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Student Involvement & Growth: A Case Study on Student Stories of Agency & Adulthood

Jamie Nicole Taylor
University of Kentucky, jnhunt3@uky.edu
Author ORCID Identifier:
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6617-2751
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STUDENT INVOLVEMENT & GROWTH: A CASE STUDY ON STUDENT
STORIES OF AGENCY & ADULTHOOD

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DISSERTATION
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Education
at the University of Kentucky

By
Jamie Nicole Taylor
Lexington, Kentucky
Director: Dr. Jane McEldowney Jensen Professor of Education Policy & Evaluation
Lexington, Kentucky
2022

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT & GROWTH: A CASE STUDY ON STUDENT STORIES
OF AGENCY & ADULTHOOD

Often students face their most challenging life decisions and periods of growth during college. Engagement and involvement with their institution helps students develop socially and academically; some research shows that involvement can support other students' needs as well. The goal of this project is to explore the ways in which students perceive their agency or sense of freedom of choice relative to their college engagement. Using multi-level data collection, consisting of a background recruitment survey and two interview sessions, the data generated in this layered approach came from the third-year student cohort at one state university in the southeastern US. Analysis of the data highlights the difficulty of transitions to college, building decision-making skills, learning about themselves and their identities, and developing communities. Details about college engagement pathways from high school to and through the first years of college were all analyzed to explore students' perceptions of feelings of agency, decision-making capabilities, identity and personal awareness, and movement toward adulthood. Although not the focus of study, additional questions were asked regarding the students' experiences with involvement and personal development during the turbulent period of their fourth semester when forced to leave campus as a result of COVID-19 prevention policies. Increased sense of agency and development toward adulthood occurred throughout the students' pathways to and through college; however, students' first engagements when they arrived on campus often had a huge impact on this growth and on establishing their plans for the future.

KEYWORDS: College Student Involvement, Student Growth, Agency, Adulthood,
Student Perceptions & Feelings

Jamie Nicole Taylor

6/20/2022

Date

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT & GROWTH: A CASE STUDY ON STUDENT STORIES
OF AGENCY & ADULTHOOD

By
Jamie Nicole Taylor

Dr. Jane McEldowney Jensen
Director of Dissertation

Dr. Jane McEldowney Jensen
Director of Graduate Studies

06/20/2022
Date

DEDICATION

To my family & friends who encouraged me in the best and worst of writing times. Especially to my wonderful husband, Drew Taylor, without you I would never have made it through this program or this dissertation. To my mom who never stopped believing in me and cheering me on, even when I wondered why I was doing this thing. To my aunt Jenni, who helped correct all my words and make me sound much more intelligent by removing my repeats she so loves to find. To my sister who always gives me permission to think about what comes next, even when she thinks I deserve a break to just live (say, after a wedding when I thought I needed to get a PhD because I was bored…) To my aunt Nancy & uncle Martin, for walking Drew and I through all the ups and downs of PhD life. To my sisters and friends from my undergraduate time at UK – I would not have come back to work here or had the opportunity to complete this program without all the fun we had in our college days. And finally, to my grandparents, my Granny who demanded we get married in Lexington and is the reason we have stayed here to build our life. And my Gramps who I have felt in every word and every step I have taken toward this accomplishment. He taught me to bleed blue and to never ever stop learning.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

Research Problem

Researchers have shown year after year the importance of college student involvement during their time on campus. Often, when talking about involvement, different definitions and parameters are applied to show how students engage. Because the definitions of involvement can look so different, some including only outside of class opportunities and others including co-curricular opportunities, and still other studies falling between the formal and informal areas of involvement, it has become difficult to say why "involvement" in general is so important for students. In order to better understand the significance of involvement, we have to know how it is defined in the research. Only then can we possibly see why a certain type of opportunity could be so influential on a student's life and development.

Theories of student campus involvement provide the basis for student engagement efforts across institutions, building for decades on Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (1984, 1993) and Pace's (1982) ideas about the importance of both quantity and quality of student engagements. Klemencic's (2015) more recent ideas on agency in college help to link the student engagement and involvement opportunities to their personal growth and feelings of independence and freedom, as well as the development of good decision-making skills for their future. These ideas, as well as Kuh's (2009) contributions of high-impact practices and studies of the NSSE student involvement data, and Arnett's (2000, 2004) explanation of the stage of "emerging-adulthood", contributed to a framework for studying students' perceptions of their involvement as a context for student development.

Using the background information from Astin and Pace, reframed with Klemencic's more recent studies on agency and involvement, I developed a definition to push this research forward. For this project involvement is defined by the "who" being the students, the "what" and "when" from Pace's (1982) ideas on quality and quantity of engagements and Kuh's (2009) high-impact practices, and the "why" defined by Astin's (1993) ideas on three areas of connection (peers, faculty, and community) necessary to develop from involvement. From there, this project was built to find out, with this definition in mind, just "how" students feel about their involvement in college. Do students feel growth in agency, freedom, and independence? Do students feel more grown up or adult because of some involvement experience or opportunity they had in college? How and why do students connect their college involvement to their personal growth and development?

Scope & Audience

This project took place at a large, R1 institution in the southeastern United States drawing from a series of interviews with members of one student cohort who had completed their first three years of college, and were mostly traditional college students on a large, predominately residential campus. This cohort consists of students going into their fourth year of college, all of whom began college in the fall of 2018. It involved two stages of interviews focusing on independence, expectations, and their perceptions of how involvement has influenced feelings of growth in this group of students.

This project is designed to follow the journey of involvement from high school to college of each student to understand what may or may not work, in helping college students find their place in the college community, realize their academic and social

success, and ultimately begin their movement into heightened agency and adulthood. The results of this study may be of interest to many different stakeholders from student services and success personnel to researchers developing new ideas about student engagement in college. This project is intended to help to better plan student support and to further discussions on involvement theories that have been cited for decades. Considering that involvement on campus can look different for each student, and individual choices or interests along with availability and access is different everywhere, the goal is to better understand these students' seeking success and graduation while balancing their social, academic, and career-oriented engagements on campus. The project, as such, was designed to explore and discuss how students perceive their own growth as a result of these engagements and campus opportunities.

Research Statement

This project attempts to explore the following questions via the multi-stage data collection in the study of third-year students following their first and second year and their experience during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic…

1. During the transition to college, how were the participating students involved and engaged on campus?

2. What specific involvement opportunities most directly impacted these students' college transitions or most supported their development toward adulthood?

3. In addition to their self-reported involvement choices, in what ways were students' engagement during college linked in any way to their feelings about independence and freedom, self-awareness and decision-making skills, adulthood, or agency?

Contextual Literature & Conceptual Framework

My research questions were developed with decades old definitions of involvement from the 1980s through the early 2000s. Unfortunately, Astin and Pace are still the most often cited when people try to define what involvement means or looks like in college. However, I knew there was more to the picture of student growth and life on campus, and that supported my developing the research questions above. The questions were to help me move the conversation forward and more in the direction of how involvement may impact student growth into adulthood. In order to keep that conversation going, I had to understand the historical theories (Astin, 1984; Kuh & Pike, 2005; Pace, 1982) and then begin to see links to the more current ideas about student growth in college (Arnett, 2004; Klemencic, 2015). Connection the involvement ideas to the growth and development in students during their college experience was what shaped the research questions and the methodology for data collection in this project.

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

The theoretical background for this project is built on the ideas of agency (Klemencic, 2015) and emerging-adulthood (Arnett, 2004) as part of the process of engagement (Astin, 1984) and involvement (Pace, 1982). These ideas came together to explore how students can develop agency and maturity as emerging adults via their involvement on campus during the first parts of college. As is introduced in "How College Effects Students: 21st Century Evidence that Higher Education Works" (Mayhew, et al, 2016), student engagement effects desired outcomes. Citing Pace (1982), Astin (1984), Kuh (2009), and others, Mayhew, et al comments on evidence in the 21st century that long-standing arguments suggest both quality and quantity of student involvement has an effect,

and most often a very positive effect, on student outcomes (2016). Utilizing these resources, the project explores how involvement can support growth. More specifically, the ways in which involvement can help ease transitional issues or difficulties and contribute to the development of independence and agency during the college experience. The background literature for this project begins with the ideas of Pace (1982) and Astin (1984, 1993) on engagement, quality and quantity of such, and how it can help, especially the newest students, see desired developmental and learning outcomes. These two ideas are the longest standing in this framework, and although they have been argued for many years by their authors among others, they do have a strong place in the literature about college involvement. These two could be considered the backbone of involvement theories on how to best utilize involvement to connect students to each other, and to the campus itself via faculty and staff.

Pace established the foundation of how the quality of student effort in college can affect their experience and planned outcomes (1982). This is an important concept in the framework for this project because the hope is that many of the students interviewed will have a myriad of experiences and different ideas of what involvement looks like, and how their efforts to be engaged in certain things on campus helped (or hindered) them in their first years of college. In that vein, Pace (1982) could help support the student outcomes they report and how their different efforts in different areas could have many outcomes for many different students. Quality of effort was written by Pace as a follow up to his 1979 student questionnaire about their choices of involvement on campus, both inside and outside the classroom. His big conclusion was that "what counts most is not who they are or where they are but what they do" (1982, p.19). In other words, Pace's suggestion is that

any quality engagement, whether observed or self-reported by students themselves, is influential in that students' life. Looking at that quality of involvement idea in the scope of this project, Pace (1982) will both help with reasoning for student self-reporting and their own ideas of "quality", to explain what they find important and influential in their first few years of college.

Along with the ideas of self-reported "quality effort", the Student Involvement Theory (Astin, 1984) helped to show students' engagement opportunities importance, and how the myriad of opportunities that were offered can be used to the greatest advantage for students. Astin's (1984) theory explains, somewhat similarly to Pace, that "student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 518). This concept further explores the ideas of Pace's quality of involvement, as it goes one step further to include both quality and quantity of involvements, and how different students can see involvement opportunities on a spectrum, some needing more quantity and some needing higher quality to truly support them in their needs and desired outcomes from their involvement. This could include anything from studying more hours for a science exam to help increase a grade, to helping a student organization understand all their event options before they vote on their choice for next fall semester. Whether quality or quantity, Astin (1984, 1993) uses this theory to show that involvement supports greater levels of student learning and personal development, whether its involvement with peers, faculty and staff, or the campus community.

The second key area of literature comes from the student development ideas and how personal development is evolving in recent years when it comes to students in this age

group. Arnett (2004) defines this "emerging adulthood" as a part of life where many things are uncertain for the young person, college affecting all these things… "identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling of in-between, and age of possibilities" (p. 8). As I studied Arnett, more questions about growth during this period were emerging for me. The understanding of how student development and growth could be shared in the student stories began to take shape, as well as how I could get the data from student interviews to show involvements' influence on their stages of growth. Relating to emerging-adulthood, I found Klemencic's (2015) definition of agency and how it has been defined to help see student growth in college. Being able to draw the connections between students' involvement activities and opportunities, directly to their feelings of freedom, independence, decision-making, and identity development is very telling. That was the missing link that Klemencic's ideas brought between the involvement literature and the development stages. Although many students come to college feeling like they will find freedom, they often already have to make decisions and enact their agency. The idea in this project was then to dig into how those involvements and decisions made during the start of college and during the transition can really help support their growth toward more advanced self-awareness and preparedness for their next steps in life.

When I began this project, moving into adulthood and greater agency was seen as the goal I was attempting to connect as an outcome of students' involvement on campus. Thus, these background theories and ideas on development created the theoretical framework for the questions and methodology. This literature's most referenced understanding of involvement, from Pace and Astin and of agency and growth, from Klemencic and Arnett, helped me create the research questions. From there, I created the

processes necessary to hear the students' reflections on their own personal growth during data collection. These background ideas also helped to frame my own definition of involvement and how I could see the relationship between that involvement and the student growth through their stories.

