, they have shown me that moving out-of-state has made

them mature in a way that staying home wouldn't have done for them. I had discussed my thematic concern and each admitted that having someone recognize their initial struggle would have been a blessing as they wouldn't have felt alone. OOS students, once given the initial tools they need to succeed, can be one of the biggest powerhouses on a campus as they now would have knowledge of both their university state and their home state. I noticed a majority of students working in admissions and performing campus tours were OOS students, which comforted students looking to come to campus from another state or location.

Sometimes it is simply about being someone they can rely on. I learned in my position that I am a reliable source that my students can talk to when they feel as though they cannot turn anywhere else. I like to use Schlossberg (1989) in this case because it is a very individual based assessment. My students have me as a shoulder to lean on but they also know at the end of the day, their decision must come from their own being. I had a student who didn't know what to do when it came to the point of her moving back home or staying on campus. What I did with her was sit down and list out pros and cons. Her biggest pro was that she loved being an RA but it was hard to work part time while doing her job in the Residence Halls. At this moment, I told her how much I loved her being on my staff but it needed to come from her as to which made her feel more complete. In the end, she decided to stay on staff because of how much joy being an RA brought her. This utilized Schlossberg's theory that it comes from the individual. She thought of the situation, put into context her own views, came to me about my support/opinion and then came to terms with her decision.

As mentioned before, it is important to remember that there is a constant change within higher education. This is one of the biggest challenges as not everyone can keep up with the flow

of things. I truly discovered that, with OOS students it is hard when it comes to moving out. Whether this means they are leaving mid-way, randomly or at the end of the year, it isn't always as easy to get their stuff out of the Residence Hall. The most difficult part with this being when checking rooms and still finding futon couches or packing bins filled with items. When reaching out to these students, more often than not, we are told that they were unable to bring them home at that time and point. What our Residence Life office began doing was give them a window of time to do something with the materials or they would be charged. I don't personally like the option of charging students as they already might be having a hard time getting to their home in the first place. The one way I managed to deal with this scenario is by talking with the residents before check out occurs. I began to ask residents if they would be able to get all of their belongings home by the time check out rolled around. If the student was unable to say yes, I would offer them solutions to storage or suggest donation of the items if they knew they wouldn't need them after the school year.

Another challenge that I commonly came to face with is other departments not necessarily knowing how Residence Life works. All too often I came into contact with someone not understanding that our jobs are more than glorified babysitter, this was an actual term that I had come into contact with. I feel as though no one gets Residence Life as it is one of the departments that spends the most amount of time in contact with residents as our officer is literally located in a Residence Hall. I had come in contact with a professor who didn't know where a resident was as she hadn't been in class and hadn't returned any phone calls. I went to the resident's room but she was not there. I had found out after calling her that she was currently in her home state dealing with the death of a family member. When reaching back out of the

professor, he didn't understand why the student just couldn't come to his office to talk. It was in the moment I realized that professors truly don't know anything about the students outside the classroom.

It was at this moment I had to accept that not everyone is going to understand what student affairs professionals, especially residence life folks, deal with on a regular basis. Professors have the job of teaching students in the classroom and they may view that as the extent of their job. It would be easier for OOS students to communicate their situations if professors took an interest in their outside life. I started to manage this by building a communication with professors when students were having a difficult time. I began to communicate with advisors. I knew it was working when advisors began to reach out in regards to different students that were having a hard time.

Chapter 4: Program Design and Implementation

The main focus of the previous chapter was the lack of research done on the success of OOS students. While it may seem simple enough to equate these students to international students, it is, in fact, a little more complex than that. OOS students are grouped with other categories of students, which results in the student feeling left behind or completely ignored. By bringing forward the lack of research on these students as well as what research has been done, it highlights the dialogue needed for the future generations of OOS students in higher education to have a more positive college experience.

One of the ways we can truly improve the college experience for OOS students is by creating a program designed specifically with them in mind. The program created would be a Living Learning Community (LLC) called *New State of Mind*. This LLC is a place where OOS students will live together with the comfort of knowing others in the hall have had a similar experience. This intervention is geared towards OOS first year students, although transfer OOS students will be given the option to join the community as well.

Purpose

The goals and objectives set in place for the *New State of Mind* community are created with end results in mind. The main goals of the intervention are:

- Create a centralized space for OOS students to prosper and grow within the community and institution
- Build connections within their new environment that will assist them in their college transition and experience
- Increase enrollment/retention/completion rates of OOS students

These three main goals are centered on ensuring that OOS students will have the best college experience as well as maintaining the numbers of OOS needed on campus. These goals correlate with objectives needed in order for the program to be successful. The base of this intervention is to find ways the university can improve its interaction with OOS students. The following objectives are what is needed if the university wishes to have a successful community:

- Obtain a physical space within a resident hall for student growth
- Develop and implement a volunteer buddy system in which the involved students can/will utilize in building their campus connections
- Understand how retention is affected based on the results of the intervention by accessing data on a regular basis.

Once these objectives are realized, the program can be implemented. Universities can use this type of program to their advantage (i.e., increased enrollment of OOS which depending on institutional type yields increased tuition dollars) while also granting OOS students the necessary means to have a successful college career.

Now that it has been discussed what the goals and objectives of the LLC, all that is left is to talk about the outcomes desired of these students. While it could be as simple as wanting the student to continue their education at the institution after their LLC year is over, it needs to be more in depth. My outcomes include understanding and enhancing student development as a focus for success. The following outcomes are what is desired to showcase the successful nature of *New State of Mind* :

- Students will be able to correctly identify each needed resource on campus.

- Students will showcase their comfort on the campus by becoming actively involved.
- Recruitment rates of the LLC remain steady after each fiscal year.

Each of these outcomes will be possible as long as the LLC is given the chance to show that these students need the program on campus as well as the benefit it would grant the university.

Theoretical Frameworks

Schlossberg's (1989) Marginality and Mattering theory serves as a framework for developing, implementing and advocating for this intervention. This theory is focused around the prospect of what a student starts out as and how the university can transform their thinking into a new mind set by paying attention to the student as a whole (Schlossberg, 1989). When an OOS student first moves onto their new campus, they might feel as though they fall into the marginality category (Schlossberg, 1989, p. 7). This category is that of feeling self-conscious or inferior compared to that of their campus friends. These feelings could come from that of not having the same experiences as their fellow campus interactions, in this case being from the home state of the university. Having these doubts or troubles become a problem when the student feels they want to be comfortable but are afraid to because of the fear that they may be singled out. For this marginality, there are two different variations: permanent and temporary. In the case of the university, the student marginality should be temporary as if it becomes permanent the student might transfer out back to their hometown.

The second half of this lens is that of the mattering portion. It is this aspect that gets the students into the level of comfort they need to begin to believe that they can achieve their college experience. Within this section, there are four levels of mattering: attention, importance,

dependence, and ego-extension (Schlossberg, 1989, p 9). The attention and importance levels are based on the aspect that the student understands that their needs are being viewed and that the university is doing what it needs to in order to ensure that they can be met. The dependence aspect is getting the student to show more vulnerability and knowing they can use the university as a source of support. Last is ego-extension which means that the university/those surrounding the student will be filled with pride/sadness depending on the success/failure of this student (Schlossberg, 1989, p. 10). This entire portion is based on the idea that the student is important to the university, hence why the LLC would be a valuable asset. It is an already preset area that the student knows will give them the support to be successful.

Using Schlossberg's Transition Theory as a second framework will inform the programmatic aspects. Transition Theory is a practice focused on the three different types of transition: anticipated, unanticipated and non-event (Schlossberg, 1995). In this case, it would be an anticipated transition as the student graduates from secondary education and moves on to higher education. It is about ensuring this student that this transition period is normal as they venture through this time in their life. The theory itself has identified the four S's that will influence the ability to cope with the transition.

The first S is the situation and in this case, it would be the student moving out of state and into a new environment. This transition portion can be viewed as temporary as the student is able to move back to their home state once they have finished their degree. If the student is given the proper tools to handle the situation at hand, then they will be able to transition into campus life a little smoother. The second S is self which stands for the student. It is in the student's mindset to see if they feel strong enough to handle the transition (Guido et al. 2016, p. 48). The

university can assist with this portion by keeping an open mind and listening to any of the struggles that the student feels they are having difficulty with.

Following the first two of the S's comes the third which starts for support. Support comes into play when the university is doing it's best to help the student body in any way possible. OOS students need support when it comes to moving onto campus as they may have never been away from home for a long time period. This support also comes from the student's personal relationships. The last S is that of strategies, also known as coping mechanisms. While this is something the student needs to evaluate themselves (Guido et al. 2016, p. 59), the university can help by creating the *New State of Mind* LLC. This LLC is a strategy for the students to see that they do matter and that they have a support system. This entire program is based around the idea that these students face a large deal of transition: from moving into a new state, starting college and meeting new friends to discovering who they are as human beings. Higher education professionals should start to consider how we can bridge the gap in reassuring our OOS students.