Project Framework

I have developed a definition of "involvement" combining the ideas of the theories referenced above, to say that the students' quantity and quality of involvement, along with the types of and who they engage with, all come together to define their "involvement" in my study. Using my definition of involvement, and with the background literature in mind, I used the interview questions to explore how students' experiences influenced their growth, from their own reflections and feelings about their college lives. The project was framed to get student feedback in the data collection, to help them reflect on their experiences and share their perceptions of growth in their own words. I found that, in my experience working with college students, they often share more candidly when it comes to things that are set outside of the classroom. That is was drove me to ask more questions to further the discussion about student involvement, passed the old ideas of simply pushing quality and quantity to get them engaged with peers, faculty and staff, and their campus community (Astin, 1993; Pace, 1982). I wanted to do a study about how students feel about their growth, and if they can help to pinpoint what and how their experiences were enhanced by their chosen engagements. That ability to connect with students to get their first-person accounts was important, and one that I do not believe had been used to discuss general involvement, both formally and informally, during their time on campus.

Therefore, I developed a project to do exactly that asking them what they found to be important in their growth and development toward adulthood during their campus life.

Asking about if, and how or why, the relationship exists between students' involvement in college and how they developed toward adulthood, became the goals of these research questions. By utilizing Arnett's stage of emerging-adulthood and talking about growth of agency in terms that students relate to, I believe the students better articulated their own feelings and perceptions of growth as a product of their involvement experiences. I developed the questions that worked to establish a link between not just the importance of getting involved in order to create community and social connections on campus, but also for helping students become better versions of themselves before they leave college.

Learning better decision-making skills, feeling more independent, and understanding self-awareness and reflection were some of the biggest results reported by students in this project. According to the student stories on their involvement choices and experiences, development in these areas of personal growth, not just academic growth, were often linked to their engagements outside the classroom. Whether a student reported a formal engagement in Greek life, student government, a university club, or an informal study group they formed, the outcomes often still looked the same. The students were reporting that, whether highly involved or hardly able to commit time to school, that some sort of peer and community involvement on campus helped them develop decision-making skills, feelings of agency and freedom, and becoming more adult.

Overview of Design

This project utilized two phases of data collection a recruitment survey which captured students' self-reports of types of involvement in high school and in their first semesters of college and a series of two interviews. The initial survey, sent in the spring of their third year, was designed to collect background information. The survey also requested students interested in participating in an interview, incentivized by payment, to include their contact information. Those who agreed were then interviewed twice, first to review their survey information and explore the ways in which they felt they had been involved first in high school and then in college and second to explore in more depth the ways in which they perceived their sense of independence as college students. These two interview sessions normally took place within a week or two for each student participant. All data collection from the survey to the interviews took place in Spring and Summer of 2021. All three pieces of data for each student were analyzed together and then in a constant comparative method across student cases.

The research took place at a large, research institution, in the Southeastern section of the United States. The students who were approached with the survey were at the end of their third year of study, all having started college in the same cohort, Fall 2018. The reasoning for this cohort choice is simple, but important, for this research. This group of students had lived through two fall semesters and one spring semester, almost two full years, before the COVID-19 pandemic sent them off-campus. Given my emphasis on the role of campus involvement, I wanted to ensure that participants had a transition to college that was not affected by the upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic. I needed to know that this group was able to reflect on two years of retention and involvement on campus, to get

a better understanding of what that looks like for students. I then analyzed survey results to create a typology of involvement. This included students who were highly involved in high school and college; involved in high school but not as much in college; not involved in high school but involved in college; and not involved in either high school or college. From these categories, I invited students to participate in the interviews, doing the best I could to recruit students from all levels of involvement typology. The interviews took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, before classes had returned to a more normal state, over the summer when almost all students were off campus. However, the discussions were based upon their experiences up until this point for the purposes of the research questions.

The goal of the interviews was to gain first-person insight via student reflection on their growth via involvements, and how they perceived their engagement in both academic and social involvement opportunities in the context of transitioning to college. The interviews were designed to create a space for reflection as students begin the final stretch of their college lives, to better understand how and when they could pinpoint and explore their growth in self-awareness and development toward feelings of agency and adulthood. All interviews were done online via Zoom. Twenty-four students participated in all three parts of the data collection – the survey response, and then two, hour-long interview sessions via Zoom meetings. All of these were recorded, and notes were taken during the interviews as well, for review and transcription later. The transcription of each interview was written with reflection on the field notes from each and on the video and voice recordings.

Analysis was done iteratively for each stage. First, the data from the survey were used to develop the typology for recruitment and subsequently to personalize their

11

interviews. Because of the speed at which the students responded to scheduling their second interview after the first, a brief analysis of the first interview transcript was done to inform the second and final interview. After all three data points (survey and two interview sessions) were completed, a profile of each student's "pathway" was developed using all three data sets. This was the way to see both the depth of the information from the interview discussions, along with some more surface level details, and understand the whole picture of each student's experience. Being able to use the data from each stage to move forward was very helpful, and then really painted a full picture for each participant to be analyzed in the end. Finally, the students' pathways and narrative were analyzed across the data set using a constant comparative method.

Significance

The influence and significance of this project will be important for the institution but could also drive change in supporting student transitions, student involvement, and growth via that involvement. The outcomes from this data analysis are important to not only the student services people in higher education, but to faculty and staff, in helping to better understand what students need in all areas of engagement on campus to best support them toward adulthood. Each of these questions was also included to further the literature surrounding involvement theories and student development because Astin (1984, 1993) and Pace (1892) are still so significant, but they need updating to truly understand how involvement looks in the present-day college student life.

The first part of this project attempted to address both student involvement, or lack thereof, and how that can support desired student learning and development outcomes, using student reported data from the interview sessions. The first two research questions

were developed and attempt to answer questions about transitions to college and growth influences from their chosen involvement opportunities on campus. Interview data were analyzed from each student participant, to better understand their individual involvement choices, their transition stories, and their feeling about their expectations versus realities of college life and learning.

The second piece of the project is more than just students' sharing about their perceptions of development through emerging-adulthood (Arnett, 2004), but further development of identity and agency (Klemencic, 2015). Using the background of student involvement theories (Astin, 1984), along with the development of student competencies along a spectrum (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), the questions framing this project attempt to lead to more than just reports of academic success. With the inclusion of involvement theories, competency development, and growth, the ideal outcome for these students would be realizing that growth within themselves. The questions aimed to generate data in the student interviews to explore the ways they are perceiving their developing toward emerging-adulthood and agency, while also helping administration and academics to better understand student needs throughout college, and to help develop these competencies and support this student growth.

By utilizing this multi-dimensional approach to theory and data collection, this project was planned to address not only student needs, but best practices for student success professionals and administration to support the students in these areas through the toughest transitions of young adulthood. Answering questions not only about how involvement affects students, but how it can be improved and how the institutions they attend can best serve their students through transitional years and beyond, are two areas of significance

attempted to be met with these research questions. The existing theories about student development do not necessarily address any connection to involvement in general, there are studies following students in very specific groups or involvement types, but this is to further that conversation with less specifics and more student thoughts. The questions were driven by the existing theories, especially around both quality and quantity, and the three major areas of connection to peers, faculty, and community. And then using those theories to see directly from the student interviews, I explored how they perceived feelings of agency, independence and freedom, decision-making, and adulthood as a result of their involvement opportunities. Addressing what is missing in the current involvement and student development theories, in order to show a relationship between how students feel they are growing and how their chosen involvement activities have supported that growth during their college experience.

With that, the goal was to better understand every future student's needs in support around involvement and the importance of their personal growth in college as a result of their access and engagement with different activities. Further understanding of student thoughts on engagement and their stories about their growth during college was shared to help them better transition to college and to adulthood, via identity and competency development. But also, to help further the literature on student involvement having a direct impact or influence on those developments and the growth students reported in their interviews. Exploring how involvement could help ease transitions in college, as well as how it can contribute to each students' perceptions of their own growth in agency and toward adulthood, was the basis for the development of these questions and this project.

Conclusion

Utilizing a multi-step process of data collection and analysis, this project was designed to link the influential theories of engagement and involvement to the psychosocial development ideas of Arnett and Klemencic on how students develop toward adulthood in college. Student involvement theories as defined by Pace (1982), Astin (1984) were the background ideas that helped to develop the research questions. The goal was to use these historical perspectives to support the newer ideas on emerging-adulthood (Arnett, 2005) and how the involvement theories linked to these college students' development toward these feelings of agency and adulthood (Klemencic, 2015). In the end, those connections were able to be made to some extent, and the exploration of these links could lead to many more projects and questions surrounding the importance and influence of student involvement on their final college outcomes. Student involvement experiences and what they learn from those engagements were shown to be linked to their feelings of growth in agency, independence, adulthood, and self-awareness.

The connections between involvement and student growth were highlighted in many ways by the student participants in their stories and data sharing. Along with the initial data collection and analysis, an additional chapter discussing the COVID-19 Pandemic shutdown influence and impact on students' experience has been included. This chapter is appended to this project, but in my opinion was very important to best understand some of the struggles and disconnections students were feeling during their last year before the interviews. This information is shared to help further the exploration of this topic, but also to separate some of the issues that were directly related to the pandemic from clouding the outcomes of the original study, that was not planned to take place during this period of

pandemic life. With this interruption to academic and campus life included, there were many stories surrounding the obstacles students faced during campus shutdown. However important that data and discussion may be, I found it fit better as an additional reference for this project, as opposed to a portion of the initial research question analysis I planned. Because of this, the themes and outcomes of the project should be thought of separately from the pandemic, but the references in the COVID-19 can still be of importance for the scope of other discussions and studies in the future.

Themes from the involvement level analysis and demographic identifiers that I found in this project include: each student's need for connection to peers, feeling at home or having a community, early involvement being some of the most imperative, and opportunity to explore different areas of interest. Different student involvement levels, both in high school and college, along with background characteristics and demographics seemed to have effects on how students were feeling about their growth toward adulthood. There were several groups of students identified by their involvement levels and their demographic identifiers that helped to break down the data analysis and see some different outcomes for different student groups according to their reflections. Understanding where they come from and how they chose to get involved helped to highlight different groups' ideas on agency and how their involvements have affected their agency, independence, and movement toward adulthood.

Comparisons and analyses of these themes lead me to believe that many students feel the impact of involvement on their personal growth and preparation for adulthood according to their perspectives shared in the study. As such, there is a link between engagements outside the classroom and growth toward agency and adulthood in college

students. The reflections that students shared in the data set seemed to point toward growth in several domains, because of many different personalized reasons each student explained during the interviews. The results showed that students pointed toward growth in numerous areas of their lives during their interviews, everything from decision-making and self-reflective practices to career trajectory and feeling ready to enter the "adult" world were shared as individual outcomes. And it should also be noted, the students' involvement early in college, especially, can make or break their outcomes in academic, social, and personal growth on many levels. Analysis of the data in this study reveals many examples of how student engagements have helped this group learn more about themselves and grow into more self-aware, independent young adults.

LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The background for this project is supported by the historical foundation of the theories from Astin, Pace, and Chickering, then connects those to students' development of their own adulthood and agency. Understanding of student involvement theory, first-year student experience, competency development, emerging-adulthood, and agency and freedom are all imperative to follow this project from data collection through analyzation and future research suggestions.

This project is based on traditional arguments for student involvement (Astin, 1984; Kuh & Pike, 2005); and Pace, 1982) and student development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) which highlight the importance of involvement's influence on personal growth in college. There are also concepts drawn from sociological literature examining the concepts of freedom and agency (Lee, 2016, Armstong & Hamilton, 2013; Klemencic, 2015) and emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004) for college students. The goal of the study was to explore the connection between student involvement and personal development.