Program: New State of Mind

The program designed to assist OOS students with their transition into their new environment is one focusing on the integration aspect. For my program, I propose a Living Learning Community (LLC), called *New State of Mind*, that will serve as a centrally located area in which 36 OOS students will share the same floor of a residence hall as they all grow accustomed to their campus along with their new state. *New State of Mind* would include programming and meetings to guarantee the successful transition of these students.

There are three main components to ensure the proper success of the LLC as a whole:

staffing, programming and a buddy system for the residents. Holding these three components, along with collecting data on what needs to be improved and what does not, gives those in charge of the LLC the chance to prove to these students that they do belong in this new environment and that they can thrive after being given the chance to situate themselves. By creating this placement, it grants OOS students a chance to take the time they need while also being given a backbone created by their institution.

Staffing

The first priority of *New State of Mind* would be staffing. Staff would be in charge of making sure that students receive the needed assistance to prosper. An LLC is usually managed by a professor who is teaching a class that has a focus on the main connection the students have, such as an Honors LLC for students who surpass the average GPA. For this LLC, it would be coordinated by the Office of Residence Life as it primarily has the target goal of helping the students feel comfortable on campus. Residence Life would be in charge of determining the location and the size for this program. As previously mentioned, most LLCs are managed by a professor but in this case, there would be a live-in professional that the students can rely on that will be in the community on a regular basis. This staffing pattern gives the students the reassurance that there is someone closely located. The live-in professional would need to be someone who previously has experience working with student development and transition, such as working with international students.

Alongside the live-in professional would be a resident assistant (RA) to help with everyday hall living issues for the residents. The RA, in particular, would be in charge of coordinating programming for the residents as well as helping with any kind of hall situations,

such as conflicts or needs of residents. This RA would receive specialized training on working with OOS students, focusing particularly on two things: the transition period with positive/negative effects on the students and how homesickness can have a drastic effect on the students in the institution. This training would take place previous to the OOS residents moving on to campus. It would be highly recommended that this RA be a student who is originally from OOS as it will create that connection between them and the residents. This small connection will help the students see that it is possible to be successful in their new location by having the RA lead as an example.

The framework of Sanford's Theory of Challenge and Support (1967) creates the idea that there needs to be a middle ground when working with students. There is a big difference between doing everything for a student and not helping them at all. As student affairs professionals, one should be able to lend a helping hand to the student while also having them take responsibility for the mission ahead. Employing challenge and support grants students the ability to grow on a diagonal slope, slowly going upward (Sanford, 1967). If we just continuously support the student and only offer to do everything for them, they will remain stagnant resulting in the inability to do things for themselves. If the university offers nothing but challenges, they will remain stagnant as well but with the result being the student possibly leaving the institution. By creating that diagonal slope, students can successfully complete the journey of college knowing that the institution was the perfect balance of helpful but also challenging.

New State of Mind would be the perfect balance for these students. The LLC is about assistance while also challenging the student to break out into new aspects of the university. This

is mainly why the community is only a one-year program because it helps with that transition and then encourages the students to break out during their second year in college.

Programming

The students involved in the New *State of Mind* would be moved in before the returning students, around the same time as first year students. By allowing them to move on to campus earlier, it would create that sense of comfort to make connections before the campus becomes busy with the rest of the student population. They would receive their own individual orientation along with the one already set for the first-year students. This orientation would not be a standard practice but instead more focused on the student getting a solid footing in their new space. This orientation would last one day and would include students introducing themselves to each other, which involves ice breakers, as well as understanding the layout of their floor/residence hall. The live-in professional and RA would show the students the campus and bring them to dinner in the campus dining hall. This would be a small introduction to what would happen through the rest of the semester. There would also be a meeting after dinner to go over the contract (See appendix A) that students had to sign before entering the LLC which would entail all the things they would participate in or keep in order so they can remain in the LLC.

A part of the programming model includes a monthly meeting that all of the students would be required to attend. This meeting would serve as a check-in so that each resident can see how each other is doing as well as get the chance to talk to some people that they may not have the chance to meet up with. This meeting would be planned out to take into consideration each resident's schedule and plan it at a time that shows each resident is available. This meeting slot

would be placed in their contract as an understanding that they must attend. One unique aspect of these meetings is the inclusion of a meal. Each time a meal is part of the meeting, it will include a dish or dishes from one of the student's home state. Students will be asked to write down their favorite local dish and the dishes will be given to the food service staff. They will work to recreate the dish, possibly in conjunction with the student.

As for the actual programs happening within the LLC, there would be two major types: on-campus and off-campus. It is clear what these two variations mean but it is what the students will be doing during these two types of programs that make the world of difference. With on-campus programs, the RA would work in coordination with the live-in professional to get approval for different programs that would be hosted in the hall or in a local common area. Residence Life would give the budget to the RA for an allotted amount to spend on each program. In total, the RA would need to complete six programs a semester, leaving them to have one prepared every three weeks which leaves the RA two weeks to prepare the event and make sure to have the needed materials. The reason for this spacing is to ensure that there is something always happening in the hall which leaves little room for the residents to feel lonely or want to leave campus.

The programming itself would need to correspond with a variety of categories from educational to fun. The reason for this is to keep the students engaged but also be able to have fun with bonding activities with their fellow residents. For the educational aspect of the programming, it would be necessary that the RA implement activities that give the students a piece of education while living in the residence hall. This does not mean that the students will be completing homework or filling out worksheets. Instead it would be focused around them

gaining new information about things that particularly relate to them. An example would be a program based on the history of their new surrounding area(see Appendix B). If they were to be living in a town in Pennsylvania, it can be a program where they receive information about when the town was founded and what it is particularly known for. It breaks the discomfort of the students not knowing their location and gives them backstory to their new space.

The other side of this programming would be that of fun activities. These can range from simple interactive games to craft-based projects. These would be focused solely on giving the residents something to do if they were not feeling particularly interested in anything else and also to hang out with their fellow residents. These craft type programs can be that of having the residents decorate their own door tag by giving them their state shape or having them create a picture that resembles something close to them. It is about giving them the chance to express themselves through an individual-based activity. The games can be something that might have particularly held a special memory to the residents from their home state. Again, it brings a piece of home to campus that they may share with the other residents.

These programming tactics are a focus point of keeping the students busy while living on campus. If these students are left alone with their thoughts, it can cause more harm than good which, in my opinion, could result in the students leaving often on weekends and then leaving completely by the end of the term. A common phrase I have heard from the students I have interacted with that call their institution a suitcase campus. While this might be true for some, there are still students on the campus to think about, in this case the OOS students. Programming should still be a continued event over the weekend so we can avoid students feeling alone or isolated.

Campus Comrades

Previously mentioned in the three main points of this LLC would be that of a buddy system. This system would be created the second year of the LLC as it would utilize the graduated residents from the previous year as the volunteers. Campus Comrades is something that would be at the ready in case a resident would like to participate. The reasoning behind this is to create a system in which the residents of the LLC have someone else to be in contact with that has previous experience with the program. These are students who no longer live in the community but can assist with the transition. It gives a different perspective for the student so that they don't constantly have to talk to the live-in professional or the resident assistant. The relation of this to the program is to keep the students engaged with the campus by introducing them to someone who can be seen as a success in finishing the LLC and being completely immersed in campus culture. This student can be of service to the LLC resident in different ways:

- Show them how everything functions
 - Computer lab
 - Dining Hall
 - Campus store
- Introduce them to different activities/clubs
- Give them advice on different classes
- Have a meal together to connect
- Assist with additional questions

The way this would be sorted out is by pairing the volunteer with student(s) that are similar in personality or location. Each volunteer could have up to two residents as long as they are comfortable with it. This program is completely by choice and would just be another opportunity for students to place a volunteer option on their resume as well as help fellow OOS students.

The overall goal with this part of the program is to get the students out of the created comfort zone that is the LLC. At the end of the day, they will have that LLC but they should be able to explore outside context while still having that backbone of the LLC. It can lead to great opportunities that they might have realized if they did not take that leap into meeting a new person and looking at other campus perspectives.

Implementation

When thinking about what needs to be done in order for this intervention to be successful, it is primarily about making sure the institution is on board with ensuring these students receive the needed attention. The implementation of this program would take other departments being involved in the recruitment process as well as ensuring the LLC has the needed funds. It is also about being given the needed time to have the LLC be successful. For this to be the top level of success, it would take roughly a year to gauge it. The progress of the LLC would be dependent on the success of the first class. This first class would also be dependent on the continuation of Campus Comrades. The timeline (see Appendix C) for this program would change from one year to the next. Once the first year would be over, those in charge of the LLC would change the progress of the timeline depending on the ending results of the questionnaire that the students fill out at the end of the year.

Recruitment of Participants

In order to recruit students to the LLC, we would need to rely on the assistance from admission and residence life/housing. Admissions would be able to assist residence life in the process of bringing students on to campus that would be interested in being a part of the LLC. This would happen primarily when admissions is hosting school visitations and broadcasting about the LLC. Residence Life is the one that would be in charge greeting the students during on campus visitations and showing them the LLC. The office of residence life can help give more in depth features of what the *New State of Mind* LLC can assist with if they choose to become a part of the institution.