Student Involvement

Involvement on campus became a focus of research in student affairs beginning with Astin (1984) & Pace's (1982) work examining how involvement can affect student life both socially and academically. Subsequently, Kuh (2009) built upon this work in his study of high performing institutions in *Involving Colleges: Successful Approaches to Fostering Student Learning and Development Outside the Classroom.* Institutions nationwide began participating in assessments of student engagement through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) including measures of involvement with campus activities. These surveys have helped in shaping this project, but also influenced how the

questions about involvement came about in the first place. The theories from Pace and Astin have helped to define "student involvement" and created background for how student participation can influence their development.

Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (1984) is the basis of much of the research on the importance of keeping students engaged at all levels while they are in college. However, even before this theory was developed, there were the ideas from Pace (1982) that point to not only the quantity of involvement activities, but the quality of that engagement is what pushes students to not only progress through educational competencies, but to advance socially, thus furthering their own identity development.

Going back to the original ideas from Pace (1982) about the engagement quality being imperative, we can better understand how far higher education personnel have come in encouraging student involvement being a heavily influential part of their college experience. Being able to motivate students to engage with clubs, events, organizations, social connections, and all other opportunities offered on college campuses these days has shown the relationship between the engagement and the overall personal student identity development. That is what Pace's ideas from his survey about student engagements and their quality versus quantity were pointing to, the importance of the relationships, connections, and communities students develop during college. The conclusion from the quality of engagement data that Pace finds that spikes further research on the importance of involvement is that "granted the importance of all elements that influence who goes where to college, once the students get there what counts most is not who they are or where they are but what they do" (p. 20). And finally, he states, "The more aspects of college experience one participates in at an above average level of quality of effort, the more

objectives one makes above average progress in their attainment. Breadth of involvement and breadth of attainments go hand in hand" (p. 26), speaking to the data showing that many types of quality involvement during college was shown to connect to growth in many academic and social stages of development.

Astin's theory (1984) along with much of his follow-up research since then have pointed to several distinct types of involvement being important and imperative for students to reach that "quality" and "quantity" they need to develop their sense of self and continue the path to all the academic and psycho-social competencies set out for them. However, further research has shown that simple "involvement" or "engagement" with friends, or with their class work, or with their one student organization is not enough. According to Astin (1984, 1993) each student needs faculty connection, peer connection, and campus/community connection to gain a balanced quality and quantity involvement and to develop toward graduation and adulthood goals. Aside from the quality of involvement being equal to the quality of attainment ideas from Pace, these three different areas were found to make up a good "quality" measure of engagement for a college student. All these distinct types of student involvement during college are directly influenced by the student's choice and connections being made to these different areas of involvement. Because all these types of involvement are important, but the quality of the engagement is also just as important. Students must make the best choices for themselves, and have equally available access to engagements, as they begin their college experience. Being able to connect with faculty, especially early on in their college career, finding connections to a group of peers, and then finding their connection to the overall community on campus have all pointed to further engagement. More engagements with these three areas,

according to Astin's research and follow-up work (Kuh, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; 2016) show a direct relationship to how competent the student becomes throughout their college experience, both academically and personally.

Some would say that involvement early on in college is the most important part of that experience (Pace, 1982 & Astin, 1984). Pace (1982) was one of the first to outline the importance of student engagement and what it meant for students to be involved, and how the level (quality or quantity) of students' engagement affects their growth. "If students expect to benefit from what this college or university has to offer, they have to take the initiative" (p. 3). The concept of "taking initiative" is important in this project because students must be motivated to find connections and get involved, that is the feeling that Pace includes here. There must be a want and need to engage, and the students must find that first to get involved on campus. This is the basis of Pace's involvement ideas, and he goes on to explain that a breadth of engagements in college is necessary, and the quality of involvements can contribute to student growth in four big areas: Personal & Interpersonal Understanding, General Education Objectives, Intellectual Competencies, and Understanding Sciences (Pace, 1982). All four areas can be an important part of student growth, and getting student thoughts about how they may feel growth in their own identity or personal understanding, or how they may have developed a more concrete education and career plan could be important to this discussion. Also, better understanding if these four areas are leading them to feel as if they have grown intellectually in any way, or if they may also have a better understanding of the sciences or even the area, they are majoring in. Growth in any or all of these can point to Pace's ideas about involvement encouraging student outcomes in these areas.

Pace's ideas lead to Astin's Student Involvement Theory. Astin defines involvement simply as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (1999, p. 518). And Astin also relates his five basic involvement ideas all to a similar thought to Pace's quality of involvement ideas, stating in all five that involvement is along a continuum and needs both a quantity of student engagement options, and a quality level from low to high, depending on how much time and energy the student spends on each engagement. Whether these involvements are in class and study time, or organization and student leadership opportunities, they can still have both breadth and depth according to Pace and Astin. These theoretical ideas help to structure the idea of student involvement in this project, recognizing that involvement levels, and understanding the student engagement levels is important for clarity on their impact.

First-Year Student Involvement

"Student involvement has long been studied as a statistically significant contributor to desirable outcomes of the college student experience" (Foubert & Grainger, 2006). Still, with this conclusion, the question still stands... How first-year involvement specifically can not only help them have better college experiences, but can it also enhance growth toward agency and adulthood? In many cases, the experience that students have in their first year of college influences their decisions to stay in college, on what to study, on how to engage with campus, and even other outside aspects of their lives. Involvement then, especially early on, can truly make or break a college students' experience on campus, and therefore affect all their growth in the rest of their college years. There are a myriad of studies about

student experience and first year needs but connecting these to student outcomes and personal growth has not been explored as purposefully in relation to involvement.

The few investigations in the current literature about first-year students' involvement discussed how these engagements affected their cognitive growth and some discussion of psychosocial development. There was one small quantitative study discussing how students grow across Chickering & Reisser's 7 Vectors (1993) and those outcomes did enhance my research questions. Foubert and Grainger (2006) found in their small one-institution study, first-year students who joined or lead a student organization showed gains in personal development domains, both moving through autonomy to interdependence and establishing purpose. Related, but addressing more traditionally academic domains, a longitudinal meta-study from Cruce, Wolniak, Seifert, and Pascarella (2006) found that faculty interactions via involvements can increase students' cognitive development, orientations to learning, and educational aspirations by .16 of a standard deviation, when controlling for demographic and pre-college attributes across the longitudinal data. And a final study on first-year engagements speaks to the importance of pre-college feelings on career-aspirations or goals, and how important it is for faculty and staff to tap into these background characteristics when suggesting involvement opportunities for first year students (Tolian, 2019). Again, great data to understand better how to support student involvement in different areas or according to different background characteristics, but these studies are still lacking in an understanding of what students feel are their growth outcomes in the first year, specifically.

Over the years, the NSSE surveys have attempted to reflect on the connection between first year involvements and personal growth, and George Kuh has also explored

student engagement on campus, and its effects on student experience, especially at the start of college (Kuh, 2009). From NSSE 2008, the outcomes from active learning opportunities and involvement on campus lead to more engagement for first-year students. "Well-crafted first-year experience programs and individual effort can allow students to exceed expectations" (p. 17-18). Again, like what the outcomes of the smaller quantitative studies showed, both encouraging students with many opportunities to get involved on campus (with peers, faculty, organizations, communities, etc.) and seeing them engage further and further with these efforts can only better their experience and achievement of academic and some personal competencies. The question still holds, if and if so, how do these early involvements help students see their own growth toward adulthood?

Kuh (2009) used NSSE data, other involvement background research, and his AAC&U report (2007) about high-impact practices and went on to show how important it is for the institutions to really encourage and make involvement opportunities of all kinds available to first year students.

Student engagement and its historical antecedents – time on task, quality of effort, and involvement – are supported by decades of research showing positive associations with a range of desired outcomes of college… Moreover, engagement increases the odds that any student – educational and social background notwithstanding – will attain his or her educational and personal objectives, acquire the skills and competencies demanded by the challenges of the twenty-first century, and enjoy the intellectual and monetary advantages associated with the completion of the baccalaureate degree (p. 698).

This conclusion from Kuh (2009) was pivotal in the development of this project. First-year students must begin making connections, whether related to their high-school

involvement and background or not, to take advantage of all the ways involvement with peers, faculty, and the campus community can benefit their educational outcomes. High-impact practices, along with both quantity and quality that Pace refers to, and the idea of student involvement theories helped to outline what involvement looked like throughout this project.

Similar to Pace's final findings, Kuh (2009) explains above that ultimately student engagement, quality of such especially, will have an incredible effect on student outcomes. Now that we have evidence of this linkage from several different small and large quantitative studies, supporting quality and quantity engagement for all students could be an incredible step in support of student growth and development in college not only toward graduation, but toward adulthood and becoming more productive world citizens. These ideas come from what Kuh says explicitly as a result of the NSSE data but may be implied from earlier involvement theories or smaller quantitative studies as well, that enriching and high-impact experiences, involvement opportunities of many kinds, and digging into students' background characteristics can help develop each student as a person, not simply in academic level achievements. Ultimately, it can help link students to their most desired involvements, and hopefully lead them to growth in their personal and professional goals, even early on during college. All these studies do help to better understand involvement outcomes for first-year students, but still do not directly answer how these involvements can support feelings of agency and adulthood related to these involvements.

Defining Student Involvement

The definition of student involvement in this project is a combination of the background literature and the future research necessary in this area to help students achieve

their desired outcomes in college. It is proposed by Pace and Astin that quality, and quantity to a lesser extent, are the most important measure of student involvement influence on development of personal and academic achievements. Along with Kuh and the assessment of NSSE data, there is a clear connection being made between involvement and achievement of competencies, as explored by Chickering and Reisser (1993), during college. Desired and planned outcomes for college students can vary, from institution to institution, organization to organization, or from student to student, but this project wants to show the links between engagement and outcomes, and how they do seem to hold strong even in different areas or types of involvement during these formative years.

Defining involvement must include the ideas of breadth and depth (quantity and quality), it must include the importance of beginning to engage early on in college, and it also must include that involvement has influence on students' outcomes academically and personally. Putting together the ideas about student involvement theories, competency development and achievements, along with the link to feels of agency and growing adulthood, brought out how involvement was thus discussed for this research. It also helped to define how student interviewees were encouraged to understand all the types of things that could be considered involvement when they talked about their college experiences.

Astin's Student Involvement Theory, Pace's investigation of quality engagements, and Kuh's study of the NSSE data and ideas of high-impact practices bring together an outline for how student involvement is defined for this project. Together, these three define involvement as an imperative part of student life. First, defining quality and quantity according to Pace by how enriching an involvement is and how much time is committed or required by the student. Then including Kuh's (2009) high-impact practices include

everything from study abroad opportunities, to writing intensive courses, all of which can show more influence on student outcomes than other activities according to his research to define the types of involvement for the project. And finally including the definition of involvement from Astin's (1984, 1993) three important types of connection to show how students engage. Together these examples, Astin, Pace, and Kuh & Pike, define the who, what, when, why, and how of student involvement, and help define those ideas for this research. The "who" being the students, the "what" and "when" coming from the ideas on quantity and quality of involvements (Pace, 1982) and the definitions of high-impact practices (Kuh & Pike, 2005; Kuh, 2009;). And finally, the "how" defined by Astin's three major areas of involvement with peers, faculty, and community, along with the ideas from Pace about taking initiative to engage explaining the students' "why". Together, these three theories about involvement and types of involvement came together as the basic definition in this project.

Along with the theoretical definitions, there have been several empirical studies of distinct types of student involvement in college, as well as some newly identified desired outcomes that are widely recognized as best practices (Kuh, 2009 Mayhew et.al, 2016; Xiao, Bradley, Lee, 2019). To best explain the most recent findings and definitions of student involvement, these reviews of types of involvement and desired outcomes are imperative readings. From "How College Affects Students: Volume 3, 21st Century Evidence that Higher Education Works" (Mayhew et.al, 2016) the most recent studies they review from the 2000s point to defining involvement as any of the following: peer and faculty interactions, student clubs/groups, religious engagements, paid employment (on or off campus), living/learning community, philanthropy or service, Greek life, athletics, and

co-curricular requirements. More specifically, Greek life is associated with growth in personal and social development, as well as practical competence (Hayek, et al, 2002; Pike, 2003), and learning communities are connected to enhanced student beliefs of personal, social, and practical growth (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Along with these specifics, more information about the importance of faculty, peer, and diversity interactions, and the cocurricular were found in a cross-sectional analysis, showing between .13 to .24 of a standard deviation positive impact on student autonomy, personal growth, life purpose, and self-acceptance (Seifert, et al, 2008). We know from these general involvement and more specific studies how early college engagement choices can help students develop some practical and personal attributes.