The second part of recruitment would be the housing application that all incoming residents fill out prior to moving onto campus. There would be a section of the application that asks if the resident is interested in joining a living learning community. If the student selects yes, a list of the communities would be exposed, including that of the OOS community. Along with the check box for this LLC, there would a description reading:

“Are you coming to *insert institution* from out-of-state? Well look no further than this community! The *New State of Mind* community welcomes anyone who is coming to campus from a new state. We want to help you transition into your new home by showing you the way with the help of others in a similar situation. By becoming a part of this community, we will assist you in the inner workings of our institution and ensure that you are comfortable. Join us today!”

This description is key to recruitment. Students want to know what they are signing up for before they actually commit.

Budget and Funding

The budget (see Appendix D) would be composed of a different couple avenues, from the university itself to outside stakeholders. The budget would primarily be generated through the housing fees the students pay in order to be a part of the LLC. A concept that can be investigated is requesting Residence Life to add additional funding to the budget in order to go on the long-distance trips. This part of the budget would need to be dedicated towards just the LLC similar to how there is other budgets within a department for specific attributes. If Residence Life puts the money forward for the programming, it would make it a little easier if the second part of the budget plan from alumni doesn't go as smoothly.

The second option to achieve a budget is to reach out to Alumni who were attendees of the institution and had come from out-of-state. It comes from the idea that using the understanding of Alumni and how they felt when they had come to campus. It creates that connection that those students wouldn't feel the same way they did if they were given the chance to a better campus environment filled with opportunities to flourish. Alumni Relations can be a source utilized to get into contact with those who were viewed as OOS students. By pleading the case of not having these students experiencing the same disconnect that they might have faced, it opens the conversation of what they can do to help.

Challenges

The biggest challenge faced is by those that have not felt this challenge themselves. For institution leaders who do not understand that feeling of leaving everything behind, it can be

difficult to back a program for those exact reasons. It would be difficult to make these leaders see the effectiveness unless the students that would be involved come forward to talk about how this program would be helpful/effective for their growth within the campus. It is about hearing the voices of the students and what they need. The intention of creating this LLC is to create a space for a demographic of students that do not receive the recognition that they need. The intention of creating different departments is because we are trying to assist with their challenges as it does not matter if, as student affairs, we have personally experienced these challenges. Creating the different departments on campus should be more about what our students need than what we personally have experienced yourself.

Another challenge that might be faced with the LLC is the lack of student interest. If it comes to the point of students refusing to take part in the LLC, Residence Life would need to find an alternative method of bringing students in. This could possibly mean opening the LLC to other students in the institution. There are bound to be students already in their sophomore or junior year, possibly even transfers, that would wish to participate in this LLC, especially if it was introduced after they had started their education. By opening it to these students, it can assist with filling occupancy and also opening the conversation that even the upperclassmen students also need help with transitioning even if it has been a couple days.

A challenge faced in any residence hall, with or without LLCs, is the lack of student engagement when it comes to programming. A key point for these students to become accustomed to their new campus is being actively involved with hall programming. If the students decide not to be involved, it creates the dilemma that the concept of the LLC is not being met. While it is not possible to physically make sure these students meet the requirements,

it can be a time to create an incentive that will entice the student to apply to these programs. Something that I have noted is students enjoy participating when there is a prize at the end of the journey. A motivational piece that can be put in place is at the end of the semester, whoever has participated the most during programming or activity based events, would be placed in a raffle to win a gift card towards a restaurant in the surrounding area. The students who don't win can each receive a gift certificate towards the campus cafe/bookstore. This way people who do participate are rewarded for their efforts to be part of the community. If students who don't participate see this action, it might compel them to want to take part in activities.

Chapter 5: Evaluation and Leadership

For someone to be an effective leader in higher education and student affairs, they need to be acutely aware of their surroundings and the students they are interacting with on a regular basis. If this person does not have the ability to support students while also challenging systems, no progress will ever be made. This person should also be able to let others give their perspective and know when it is time to let someone else lead the conversation. A leader is not always someone who is in charge. A leader is someone who knows the people they are leading and also knows when it is time for someone else to shine. A leader is not always right or continuously has the best ideas.

In order to be a proper leader in higher education and student affairs, one must know when to take others' advice and advance in a direction that is appropriate for everyone. Communication and discussion are two components needed in making these decisions. Another connection to be an effective leader is understanding that not every student attending an institution has faced the same problems and that each of them is unique, hence why different programs are needed for different demographics of students.

In the terms of my thematic concern, a leader helping students who come from out-of-state must have the confidence that they can relate to these students as they transition to the institution. Being able to listen to how these students are struggling assists with the creation of a supportive structure that will help in ensuring they can be successful in their new environment. The other side is still making sure to challenge these students in not becoming complacent with their current emotional state. By challenging these students to step out of their comfort zone, one can motivate them to be more positive about their new living situation.