One meta-analysis began the breakdown of how college experiences, specifically diversity-related engagements, can support student development. Although this research was not specifically about involvement, there were still interesting outcomes from across the literature that were mentioned in Bowman's (2010) article, stating that diversity experiences are significantly and positively related to cognitive development (Cohen, 1988; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Ultimately, the study showed that research across diversity experiences supported student gains in autonomy from service experiences (Eyler & Giles, 1999), good peer relationships (Denson, 2009), and in-class challenges (Nelseon Laird et al., 2005). The research also gleaned that there were some activities that negatively impacted student feelings of autonomy, including drinking 1-2 times per week, and any negative diversity experiences (Bowman, 2010). This meta-analysis concentrated on diversity experiences, but also helped further the discussion of how involvement is defined

and drove home the points from Pace (1982) about the importance of both quantity and quality of peer, faculty, and community engagements for student growth.

In a similar compilation, Xiao, Bradley, and Lee (2019) breakdown involvement types into these categories: Student-Faculty interactions, Student-Advisor interactions, Library Utilization, and Extra-curricular and Sports participation. The sources for this list are from a myriad of backgrounds, pulling together to support this list of involvement types as those that can affect student retention and graduation rates. Jacobi (1991) and Tinto's (1975, 2012) support the importance of informal interactions, and teach the reader that these connections between student and faculty, especially in the first year of college (Tinto, 2012), can be an incredibly important support system and confidence boost for students. In order to highlight the importance of Student-Advisor interactions, the knowledge from Cueso (2003) is necessary, as the study helped connect student-advisor relationships to students' willingness and ability to connect to other resources on campus. That ability to connect and find resources is incredibly important throughout student life. In the same vein, students finding library resources and using the library as an informal peer or faculty meeting place, makes Library Utilization and engagement a big indicator of quality engagement on campus (Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 2009). And finally, resources about extra-curriculars and sports engagements are widely available, and these literature reviews share ideas from Bartkus, et al. (2012) and Waller and Tietjen-Smith (2009) who mention not only the importance of engagement in extra-curriculars and sports options, but also how the students who participate view their college experiences more favorably (Xiao, Bradley, Lee, 2019). We know what involvement looks like and how these involvement

opportunities can lead to the desired outcome because of these readings, and more, in recent years on student development, growth, and engagement in college.

Bringing together these theoretical ideas about involvement along with those being used in practice shows us that there are several overlapping and overarching ideas of what constitutes "student involvement in college". Therefore, for this project, student involvement during college is being defined as both the quality and quantity engagement (Pace, 1982; Astin, 1984) in opportunities related to community, shared-interests, sports or athletics, spiritual or religious, political, service, musical or theater, academic, or any other areas available to engage with at the individual institution (Mayhew, et.al, 2016; Xiao, Bradley, Lee, 2019; Bowman, 2010). And that these quality and quantity engagements could support the student development of many skills, competencies, and desired outcomes they wish to find during college (Kuh, 2009; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This definition will be continually developed and updated as more resources are included and will ultimately make the connection of this type of involvement to students' growth in emerging-adulthood and feelings of agency during their college years.

Student Development & Agency

In the book "How College Affects Students" (2016), the authors explore different studies in the 90s and 2000s to see what research studies explore student growth, one chapter concentrates specifically on identity development and feelings freedom or independence. "All told, engagement, spanning cognitive, academic, co-curricular, or out-of-class forms, corresponds to students' reporting growth in personal, social, and practical competence domains" (p. 242). How does growth in all these personal, social, and practical

domains happen? Helping students to develop across these domains as they work toward identity and agency is the primary goal of a well-rounded higher education.

This project uses those domains, along with the students' reported experiences with campus involvement to try to understand the ways in which this growth occurs. Building upon the stage set by Astin, Pace, and Kuh that sets involvement as a key practice for student success, the concepts of adulthood and agency become a frame for the way student growth through involvement might be taking place during this period of college life. When thinking about how students grow in their identity and relationships, agency and emerging-adulthood can be relational and influenced by setting and identity. Relating the development through the stage of life called "emerging-adulthood" (Arnett, 2004) and the defining era's (19-24 years) influence on feelings of freedom and agency (Klemencic, 2015) are imperative connections to make to see how these students can use involvement to grow into well-rounded people.

Emerging Adulthood

To understand the feelings of growth and development that students express, the development process outlined by Chickering's Seven Vectors (1969), that were revisited and further explained by Chickering and Reisser in 1993, serve as a simple outline of how college-age stages can progress. The vectors are stages of development that students must go through to develop their own identity, which emerging-adulthood and agency can be linked to directly. These tasks are defined as: 1. Developing competency, 2. Managing emotions, 3. Moving from autonomy to interdependence, 4. Mature interpersonal relationships, 5. Establishing identity, 6. Developing purpose, 7. Moving into Integrity (Chickering, 1969). Although it is obvious according to Chickering and Reisser (1993) that

these steps and developments may not all be developed in the years of college life, there are many changes and influences during this period of growth that can help students find better competencies, emotion management, interdependency, relationship building skills, and beginning to define their own identity. It may be that they have surpassed all these before college, or that the students do not yet completely grasp all the vectors, but the steps are there to help outline how development in this quasi-adult stage of life can progress.

In relation to this is the process of vector or stage development is another, more historical theory drawn from lifespan development, namely the psycho-social task of developing identity, which occurs during adolescence and into young adulthood (Erikson, 1950). Backing up the ideas about Vector skill development according to Chickering, Erickson's widely recognized developmental stages help to see how formative and important these stages are in the years following adolescence that are simply not yet adult in skill or thought. From Chickering and Reisser (1993), and the influence of Erickson's traditional life-span development, Arnett argues for an additional stage of lifespan development between adolescence and adulthood which he calls "Emerging-Adulthood" (2000).

Arnett's work elaborates on the importance of independence and agency, along with the stages or steps (similar to Chickering's Vectors in many ways) that lead to these feelings of growth. The period of emerging adulthood as defined by Arnett (2000) is that from ages 18-25, when the person is in a constant state of transition, instability, and demographic diversity, with an emphasis on how that supports their exploration of themselves, and the life they are building around them. This could be a description of

college life in general because there is a great deal of change going on for each person, and they are each at a different part of the transition, even when they are the same age.

Arnett's Emerging-Adulthood idea that students of this age are exploring their identity and opportunities they have for their futures, show student agency growing, as well as growth in the development vector (Chickering, 1969) in people this age and stage of life. Looking at the way emerging-adulthood was defined for college students specifically, is eye-opening in that is explains that students in this stage of life have an extended period for growth and career-readiness decisions, making their college experience incredibly influential on how they navigate their lives both during these years and in their futures. Arnett explains that students need to experience his five qualities of life in the college years (18-25) to feel as if they have moved successfully from adolescence to adulthood. That development period, falling in traditional college years, is Emerging-Adulthood (Arnett, 2000). And those five qualities: identity exploration, instability, self-focused, feeling in-between, and possibility, are what Arnett expects all students to not only be experiencing during college, but also learning to question in order to make the move through emerging-adulthood years into their future selves.

However, Arnett did not find this new part of human development without the influence of society (especially American societal norms) on people of this age group. He explains that Emerging-Adulthood is a new experiential age of growth, that has been developing out of the need for students of this age to avoid what they feel is real adulthood (i.e., being married and having children) (2014). The shift in this part of life has only come along in the last few decades, as the age that people are marrying and having children has steeply increased. Arnett's ideas of Emerging-Adulthood being a new and necessary part

of human development is a direct result of young people marrying later (between 24-28 years of age in 2000, opposed to between 20-23 in 1950) and as a result, having children later (Arnett, 2000). This is a new shift in young people's lives, along with an even greater time spent on and a greater percentage of people attending higher education endeavors in the last 50-60 years. This shift means that the original psycho-social background of Erikson's stages is outdated, and must be edited, to better align with what more of society behaves like during these formative years.

These years of Emerging-Adulthood as Arnett has described them, are necessary for students to be able to explore themselves, their knowledge and identity, as well as experience the world around them through the lens of higher education institutions (Arnett, 2004). That experience exactly, is what this project is attempting to better understand, by linking what these "Emerging Adults" are feeling as a result of their college lives, and how their involvement has influenced those feelings.

> "They may look forward to the nonacademic pleasures of college life: meeting a variety of new people, dating a variety of new people, falling in love, making new friends, getting drunk, running their own lives independently of their parents... Their college meanderings are part of their identity explorations... Some find it, some do not. But college at least gives them the opportunity" (p. 122).

Being able to link students' engagement decisions to their feelings of growth, while also experiencing Arnett's five qualities of these years of development, is important to help understand how involvement is linked to this identity development process. From there, they hope to see how feelings of freedom and agency in college can support the growth

through emerging-adulthood, and what those feelings can stem from or develop into as a result of this period of a young person's life.

<center>Agency & Freedom</center>

"What we often fail to acknowledge, however, is that for students the transformative moments often happen outside the classroom...There are ample reasons why we ought to explore student agency outside the confines of the classroom, because this is where most student engagement actually takes place and this is where, often, the most lasting effects of studentship on students' life course happen" (Klemencic, 2015, p. 18).

This concept from Klemencic (2015) and the historical involvement theories have driven the questions in this project, in that it was designed to explore further the how and why involvement can lead to student developing feelings of agency. Though, the students may not see that this growth is happening for each of them because of their engagement on campus, the interview process and digging into these theories have helped make the link between their specific involvement opportunities, how they have engaged with these opportunities, and how the opportunities have then supported growth toward these feelings of independence and freedom, emerging-adulthood, and agency.

A definition of student agency this project was driven by is from Manja Klemencic, who references many previous theorists to show a comprehensive idea of what student agency in particular can look like, be built or influenced by, and how it can be an integral part of the higher education life stage. Beginning with Bourdieu's social theory (1977) explaining how the structure of our societies or communities can support or be challenged by human agency, choice, or behavior. Along with Bourdieu's traditional social norms

<center>35</center>

and influences on agency, Bandura's social psychological perspective (1986, 2001) is also included to explain the concept of agency emerging interactively in human growth toward adulthood. Bandura especially backs up the idea that people (students in our case) utilize the capabilities and behaviors necessary to gain their desired outcome, or what is defined as "self-efficacy" in reference to agency leading to control and decision-making power over their goals, choices, and events. Moving from Bourdieu's ideas about how society can support agency, toward Bandura's support of life's circumstances and a person's will both influencing agency. Klemencic's definition begins from a more external focus and moves to support a more internal focus on how agency is built, expressed, and once recognized can be used to find personal control and decision-making capacity in one's life.