The other connection between being an effective leader and working with OOS students is knowing which students need to be approached and which do not. Not all OOS students need assistance with their transition. Some may be able to transition faster than others. It is about keeping an eye on any students that might be struggling or hesitant to attend the university in the first place. It is important for leaders of a campus to be seen as a resource that students can utilize, whether they realize they need it or not. By trying to force students to talk to us, it might only push them farther away and cause them to not trust those attempting to help. Someone in a leadership position has to always have an open mind and inviting presence that will lead these students to talk to us in their own time.

Leadership and New State of Mind

The purpose of *New State of Mind* is to encourage the OOS students of the institution to take risks while learning about their new environment through those who are already transitioned. There are four different leaders involved in the Living Learning Community--the live-in professional, the resident assistant, those choosing to participate in Campus Comrades, and the student themselves. Each level of leadership is important in their own functional sense.

The most influential person living within the LLC that is not a student is the live-in professional. This is the person that the residents will turn to when they are having significant struggles. The person is a professional in the higher education field and students can obtain advice about how to navigate some complexities that arise when one is far from home. This person is also the leader that takes the students on trips and can assess where the students are academically/personally. Leaders in this role will use the concepts of support and challenge to help students. Challenge and support are about giving the students in the LLC the help to be

successful while also pushing them to try things outside of their comfort zone. The live-in professional will need to take the lead in ensuring that the resident assistant is meeting the requirements of the job while also doing the same with the residents in terms of meeting all expectations of being a part of the community.

For the resident assistant (RA), it is about taking the lead of being a role model to the students in the LLC. The RA is someone who has the job of leading by example while also assisting with any transitional needs the students may have. This includes any crisis situations, perhaps revolving around homesickness, to conflicts the residents might be facing within themselves/friends/roommates. The resident assistant must be able to show the residents that the transition is possible, even if it does take longer for some students. An RA dedicates time to creating programs with the intention of leading the residents into an active role within the community.

Those dedicating time to Campus Comrades (CC) are leaders in the simple factor that they are taking time to introduce these new students to their home. Showing OOS students the facilities on campus as well as just checking on them gives them the feeling that they are noticed and cared about. Someone who is a leader cares about the people living in the same space as them. Those in the CC position want to show a leadership perspective that, similar to the RA, the transition can occur if given the opportunity. They lead by example from being in the same position previously as the new OOS students.

The last form of leadership within this LLC is where it all starts: the student. The student must be able to challenge themselves to assist with their transition. They must want to be at the institution and make the effort to become comfortable. A professional or other students can only

accompany these students to a certain level. This form of leadership does not necessarily mean that they must always be in charge but instead insist that they have the mentality to lead their own path to their destination.

When it comes to leading this intervention from my potential position it would be natural as residence life is my passion. Working within residence halls is an area I truly desire to pursue with my higher education policy and student affairs degree. Integrating this kind of position would come down to being able to talk to the stakeholders about investing in this program. The leadership I would utilize to move this programming forward would be the affiliative style approach as this style is seen as the “people first” tactic (Status Net). My goal in this program is to ensure the institution's residents are being heard and seen. This intervention is not about what I nor the university can gain, but what the students as a whole can gain. The stakeholders who are asked to invest in this program must understand the approach being used in crafting and implementing the intervention.

Utilizing this style of leadership has the benefit of meeting the needs of our residents. One of the key traits of the affiliative style is called other’s awareness which is when someone has the dedication and knowledge of the needs/emotions of others (Status Net). The main reason I am focused on this style is that I have been in the same position as these OOS students. Having never left home or my home state, moving to a new state was overwhelming. By sharing this personal story and putting it into perspective of how it can affect the students, makes it real and not just a simple thought. It also shows that it is possible to succeed without the program but if the program is in place, it can help the transition be smoother.

Assessment, Evaluation and New State of Mind

Assessment and evaluation are the key deciding factors for program sustainability. According to the Glossary of Education Reform for Journalists, Parents, and Community Members, assessment is a “wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students” (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014).

For the LLC, the assessment would come before it was implemented and would be focused around the lack of community space created for OOS students. This assessment is of importance as it shows the current state of OOS students. The assessment would include looking into the success rates of in-state students versus OOS students; measurements of GPA would be taken into account. The whole point of this assessment is to create the understanding of how OOS students are doing with the current status of the institution.

Assessment and evaluation are part of the process when going through action research. The definition of action research is “a wide variety of evaluative, investigative, and analytical research methods designed to diagnose problems or weaknesses” (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). When someone chooses to pursue action research it is to understand the problem and then propose a process to implement a change to solve that problem. Once the problem has been discovered, it is necessary to assess what is needed to make a change. Action Research can take place in multiple different settings and in this case, it would be academic/educational. An assessment measure(s) can help us understand what is needed as we build an intervention; an evaluation can help us understand if we met the needs with the intervention.

One way to determine the success of the *New State of Mind* LLC would be to examine the Campus Comrade program. It will be important to report the number of students who volunteer for the position. We can also survey these volunteers to understand their experiences as Campus Comrades. This data shows me that these students had a positive experience within the LLC and that the program can and should continue. One goal of this program is to ensure students feel as though they are part of the campus community. OOS students are just as important as any other students and student affairs educators should work to help these students transition and acclimate to their new environment. One informal way I might assess the success of the program is to hear that students are proud to be a part of the *New State of Mind* LLC. This anecdotal information is helpful to obtain as one informal measure of success.

There are a number of ways to assess and evaluate this program. Students living in a residence hall most likely complete satisfaction surveys about their experiences. The students in this community would be surveyed as well and these results can be used to understand more about the student experience in the LLC. Additionally, and more specifically, the students would complete two different variations of assessment: one for after any off-campus trips being held and one major assessment about their experiences at the end of the school year. These two assessments would be taken into consideration by the live-in professional and the Office of Residence life for what needs to change in terms of quality for the betterment of the LLC.

For the post-trip assessments, students would be asked five questions about their time on the trip (see appendix E). The data from these assessments would be taken into consideration

when planning the trips for the following year. This collection of data determines which off-campus trips are successful in helping the students to become accustomed to the institution. This information also benefits the future generations of the LLC by providing information to the planners about which trips were successful and which were not.

The next student-related assessment would be the end of the year overall questionnaire asking the students about their experience. On this questionnaire (see appendix F), there would be a range of questions to gain insight about their experiences at the university and specifically in the LLC. In total, there would be four linear scale-based questions of assessment: (a) Meeting Goals and Objectives, (b) Faculty and Staff, (c) Satisfactory Resources and (d) Social Climate. These four sections would help the Office of Residence Life, the live-in professional and the RA on the floor have a better understanding of how the students view the LLC and if it is being run to the best of their capacity. These surveys would be anonymous allowing for the students to be honest in their reflections.

Looking Ahead

The entirety of this program is based around incoming students from out of state. The population I would like to include and look to bring into the LLC in the future would be the students already living on-campus but needing to have a community base. These already recruited students are just as important as those just moving onto campus. The way that I would approach this situation is by opening up the activities within the LLC. While the living situation might be exclusively for first-year students, the students living within the halls would be able to participate in trips or the programming within the hall. Including upper-class students can create

connections for the students living in the halls for the first time; It benefits both parties in creating relationships with people in different areas.

This program is something that would have a difficult time smoothly operating at a university of a large capacity. The reason being that large institutions typically have more OOS students which relates to the problem that more students would be denied access to the LLC. The purpose of this community is to include residents and by denying students it might create the dialogue that because one student is from one place, they are in need of the program more. If this program was to be implemented into a bigger school, it might become more of a center type space for OOS students to utilize, similar to that of an international student space. This center could still put on programming for students along with going on trips into the neighboring areas. These changes, while not giving the same consistency as an LLC, still create the environment that will assist OOS students with their transition into their new environment. The live-in professionals become a director of sorts to the OOS center and can offer meeting times for these students to have an opportunity to talk.

I have one major goal for this thesis and that would be to encourage those in higher education to pay attention to every demographic of students on our campus. It is important to recognize that not every category of our students can be seen physically. By taking into consideration who our students are, it gives them the understanding that we do care about them and their success. I want student affairs professionals to be able to say that they have made a difference for students from out of state as they transition onto campus. All too often, we preach about student development but wonder why we do not see this change in certain students. If we took a step back to see who these students were personally, we might be able to make that

change by giving them the support but challenges that they need. My goal is just to open someone's eyes so that they may look into the perspective of an OOS student.