Klemencic's (2015) conceptualization of student agency brings these ideas together to explain her definition. However, in addition to more traditional theories based upon psycho-social and social cognitive ideas, Klemencic also finds it important to understand as Biesta explains, that agency can be developed in a socio-structural context or relational context of action. "Agency is the quality of self-reflective and intentional action and interaction, and not something students possess... Students are conceived as self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting" (Klemencic, 2015; Bandura, 2001; Biesta, 2008). This background puts a more personal and powerful spin on student agency, in that it is something that one does intentionally, even if there is not yet a clear goal or desired outcome. This is how students learn to better express and use agency by making decisions, learning more about their priorities and goals, and putting those new self-reflexive skills into practice again (Klemencic, 2015). Together with Bourdieu, Bandura, and Biesta, it is then explained in Klemencic's defining article on agency just

how students in their college years can use and grow agency. This explanation says student agency is built up of six premises from these background theories into action for her research. Those six premises are as follows:

Agency is developed by individuals or groups of students while interacting with others, materials, and ideas within their current environment;

Agency can be stronger or weaker in any given situation or for any given student at any given time; Student agency is developed over time, and affected by the experiences of each student, helping them to make better decisions and even imagine their future selves; Student agency development is influenced by their social setting (i.e.: institutional culture, political influences, economic setting, etc.) and their experiences in that setting; Student agency is relational and often influenced even more by their relationships built than simply their own experiences in that space; Three modes of agency identified are personal (affecting only their own decisions and outcomes), proxy (affecting their own and others or a group's decision where they may have indirect influence), and collective (affecting their own and others or a group's decisions with collective knowledge and influence within that group).

Klemencic utilizes all these premises, from Bourdieu's and Bandura's explanations of human choice and decision-making and Biesta's addition of self-reflection, to create a definition that presumes students take on four roles while they are in college. The four roles that are based on agency are: preparing for sustainable employment, preparing to be active citizens in a democratic society, cultivating their own personal development, and developing and maintaining a broad, advanced knowledge base (2015). From these four

37

roles students learn and develop agency in different ways, ultimately leading to a definition:

> Student agency as something student can develop – individually and collectively – through self-reflective and intentional action and through interaction with the environment in which they are embedded. By exercising their agency, students exert influence on their educational trajectories, their future lives and their immediate and larger social surroundings (Klemencic, 2015, p. 12).

Understanding how student agency is developed from both social cognitive backgrounds and psycho-social theories brings all these ideas together for Klemencic's definition. The definition quoted above will be utilized as the basis for reference and discussion on student agency throughout this project. Student agency, as defined by Klemencic (2015) also explains that these actions and influences are their agency in action via their decision-making, their feelings on their ability and freedom to and independence in making those decisions, and how they act upon these decisions. All of their decisions and actions, therefore, come from each students' own agency and ability to enact as a result of that agency.

Thinking through these ideas helped to drive the research for this project. However, both definitions of agency were helpful in the discussions with students, Klemencic's helped to not only outline the idea of agency for students in this project, but also her premises and the roles students move through in college age development, really defined the way agency was viewed in this project's design and outcomes. There are clear links in the definition of building agency according to Klemencic's (2015) and development toward emerging-adulthood during the time between 18-25 years (Arnett, 2004). And so, the link

from discussing agency in the interviews, also helped to better understand how they were developing in this stage of emerging-adulthood, and how it can continue to grow during these pivotal years of college and starting careers.

Conclusion

Klemencic and Arnett, along with the background information on student involvement, all link together to frame the research design for this project. The ideas and questions that started this project were directly influenced by the ideas of developing skills and competencies, moving through emerging-adulthood, and finding agency. Utilizing these ideas, along with the background historical theories of involvement from Pace, Astin, Kuh, and even Chickering, brought the research questions into perspective and gave life to the project itself. Using these theoretical and conceptual ideas as a framework helped to bring the ideas of agency and freedom and independence to the forefront of the interview questions for this research. With these historical definitions in mind, the development of agency through the season of emerging-adulthood are cited often by these students in the form of feelings of freedom and independence. The discussions in this project were not different, students often mentioned feeling like this time in their life, outside of their childhood homes and in a period of transition, they felt more freedom, independence, and agency than they had before.

However, these feelings did not just come fully developed with moving to college; exploring their interests and identities, along with opportunities to engage with their peers, professors, organizations, and campus experiences all influenced these feelings during this period. Thinking through how these experiences affected them was what I hoped to find out more details about. As such, the conversations often led into discussions of agency and

adulthood and how they were being developed in their college lives as a result of their involvement opportunities. The project was framed, and the questions were developed for interviews, with the thought that there may be some connection between student ability to develop feelings of agency, move through emerging adulthood, and find connection to their chosen engagement levels and involvement types on campus. Although these three may not be directly linked in all the literature, there is some commonality, and the project was designed to help students identify their movement toward feeling more "adult" via their involvement during college.

Conceptualizing this project through the lens of student development via student involvement is how it began, and the literature around the growth via feelings of agency, movement through emerging-adulthood, and generally feeling more "grown up" helped to define the parameters of the interviews themselves. Using the historical context of involvement theories, along with the linking these ideas from Klemencic and Arnett made this project into an exploration of involvement and its effects on students' experiences and growth in their college years. With an emphasis on how the initial involvements in the first years of college can really make a difference for young people, the research was able to reach many students at the case study university. This research questions were used to help students talk through their growth in these areas as a result of their involvement opportunities.

The research questions identified for this project revolved around the importance of first-year college student campus involvement, the use of involvement in developing agency, and the way involvement opportunities may have helped students in the period of emerging-adulthood through competency and skill development. Although the links

between the historical involvement literature and the new ideas of student development via involvement may not be so aligned, the support of the background theories did help in the outlining of this project and the questions each student was asked. Along with that background, an exploration with each student interviewed relating their involvement to their feelings of growth was discussed. This framework of defining agency and adulthood during the interviews then hearing about freedom, independence, and self-awareness being linked, really drove the point home. Simply put, students were often able to find the link between their involvement on campus to their growth as a human, not just in their academic or social experiences, but holistically. Framing the interviews around involvement opportunities and what these meant to each student helped them to openly discover and determine areas of growth in their identity and agency.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Design & Method Overview

In order to explore student perceptions of involvement on campus and growth in agency and self-authorship, I conducted an interview-based study that included a preliminary recruitment survey. I used the survey results from those who volunteered for the interview (N=269) to categorize the students' experiences in high school and college and to recruit interview participants based on those categories. Then I conducted a two-hour interview over two sessions with 24 students. In the first interview, we reviewed their history of involvement in high school and their first year of college. In the second interview, we explored the topic of freedom and agency discussed above as well as their experiences with leaving campus due to COVID-19. Analysis was iterative following each phase of data generation both examining each student's pathway of involvement to and through their first years and then across student datasets using a constant comparative method to develop emerging themes.

Using the survey helped to narrow the pool of participants for recruitment and personalize the questions for the second piece of data generation – the individual interviews. Questions were asked in both the first and second round of interviews that brought together data on what types of involvements, time commitment to involvement and school, and even their social experiences in those involvement activities leading to their perceived growth toward adulthood. I used the data from the interview questions to attempt to explore my overarching questions about how involvement in college, especially during the influential first year, can help students to feel more agency and contribute to their emerging-adulthood (Arnett, 2004; Klemencic, 2015;).

The goal of the interviews was not to try to measure growth, but to explore how the student interviewees talked about their experiences of growth from involvement. This phenomenological approach allowed me to explore their explanations of their time engaging with student groups, organizations, social or Greek connections, dorm life, student government, activism, campus events, and more. Analyzing the data for connections between student involvements on campus and their perceived growth toward independence, freedom of choice, and "adulting" as they liked to call it, resulted in further understanding how the students themselves framed the experience of involvement. I attempt to show how the students' personal feelings and experiences could point toward a development of good decision-making, sense of self, sound reasoning and confidence within their own abilities.

Research Setting

This research took place on a south-eastern United States Research-1 University campus. This is also the institution where I work, teach, and am currently a student. I was once in the same spot as the third-year students I recruited for their study, as I graduated from the university in 2011 with my first two higher education degrees. This is close to home for me as my alma mater, which can lend itself to biases and limitations in research. However, this institution is also a connection that can be utilized in order to be able to make more personalized connections to other students in the same shoes as the ones interviewed for this example project.

The university is a large research institution, connected to one of the state's largest medical enterprises as well, so the reach for recruitment of this school is wide in the state and beyond. This type of school was chosen for the study because of the myriad of

involvement options students have available to them on a majority residential campus of this size. It was important to show a large campus with many opportunities, but also one where some students can get lost in the population without finding many connections at all. I found it important to recognize both sides of the spectrum, from very involved to not at all involved, in order to discuss how those engagements can impact a student's experience. This type of institution made it possible to get input from students along that spectrum, to show how important involvement can be, but also how often it is missed as well. This was planned accordingly to help enrich the data and discussion on influences of involvement from all sides.

The institution is in a south-eastern state. Similar to many institutions of its size in the area, it is in a mid-sized city, not too urban but also not rural. Because of all those characteristics, this university has a mostly resident driven enrollment (holding around 2/3 of the enrollment in the last ten years), but with a mix of on-campus and off-campus dwelling undergraduates. It pulls a mostly regional population of students, with the majority from in-state and others from neighboring states, often students are no more than 4-5 hours from home. The university's total enrollment breakdown is about 17% Underrepresented Minority groups, with the remainder being White and of Asian descent. Most of these students are full-time and reside in the state, the total enrollment holding strong around or above 30,000 students for the last 10+ years (according to the public website, updated data from 2019). Again, these demographics make the institution very similar to other R1 universities in the region.

Participants

I purposefully recruited students in their third year of study, during the 2020-2021 academic year, because they could reflect on high-school, first year, and beginning of upper-level involvement during their time at this institution prior to shutdowns caused by COVID-19. It was important to address the pandemic, but not to interview students who had only been in college under pandemic circumstances. The entire 2018 cohort was included in the initial recruitment survey.

This cohort of students that began college in the Fall of 2018 included a total of 3766 students at the time the data was pulled for contact. This was the total group minus those that have a FERPA protection or block on their student files. Demographics of these 3766 students contacted were:

43.1% Male, 56.9% Female

17.4% of the 3766 Reported URM Status

27.7% of the 3766 Reported Being First-Generation Students

30.9% were Out-of-State Students, 69.1% were In-State Students

These numbers were acquired from the university's public demographic website, for the total cohort of Fall 2018.

As described above, I reached out to Fall 2018 cohort by email, from a list acquired with permission and letter of support (Appendix D) from the Director of the Office of Institutional Research, Analytics, and Decision Support. The list that the office representative shared included all currently enrolled students, considered junior status, having been a part of the initial Fall 2018 class. The recruitment and assignment to this group was automatic, as they were all included in the email list if they were in the third

year, Fall 2018 cohort that was compiled according to credit hours and enrollment start date.

The survey included 15 questions, all of which were required except for the last one that requested contact information for those interested in an interview (See Appendix A) delivered in a Qualtrics submission form sent via a web link on the email invite. The survey included a mixture of multiple-choice questions and short answers, with no specific length requirements. The survey instrument was developed in such a way to keep it simple and short, telling respondents that completion will take between 4-5 minutes. The goal was to recruit students for an in-depth follow-up interview. Time, convenience sampling, efficiency, and low-cost are all things that Sue & Ritter (2007) outline for creating online surveys. Using those suggestions, the survey was outlined to be quick, with an introduction in the email explaining the details and beginning the informed consent process (See Appendix C). This helped to solicit responses, while also notifying students ahead of time what time commitments were necessary for each piece of the project, if they were interested in continuing past the survey step.

Following an initial round of responses, the interview survey email request went out again, to all those who had not yet submitted in the population. This invitation, and subsequent reminder encouraged the participants via friendly "help out your fellow-student" by submitting answers and supporting your institution's graduate student. Further reminders were not sent so as to be able to schedule interviews before the summer break occurred. In addition, the invitation included a cut-off date to encourage students to reply early. Included in the email reminders there was a note to "sign up now for an interview

and receive an incentive" in order to encourage more involvement toward the end of the initial push for respondents.

Of the 3766 student emails originally sent from the raw Fall 2018 cohort contacts, 507 responses to the survey came through. Over half of those students (260 or approximately 7%) included contact information as they were interested in the interview option. I sorted these students into three categories shown in Table I: highly involved in high school & highly in college; highly involved in high school & not in college; not involved in high school & not involved in college. Table 1 describes the involvement levels and demographic characteristics of the recruitment survey respondents.