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Appendix A

New State of Mind LLC Contact

The *New State of Mind* Living Learning Community has been created to assist any out-of-state students in their transition of living in a new state. This community is composed of 36 eager to integrate students whom you will be sharing the next year of your life with. The following requirements need to be met while living within this LLC:

- Residents are expected to hold no lower than a 2.5 GPA
 - Anything lower will be considered in need of additional assistance from campus resource
- Attend the monthly meeting that will be held at dinner time
 - These will be set at a time in which it is known each student can attend by viewing schedule prior to the semester
- Understanding that there is to be no overnight guests for the first month of the semester ● Meet twice throughout the semester with the Live-in Professional
 - Once midway and once at the end of the semester
 - These meetings are considered check ins with how you are dealing with academics as well as living within *New State of Mind*
- Expected to attend 3 programming events within *New State of Mind*
 - 1 academic, 1 fun event and 1 of your choice
- Expected to keep out of conduct situations regarding the Office of Residence Life or Academic
- No Alcohol or Drug paraphernalia is to be allowed within the LLC
 - Failure to comply results in automatic removal from the community

By signing this contact, I agree to uphold the expectations of the *New State of Mind* Living Learning Community.


Sign: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Program Proposal Form	
Program Details	
RA Name: Molly	RA Email: MR123@abc.edu
Supervisor: Live-in Professional	Today's Date: 11/19/2019
Name of Program: History of *insert institution*	
Date of Program: 9/18/2020	Time of Program: 8 pm
Location of Program: Lounge on the first floor	RA Building/Floor: New State of Mind LLC
General Description of Program: Residents will be distressing for finals	
Program Budgeting & Logistics	
Materials Required for Program/Individual Cost of Material:	Computer with HDMI set up; chips and juice; 10 dollar gift card to amazon
Total Amount Budgeted: \$15.00	
Curriculum Development	
How do you plan to target each specific learning outcome?	Create a kahoot after going over the powerpoint for the students to participate; winner of the kahoot will receive a \$10 dollar amazon gift card
What is your overall goal for this program?	Assist students with understanding more about the institution
Program Marketing	
Program Flyer:	Attached a program flyer to the email when sending in a program proposal. Got it! <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Secondary Method of Advertisement (week prior):	Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> GroupMe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bulletin Board <input type="checkbox"/> Door to Door <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



**LEARN
ABOUT YOUR
INSTITUTION**

**JOIN *NEW STATE OF MIND* THIS
FRIDAY FOR AN AWESOME LESSON
ABOUT OUR WONDERFUL CAMPUS
FOLLOWED BY A KAHOOT!**

FRIDAY, 9/18/2020

New State of Mind LLC

First Floor Lounge @ 8pm

**THE WINNER OF THE KAHOOT WILL
RECEIVE A \$10 AMAZON GIFT CARD**

Appendix C

Timeline of *New State of Mine* Living Learning Community

NEW STATE OF MIND LIVING LEARNING COMMUNITY Timeline

**timeline subject to change from one year to the next



Appendix D
Budget Breakdown

Budget Item	Description		Yearly Cost	Funding
<i>Staff Position</i>				
Resident Assistant	Housing assistance for 1 RA @ 6,000 per semester	6,000 x2	12,000.00	This money will be taking from the Office of Residence Life based on which resident assistant they decide to place within the residence hall floor
Supervisor	1 live-in employee @ \$36,000 for 25 weeks per fiscal school year	36,000	\$36,000	This is a salary grade pay for the position; includes housing and a meal plan for when the school year is in session. Benefits discussed by HR
<i>Training</i>				
Staff		\$0.00	\$0.00	Live-in Professional oversees training
Paper Information Packet	4 information packets based on the community @ \$0.05 a page with 60 pages per packet	\$0.05 x200	\$12.00	Utilize First Year Experience to supply the paper while using the on campus printing center for the papers
Binders	4 binders @ \$3 each	\$12.00	\$12.00	Order from the campus bookstore
Space Rental	only need to reserve the room on campus	\$0.00	\$0.00	
<i>Trips</i>				
Van	two 18 passenger van @ 3,000 for rental; \$.55/mile for 20 miles per semester	\$3,011 x2	\$6,022.00	
Lunch/ Dinner	38 meals @ 10 dollars a meal per semester	\$380 x2	\$760.00	Off campus trips
Community Tee-Shirts	38 shirts @ \$14 a shirt including letter printing	\$532.00	\$532.00	Off campus trips
Parking Lot Fee	\$5/hr for 6 hours per semester	\$30 x2	\$60.00	
		Total	\$55,398.00/ year	

Appendix E

Off-Campus Trip Questionnaire

The following questions will help the *New State of Mind* (NsoM) under your experiences as part of the community. You do not need to place your name on the sheet as it is anonymous. Please fill them out honestly.

Trip Name: _____

1. What was your favorite part about this trip?

2. What was your least favorite part about this trip?

3. If you could have added something different to this trip, what would it be and why?

4. Would you participate in this trip again if given the chance?

5. What would be an alternative trip that you would like to go on?

6. Leave any comments you might have

7. If given the chance, would you participate in this LLC again?

- Yes** **No** **Depends**
-

**Please explain your answer from the previous question.