Table 1

Survey Participant Demographics by Involvement Level

Survey Volunteer Demographics	Not involved in HS Not involved in College	Involved in HS Not involved in College	Involved in HS Involved in College
Male	-	13	56
Female	3	35	159
3rd Gender/Non-Binary	-	-	3
URM*	1	9	31
First-Generation**	1	12	29
In-State	3	29	126
Out-of-State	-	19	92
Total:	3 students	48 students	218 students

Total: 269 total survey responses with contact information

*URM: Underrepresented minority at this institution is defined according to the 5 URM groups from the Council on Postsecondary Education, which are: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races.

**First-Generation: According to the institutions First-Generation Student Advising - Being a first generation (1G) college student means neither of your parents earned a Bachelor's degree, regardless of siblings and other relatives.

From these categories I initially contacted 54 students with interview invitations, as evenly distributed across the involvement level categories as was possible. In an attempt to draw a wide range of experiences based on personal background characteristics, I also selected participants based on gender, race, first generation status, and residency. Following the first wave of recruitment, my respondents were overwhelmingly white, female, and highly involved. I then sent an additional 28 invitations targeting under-represented minority students, men, and students who self-described as less involved in college. Of these 82-total invited, 24 students completed both the first and second interview described below. Table 2 describes the involvement levels and demographic characteristics of the interview participants.

Table 2

Interview Participant Demographics by Involvement Level

Interviewee Demographics	Not involved in HS; Not involved in College	Involved in HS; Not involved in College	Involved in HS; Involved in College
Male***	-	1	3
Female***	1	7	13
URM*	-	2	3
First-Generation**	-	2	4
In-State	1	4	9
Out-of-State	-	3	7
Total:	1 student	7 students	16 students

Total: 24 students interviewed

*URM: Underrepresented minority at this institution is defined according to the 5 URM groups from the Council on Postsecondary Education, which are: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races.
**First-Generation: According to the institutions First-Generation Student Advising - Being a first generation (1G) college student means neither of your parents earned a Bachelor's degree, regardless of siblings and other relatives.
***Gender Selection Note: Only included M/F as there were no other selections identified by the 24 students interviewed, there was other gender identification options included in the survey to choose from, but all interviewees chose along the M/F binary

Generating Data

Involvement & Independence Interviews

I began scheduling interviews as soon as I had a critical mass of potential participants from the recruitment survey while continuing to solicit new survey responses to increase the diversity of the pool of potential participants. As such, the interviews began with those early volunteers at the same time as survey responses were still being collected. I continued to sort the potential interviewees according to the "involvement" typology and purposefully sampling across demographic categories. I tried to increase participation by those who reported they were less involved in high school or college. In the end, this was the smallest group. Only a small number of that group was found in the entirety of the survey responses and invited but ended up being about 10% of the interviewed panel. The other three levels of involvement did have a good number of invites for each, resulting in about an even split in those groupings, the highest number still falling into Highly Involved in High School and College. This, of course, made sense as I was reviewing data, because these highly engaged students were the ones likely to respond to a request for interview to begin with, likely because these personalities were the ones interested in engaging in all types of involvement, including research opportunities.

Table 3

Invited Students' Demographics by Involvement Level

Interviewee Demographics	Not involved in HS; Not involved in College	Involved in HS; Not involved in College	Involved in HS; Involved in College
Male***	-	4	18
Female***	1	12	47
URM*	1	2	10
First-Generation**	-	2	5
Total:	1 student	16 students	65 students

*URM: Underrepresented minority at this institution is defined according to the 5 URM groups from the Council on Postsecondary Education, which are: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races.
**First-Generation: According to the institutions First-Generation Student Advising - Being a first generation (1G) college student means neither of your parents earned a Bachelor's degree, regardless of siblings and other relatives.
***Gender Selection Note: Only included M/F as there were no other selections identified by the 82 students invited, there was other gender identification options included in the survey to choose from, but all interviewees chose along the M/F binary

The 82 invitations went out, and only 1 student signed up for an interview that did not show up and was unable to be contacted for further engagement. That 82, as such, turned into the 24 total participants. Those 24 were mostly in the highly involved in high school and college level groups, with only 8 students falling into the not involved in high school or college, and involved in high school but not in college groups. That meant that 2/3 of the final sample was highly involved in high school and college both per their survey self-reported data. Again, this seemed to make perfect sense, as the most involved students are most likely to be checking email, be engaged in student research, and be responsive to a fellow student's request for participation. A higher percentage of those invited (almost

77%) were in the highly involved level, versus how many of those highly involved students went through with the interviews (16 of the 24, 66.7%).

The narrowing and intentional demographic invitations seemed to help mitigate the large percentage of highly involved students. The ability to reach a group of those less involved, or not at all involved, was important and was able to be reached for at least a third of the final sample. In the end the recruitment process resulted in a panel of students who are mostly involved in college reducing my ability to compare involvement levels but providing ample opportunity to explore the ways in which the students' perceived their involvement affected their development of agency and independence.

As the survey data continued to be collected, I began to schedule interviews. Each of the 82 students, invited in 2-3 waves of emails, were able to open a listing of calendar times, and choose a one-hour time slot to schedule. The students received a confirmation email with the Zoom link details, as well as the first interview IRB Consent Document to review. This ensured that there was a quick start to each interview, beginning with a review of the document and verbal consent from each participant. From there, I introduced myself and the project again, while outlining the discussion topics for interview session one. Then, the questions and conversations about involvement began following the interview guide. The basis of the first interview would be on the details of the student interviewees' engagement on campus.

The interview guide (Appendix D) provided some structure to the interview conversation; however, often, in order to keep the interview running smoothly, these questions were mixed up a bit for better flow, or because of the direction the student was leading in the discussion. Because of this, the guide "... structures the course of the

51

interview more or less tightly" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 156). It was important that these sessions felt natural, more discussion-based than question and answer, keeping the student at ease to share what they wanted, as fully as they felt comfortable. Because of the self-reported answers in the survey, I was also able to take personalized details into the interviews. This process of personalizing this interview protocol also helped to ensure the student interviewees were easily able to answer the questions and know I had some idea of their background.

As Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) explain, the "art of second questions" was very important for me, as I remained an active listener and engaged in the conversation during each interview. Being able to tailor some questions ahead of time and utilizing the second question practice were two ways that helped the interviewees discuss their experiences as in-depth as possible. For each interview, I would pull the survey data for the participant, and make notes to begin tailoring the interview sessions according to that data. The data pieces that helped inform the interviews were: living status (on- or off-campus), online versus in-person classes in concurrent terms, hometown, first-generation status, and their involvement levels, in both high school and college, determined by the self-reported involvement data. These items framed the first interview by helping point questions about particular involvement types, and how those things affected their high school life, and their choice to be involved or not in college. Also, it helped to be able to take some of the basic demographic info (hometown, first-gen status) into account when considering how that involvement level may be influenced by where they are from, and their prior exposure to college life.

From there, the first session concentrated on a few topics of questions, beginning with general involvement details for both high school and college. The questions then shifted to their expectations for college life, and if those expectations were met in their first year. I tried to tease out how these expectations may have influenced their involvement choices and feelings about their transition to college.

At the end of the first session, following the final question about whether they were happy with their experience on campus thus far, I outlined the rest of the project for their understanding. Then, I invited the student volunteers to schedule a second interview which would be scheduled the same way as before and included the same incentive payment as the first interview. That wrapped up the conversation while also leaving the discussion open-ended to continue into the next session. Then, I thanked the student, sent the incentive money in the way they had requested, and closed the meeting, promising another invite email to follow up that day. The student was then able to schedule the second session in the same way as the first, choosing their dates and times. Following that session, I finalized field notes and sent the final invite to ensure a second interview session with all those possible. In all, 25 completed the first interview session. All but one scheduled and completed their second interview.

Preparing for the second interview session involved reading the notes and reviewing the answers to help guide the second session's questions and outline of subjects. I attempted to refamiliarize myself with each student interviewee ahead of the second session, considering what data from the survey was confirmed, if there was any that was reported differently, and bringing their experience answers to front of mind. Using the first session answers assisted in the discussion and more specific follow-up questions planned

for the second interview, while also setting the tone for what to expect from the student. Expanding on the details shared in the first interview session was the plan and, while digging deeper into their perceptions of their growth.

The second interview session started in the same way as the first, with the review of the consent document for interview two, which looked familiar to all the students. Once there was verbal consent to continue, I did a short recap of the first discussion, while adding how that would lead into the second discussion topics. Starting the second interview, I used the previous data to frame, and then began by asking what the student experience looked like once they moved into their sophomore year and were ultimately sent home from college due to the pandemic. This pandemic experience, again, was not the goal of the study. But it felt important to discuss the topic of engagement with all the influences they had experienced thus far in college, most of which had included the COVID-19 pandemic backdrop.

Once the pandemic issue and outcomes for each student were discussed, I turned my questions toward the student's perceptions of their growth relative to their involvement and outside of classroom engagements during their college life. This is where it became important to refer to the previously reported involvement types and experiences so that I could further understand how these areas had had an impact on the students and in what ways they identified feelings of adulthood and agency. Because student development concepts of self-authorship, agency, etc are not commonly known, I explicitly introduced the idea of agency and first asked if the student volunteer understood the general definition or could give me a simple definition on their own. I would share some simple defining ideas about agency and how a growing agency might feel in my own examples. From there,

the conversation turned toward the college experiences reported, and in what ways the student felt they may have contributed to that feeling of agency, independence and freedom, or adulthood, and then finally, why that was the case for each student.

Collection of data was layered, so referring to the previous data from the survey and initial interview session was important to keep the conversations flowing. It also helped the interviewee to understand the connections between involvement and agency I was making and then work with them to understand their perspective on their personal growth. The reference to earlier discussions and previous data points not only helped guide the final discussion about agency and growth, but also helped close the loop on why their high school versus college involvement was important to understand. Often, the students began to understand their own development during these discussions, simply by making the connections between the decisions they made in college, to the feelings they were developing about freedom, independence, agency, and adulthood. These revelations, along with sharing their expectations versus the reality of what they found during their first few semesters of college, were the big data pieces this interview session was based upon, and the set up helped to build from the "what" to the "why" and "how" and "how did that make you feel" types of questions toward the end of these interview sessions.

The first interview sessions started with a review of consent, and verbal confirmation that they are willing to share while also allowed to stop the session at any time. They were also reminded that the incentive was going to be paid, but that would be arranged at the end of the session. That opened them up a bit and helped to frame the discussion for the students to begin sharing. The volunteers were then asked to simply share what their high school experience and involvement looked like. That linked to the survey

data, and then helped to lead into how their engagements in college may have evolved, been related to, or been separate from their high school experiences.

From this first discussion, the second interview shifted gears into a more reflective and reflexive set of questions. Beginning this session, I introduced the idea of agency, as is described by the four steps from Jennifer Davis Poon in Education Reimagined (2018). This was an easy outline to share, especially for those student interviewees who were not able to produce a definition of agency on their own. I read the definition and four steps to each student and discussed further with those who may have had questions about defining agency before we began. The four steps she outlines helped to give the students an idea of how some of those steps or feelings could happen, and how those would further develop their feelings of growing agency. This introduction to agency helped students reflect on how their expectations of "growing up" in college were often different from what they thought they would feel when they got to college.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data included a combination of meaning-making, language connection, and other measures (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). I also drew from Thematic Analysis as described by Braun and Clark (2006). Therefore, the analysis was done in multiple stages, as some trends stood out during initial coding, and helped to further narrow the coding areas for more in-depth understanding of the student answers. The interviews were first organized by their different self-reported involvement levels. I conducted an initial pass of open coding. Following a first reading in these pools, I then organized the interviews by demographic categories and coded again.

First, I used Dedoose software to capture codes of the big ideas and involvement areas that each student participant identified, both in their interview and survey data. From there, as from the survey data, some involvement themes and connections to their outcomes via student disclosure began to show with the first round of coding. Then, the coding became a further investigation, helping to not only see the involvement areas that are influential, but what these engagement opportunities the students identified have done that student reported supported their growth toward adulthood. The goal in all levels of coding was to explore the questions about student involvement and perceptions of development.

Conclusion

Using the survey to help bring the invitations and the final participant number to a manageable amount for one interviewer and researcher was important. Those groupings also helped to support those themes, even when only a few interviews had been completed, to become clearer in the data. Thematic analysis led to the initial ideas about how different student background characteristics or involvement levels might have affected their answers in the interviews. It was helpful to relate the survey data to each student's interview answers and to be able to help categorize via those groupings, even following some of the interview questions. That outline of characteristics was still able to be utilized and help the research continue to build with the interview data coming together, especially in the cross-sectional exploration relating some student stories via their background details that may not have been connected previously in the original thematic analysis of interview answers.

These interviews were designed to build upon one another, to move from the students' transition experiences and involvements to their current feelings of adulthood, and then help them reflect on how those things may be connected. That was purposeful,

57

because I thought it necessary to help them explore those pieces separately, to discover themes throughout, and then hopefully connect the themes from all the data to the final themes of emerging adulthood and development of agency. Luckily, that intentionality in design did work out to guide the interviews in exactly that direction. Instead of identifying student involvement levels influencing student personal development toward adulthood, the themes were shown across all student groupings, just in different ways depending on the personal stories of each participant.

INVOLVEMENT & AGENCY DISCUSSION

One Student's Story

Bridget was highly involved in high school and shared that she was adamant about extending that involvement into her college life. She explained during her interview that she planned to get engaged on campus in many ways possible, right away, when she arrived for her freshman year. This was all in her plan because of how important and influential her high school involvement had been in her success as a student and in developing her identity and independence from her family. She came from high school ready to find her community and learn more about herself, as a result of her decision to come to this college far from home and expand her horizons.

When Bridget arrived on campus, she attended some extended orientation events and immediately began attending clubs and meetings across campus. First, NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and MANNRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences) because she felt as if her high school did not have enough in the way of minority and women support for success. And soon after these relationships were developed, she found SABs (Student Activities Board's) Leadership Development Program. In these, she found both the breadth and depth that Pace (1982) encourages as the best way for students to engage. First, she found the areas she knew she wanted to get involved in for her own identity and support, for the community she sought out. And then, she dug deeper into those areas to find the more specific and intensive opportunities necessary to accomplish what she had set out to while in college. Not only was she finding many opportunities as planned to keep her engaged and successful in academics, but she was also finding in-depth ways to engage further in

these areas to develop herself in her leadership skills and goals to grow in many aspects outside of her classroom life.

Bridget explained during the interview her feelings on being "type-A" and needing to find her place on campus right away to begin a good schedule. When she talked about her immediate, in-depth engagement on campus helping her transition to college she states,

"I will say like yeah, I think everything panned out pretty well I think freshman year. The amount of stuff I was coming in and managing was like at times a little bit difficult but, overall, like it was fine, so I think, for me it was really good for me to like come in involved. Because I feel like, if I had like too much time on my hands I wouldn't have been like a successful like productive."

Along with these engagements helping her to find her community and begin involving herself in her interests, she also made a point to begin college on a good foot academically, by ensuring relationships with professors, especially those in her future areas of study. In addition to that, her living-learning program connected her to a great roommate and many other students in the same or similar majors as her. These students become a cohort, and her roommate has become a life-long friend as well.

Just as the background theories explain, connecting not only with peers, but intentionally connecting with faculty and academic interest areas is an important part of student personal growth in college (Pace, 1982; Astin, 1984, 1993). These theories support Bridget's decisions to engage on all these fronts, and yet her explanation is simple... She wanted to move to college to explore opportunities different from high school and her home life, while also ensuring she did everything she could to support herself academically for success in college. Knowing that she came in ahead, with AP and Honors credits, Bridget

60

expected to quickly become enrolled in upper-level courses in her major and realized herself that making these connections in her dorm and in her classrooms was going to be important for her learning, career development, and community building while she was on campus.

As Bridget shared her story, she consistently reflected on how these different opportunities have already affected her life and skill development, which she was happy to get but was not necessarily planning to find simply by connecting with student groups. Things she says she has developed as a result of her involvement include: leadership skills and how to foster confidence in yourself and others in the groups, practical or "real-life" skills in budgeting or money-management, using resources and utilizing them to better yourself, and teamwork and collaboration in many different surroundings.

> "I didn't know I was going to like get these leadership roles and like be a part of organizations that really do like impact students and their sense of belonging... that's something that like really shocked me. Like how much involvement really does mean to students and how much it can really share a student's experience... I didn't even think of that, I guess, coming from high school. But it really does make a lot of sense because college is difficult, it's a lot... Having like those little outlets and life safe spaces, like you know that you can like really be your most authentic self... Finally seeing the opportunities like these organizations have been providing for students. It's awesome, I just love it."

All of these are important lessons she wanted to share, leadership skills being the most important and significant improvements she felt as a result of these engagements. She relates all these skills in the interview to feelings of independence and ability to make good

decisions for herself, even to the idea of agency and feeling that develop the more she has grown into her own identity and as a student leader. She explains that she has realized that "I do some things that may not benefit me, and recognize that, but I enjoy it. You know, kind of just like being honest with yourself... Keep your roles for yourself and figure it out along the way." Bridget has learned to make decisions for herself, keeping her needs and goals in mind, but also learning that it is okay to have things you do for yourself to have fun as well.

Bridget explains her feelings of independence were encouraged early on by "non-hovering" parents, but as she shared at the start of the interview, she wanted to come to college to explore her own identity even further and find her community for herself. She goes on to talk about how her decision-making skills, feelings of independence and agency, and movement toward adulthood have been cultivated during her college years (Arnett, 2004, Klemencic, 2015). She explains that she has tapped into her networks and realized their importance for her career trajectory, and that she must relate everything she engaged with back to how it benefits her and what she's passionate about. All these reflections show how much she has developed since her self-seeking and exploration state of mind during the move to college. She has changed her major and decided not to be a doctor, she has studied health care management and realized she wants to concentrate more on how to incorporate better social-justice practices, as opposed to simply being a hospital administrator as she originally thought when the major change occurred. All of this has been influenced by her network of instructors and peers, and by her own identity being built and emerging to be who she is today.

"I'm definitely, I'm headed in a good direction... I've had a lot of experience that have helped me with that. Like stuff I didn't expect, coming into my sense of self... You know, that self-fulfillment component wasn't like kind of emphasized, but now I kind of just know like I'm going to do this, but not this. Do what brings me joy and, you know, could help like offer some type of personal benefit as well. That's what's super important."

Bridget closed her interview explaining that she did feel growth, she did feel more "grown-up" and adult than she had before. There were many factors she attributed to supporting that growth and independence she felt, but ultimately, her final thoughts were that she was going to do what she was passionate about, and she had learned along the way how to make those choices confidently because of her own ability to self-reflect and self-actualize her goals. The goals may have shifted a bit from when she began, but her plan to get involved and stay involved on all sides of college engagements held steady and did benefit her in her successful growth in college.

This profile provides an introduction to the ways in which the students' stories of involvement and their self-reported analysis of the meaning they take from these experiences helps to expand what we know of the concepts of "engagement" and "involvement" when personalized and contextualized. Yes, involvement serves to help a student transition into their collegiate environment, but it also provides a foundation on which they can develop self-confidence, intra- and inter-dependence, and a sense of purpose.

Pathways and Levels of Involvement

The student volunteers interviewed for this project fell across a variety of background characteristics, hometowns, and involvement choices. Those differences helped to build some rich data from each interview opportunity and helped to highlight how certain types of involvement paths lead to certain outcomes for these students. Although there are no two stories alike, there are a few that are similar and helped to build some pathways relating student backgrounds and high school involvement to their college experiences and outcomes. As was displayed in Table 2, the survey data helped to break down the student participants into three major involvement level categories: Not Involved in High School or College; Involved in High School but Not in College; Highly Involved in High School and College. The three-level separation also helped to see some connections between the student stories in each level.

Highly Involved

Bridget is a prime example story of a "Highly Involved in High School and College" student. Differing from the other two levels, these students, like Bridget, are comfortable articulating how all their different involvement throughout their school and college years have affected them personally, professionally, academically, etc. Not only did they see growth and development within themselves as they went through college, often they also shared that even before entering college they felt empowered to make decisions for themselves. They anticipated being involved as a great way to expand and enhance their college experiences. They described the development they felt in themselves, and sometimes in those around them as student leaders. Just as Bridget described, support from their engagements, no matter what types of involvement they were, often helped them to

find a purpose and something to enjoy outside of the classroom. From these experiences, they gained social networks on campus (both with faculty and peers), as well as growth in personal identity traits such as positive self-talk, self-reflection, and decision-making capabilities.

I found that these students were able to share their reflections on growth because they had seen changes within themselves and their classmates in areas both inside and outside the classroom. Although the men were less forthcoming, they were still thoughtful regarding their personal development. This group of highly involved students was particularly interesting because of their ability to share their experiences as they directly related to their feelings of being more grown-up and adult. In almost all these cases, the highly involved students could pinpoint some pivotal time or experience that specifically expanded their skills and showed their personal growth. Because they were often able to talk about goal setting around involvement, these highly involved students were then able to share specific examples of how their goals were met or exceeded because of their commitment to their engagements. Overall, students in this group that were identified as highly involved outside of the classroom in their young lives find purpose and growth via their time spent committed to these engagements. As was expected from the original research questions, there is for this group of highly involved and engaged students, a great deal of connection and influence from their participation and their growth into adulthood, good decision-making, and feelings of agency.

<div align="center">Involved in High School, But Not in College</div>

Some examples that came up in a few "Involved in High School, But Not in College" category stories were especially interesting. Although both stories began as

"Involved in High School, But Not in College", the interviews quickly showed that the categorization levels may not really be that simple. Sammy, a nursing student, may have answered that she was "Not Involved in College," but when it came to the discussion, she disclosed that not only had she been in a Greek organization for 1-2.5 years, but she was also incredibly engaged with her Nursing college cohort and had found a group all its own in that area, which led to discontinuing participation in Greek life. Sammy is involved on campus and was for at least one year committed to a group that required a lot of social, service, and free time outside of class.

Sammy also struggled in the beginning of college, their first-year grades not living up to their high school standards, nor what they thought was necessary for Nursing admissions. But they made a tough choice to stop going home every weekend in college and commit to their plans to get what they needed from this experience and from their classes, to get into the Nursing program. Because of their career decisions to go into Nursing, and subsequently from their admission to the program and the time commitment required for the BSN, they chose to concentrate on their classes. And with that commitment, the people who they found themselves with more and more often – both formally in class or studying, but also as they explained, informally for fun and relaxation in the little free time they had as Nursing students.

Sammy's story is an interesting one, because they are involved and finding their connections with both peers and faculty via their academic program. And, they have identified a lot of what was required to be admitted and be successful in the Nursing program as a great influence on their development toward adulthood. Things like course trajectory and grade requirements, put a great deal of pressure on them in their first year,

and led them to have to buckle down both socially and academically to succeed. However, they do not consider this cohort engagement an "involvement" because of their choice to commit to educational connections instead of social ones in the Greek community. Ultimately, Sammy explained growth in feelings of agency not only as a result of the commitment to Greek life, and the switch to committing to Nursing, but also in the whole experience of these changes in time-commitments and choices being made to support their career goals. Realizing that they had to make a choice between getting into Nursing and successfully completing, and committing to their initial social engagements, was difficult but identified by Sammy as imperative for accomplishing their goals.

Just as Sammy expressed, Nursing cohorts and LLPs are sometimes not thought of as an "involvement" in the minds of many students. Why? In both CJ's and Sammy's stories, their academic-related groups became their essential supports and often their closest friends; did they not consider academic-related groups "college involvement"? Is this a reflection of how high school extracurriculars are defined? These groups may not be as likely to be categorized as involvement as student government or an organization, but in these cases their influence on student growth was real. The decisions to give up one organization to engage further with a Nursing cohort and student group, or the difficult transition of majors both show how decision-making and personal growth was supported by these opportunities. LLPs and academic groups can be an incredible source of support for students academically, but in Sammy's and CJ's cases, these academic connections became their biggest time commitment outside of class, and their greatest source of social connection. Not to mention, they helped these students recognize their involvements as

things outside of student organizations, and the importance of them in their growth toward their careers and adulthood.

Not Involved

There only happened to be one student interviewed that identified as not involved at all in high school or college. Her name is Deb. This option was chosen because Deb felt she was not engaged in anything outside of class on campus, they live off-campus, and they work a lot in their time, not committed to school. Deb was an Egyptian-American student who spent most of her life in a big city and had only recently moved to a small town near campus. She struggled to identify connections, outside of a few very close friends she had met in classes early on and had continued to register with to ensure they had a study group and a friendly face in as many classes as possible. Deb did report enjoying her time on campus, feeling more independent and grown-up when she was there spending time with her study group after her commute to school each day. But her time was often monopolized by work and left little time to be on campus outside of class. She attributed that lack of time to not knowing much about her pre-PA major or how to find better connections to advising and support for that area. But, overall, Deb was happy she had been able to attend this school and find the friends she did have during her time here, even if it was not considered "involvement".

This student example is an interesting one, as Deb ended up being the only person who not only identified as not involved but was able to report no formal involvement on-campus in any way. As she described, her time on campus each day was short, so she was just happy to find the few friends she was able to keep as a study group. Contrary to some other interviewee's selections, their discussions led to identifying things they are involved

with on campus, that may not fit into the categories listed on the survey but are still official and formal engagements with their campus. Deb, the one student who was in fact not involved in any way, was still able to identify some connections on campus, but pointed more introspectively toward growth in areas like decision-making, self-reflection, and agency.

There was an effort to get to know more students at this involvement level, but even with major recruitment separate from the original invites; this person was the only one who was able to be interviewed twice during the project. Still, Deb's story does lead to an understanding of how informal involvement with fellow students may affect student outcomes. An interesting point of analysis was brought out of this her story, in that Deb was able to identify some informal classmate connections that had helped them stay connected to campus-life during the COVID-19 shut down and has carried through their entire college life thus far. Still, Deb discussed her growth toward the outcomes in feelings of agency, and was only able to identify growth within themselves, affected by work they had done on themselves personally, without any specific influences from her family, her job, her student friends, or her college classes. This un-involved student story points to the idea that development in this part of life often takes place as a part of personal growth and may not be directly connected to outcomes in college life or campus involvement.

"Structured" Involvement

Bridget's story is one of classic "involvement". As the students discussed their involvement in high school compared to college their explanations helped transform the simple "what" questions, into the "why" and "how" they were involved which led to more complex definitions of what involvement can mean. This provided context to how they felt

their involvement was able to help support their feeling of transitioning smoothly into college and campus life (or not).

The first theme was how structured forms of involvement (e.g. living learning programs) helped them feel more at home on campus. Many students shared that dorm and Living Learning Program or scholarship requirements helped them to connect and meet others around them. I found these early connections a way to lead into a discussion of how their first experiences lead to in building of their communities on campus. Along with these living situations, there are also examples that other student volunteers shared about how their transition was eased from their involvement outside their living quarters.

Shannon, a student who was not only interested in Greek life for the comradery, but also for the opportunities to get more connected to campus happenings and volunteer opportunities said:

> "I didn't know anyone coming here and so originally thought 'Yes, get involved –
> Go! Go! Go!' I kinda met people in the dorms, which was really good. And then, I
> went through recruitment and ended up in a house. When I was there, we got info
> on volunteer work and other ways to get involved,"

This connection to service and community volunteer work, along with breaking the ice by finding a sorority house, was one I heard from a few different students throughout this discussion about their first engagements.

For example, Bailey, a self-reported anxious student shared how being involved in an LLP was able to make her feel more at home on campus. That initial community built simply from their first few interests and dorm connections on campus:

> "I got involved with 4Paws4Ability training service dogs. I was in STEM (LLP, full name omitted) my first year, so I got to move in early."

Bailey came to campus early for her LLP, and she talks about how it alleviated some of her anxiety about coming to college not knowing anyone. She also struggled her first year in the Biology major she chose to go to Veterinary school. She found her connections via the dog training program on campus, which helped her keep a good schedule structure. She claims that her stability and self-awareness has been bolstered by the experiences with 4Paws4Ability, and that heightened self-confidence helped her find a better fit in the Animal Science major she has been succeeding since changing at the end of her first year. All of this she attributes to her LLP and dog training connections that she was able to find right away when she moved to campus early before school began.

In contrast CJ's story pushes the boundaries of what we think of as residence hall programming by including the infrastructure of the whole residential complex, including the basketball court. He said:

> "I lived on campus Glenn III (full dorm building name omitted) freshman year. There's a small basketball court outside the building… It was always some dorm people, we played basketball quite a bit."

CJ was not feeling very sociable but was able to meet people other than his single roommate by going out and getting active in the court outside their building. That proximity to the courts created a way to let off steam, but also became his way to connect to more student peers.

> "I was an RA for a year, in kind of the leadership role… I continued as a part of the international student leadership team from my old LLP," Charity explained to me.

Charity is another example of how life in an LLP on campus opened up leadership opportunities, as well as establishing a social network that later provided a virtual infrastructure that helped sustain her during COVID isolation. As an international student, she found people like herself that lived in the same building. She was grateful for these connections, both to friends and other academically linked advisors or professors, as she needed to leverage those connections when she ended up doing a year of college in her home country during the COVID-19 shutdown. Charity explained that those connections to the LLP and being able to serve as an RA really helped her find community and support, not only during her studies from afar, but also as she changed her major and struggled with her identity after moving away from her original plan to go to Medical School. She found that the LLP family she built not only supported her in her choices for a new path, but also helped her realize it was okay to struggle and that she needed to prioritize her own opinions over the outside influences telling her that Medical School was the only way. This group not only helped Charity stay connected, they also strengthened her self-awareness and helped her find herself, even during the pandemic disconnect many people were feeling.

Charity's experience in the dorm life, along with CJ's and Bailey's both in and out of LLP dorms, helped to engage them early on and could be considered formal involvement programming. Yet, they all reported exploring a bit more just by proximity of their dorm to other resources or events in their buildings and outside on the basketball court. Ironically, some of the students did not categorize their LLP living arrangements as "involvement" perhaps because they weren't explicitly student organizations, sports teams, or academic programs. These LLPs and dorm connections created a synergistic

experience. These opportunities were being utilized, even if their relation to living arrangements may have made them seem less like "involvements" to the interviewees.

I found that these discussions about what they did not necessarily consider an "involvement" very interesting. These almost always connected to an LLP, dorm, or other living situation. Just like CJ's story, the connections built right away for students in their dorms or living spaces have a huge impact on their connection to campus. Again, these may not be what they labeled as "involvement", but during the interviews, these early connections in LLPs and dorm life had obviously had an impact on many students' early campus life. These communities were built from the very first day on campus, some even earlier as they got to move in early for their LLP programming.

A great thing that students might consider more academically related, as discussed previously. But one we know from Kuh's (2008) high-impact practices, to be an incredible way to break the ice and begin growing connection and community right away. Those connections were often both to peers and faculty or advisors, which we know is also important for their community development and feeling at home on campus (Astin, 1984; Pace, 1982). Institutional intervention, through the structuring of living arrangements for on campus students, may not be defined as involvement by the students, but do impact the ways they describe their building of community on campus.

Students' Choice of Joining (and Quitting)

We would expect to see external influences on the students' choices for how to spend their time. Influences from their parent's experiences (or lack-there-of for first-generation students), their siblings or friends who attend the same university, their roommates or first friends on campus, and even their academic supports often helped

students decide how to get involved. These external influences often provided the catalyst for a decision that would later become part of the student's independent decision making. First, because a connection via friend of a friend, Sandy got a job in the campus theatre, that ended up being her "home-base" for the first two years of college. Reimaging her abilities, Sandy was able to not only land the job she did not feel qualified for, but also meet all the people who would become her community on campus. This outside influence became her best connection for making friends, making money, and making connections on campus.

Reba described tagging along with a roommate to an Alpha Phi Omega (APE) meeting. Although the friend did not stick around after the first session, Reba continued to attend and has been a member of this co-ed service fraternity ever since. Emily had watched her father be stationed all over the world as a military kid; yet at the last minute, decided to enroll in ROTC at the university. After living on an army base all her life, Emily felt most comfortable finding her home on campus in a world that felt familiar. These four examples show that although they did not necessarily find these connections on their own, utilizing all their resources helped them to find their communities, even if those friends and roommates did not end up sticking around with the same crowds. Or in the case of Emily as an ROTC member, she found that connecting via a known family tradition could not only help her feel more comfortable, but also help her develop her own community and connections for her future that she had never thought of before coming to college and ROTC, even with a military family.

Sometimes external influences on involvement choices caused tension. Marge's mom insisted that she keep up with swimming on a club team at college, and they

subsequently argued about it when Marge decided that it just was not what she wanted from her college experience. She ended up happy with her decision but found it difficult to go against a parent's suggestion. She identified this is one of the moments when she needed to "prove herself". In a similar story, of not wanting to be pigeon-holed because of her involvements, Lainey decided to diversify her involvement opportunities. Not wanting to be defined by "sorority girl" persona, Lainey was able to find another connection in Christian Student Fellowship which she described as helping her decide her own identity. She also chose to explore her Neurology major through undergraduate research opportunities. These two took control of their own lives, by engaging or not engaging according to their own wants and needs for college life.

Sometimes previous experiences in high school served as a catalyst for choices in college that did not turn out as expected. Kaylee explained that she engaged in Marching Band because it had been a wonderful experience for years in high school, in which she felt had truly helped her grow. Unfortunately, the same experience turned out very badly in college. College Marching Band life was not for her, and she had to learn it the hard way. Not finding the same positive experience in college may have been disappointing and even inhospitable, but once she was able to get her footing on campus, she found her way outside of the band community. She referenced this decision as a very difficult time in her life, but ultimately, she was able to find fulfillment in her service activities in the community and holding several internships, before graduating early to prepare for Law School. Jimmy's decision to dis-engage was similar to quitting the marching band for Kaylee, both being difficult but necessary changes. After a successful experience with cheerleading in high school, Jimmy's story began with a scholarship opportunity in spirit

or cheer, when he first got to college. Jimmy spent two years of cheer and spirit but in a different role than he had played in high school. This engagement was out of his wheelhouse and outside his comfort zone, but he found a great network of connections, while also growing an affinity for partying. Unfortunately, Jimmy quit following a school-wide investigation into partying and unsportsmanlike conduct that was taking place during the team's travel and competition seasons. Jimmy described finding great friends in this group, but also got into partying and drinking way too much. Through the process of quitting the program, he was able to identify friends and former teammates who could support him. He was also trying to do better in school, party less, and get back on his academic track for graduation.

All these student stories about their engagements have some outside influence, from parents to financial need, and everything in between. These influences opened doors for each of them. Further exploration, however, shows the ways in which the students redefined those choices for themselves, sometimes making the choice to quit.

High Impact Practices and Transition to College

The data collected from these interviews were examples of what kinds of involvement and how much involvement these students took part in and the ways in which it had "high impact". Like those ideas that Pace (1982) and Astin (1984) argue there is a connection between the quality and quantity of involvements and student outcomes. As Lexi shared her experience moving to campus and getting involved right away, the concern about not knowing anyone on a huge campus was real. She was not the only student to mention this concern, and she realized that her roommate and the extended orientation week events would be a huge opportunity to make connections early on. Being exposed to

all of the different organizations, clubs, events, and athletics on campus at once during these events was a bit overwhelming for her, but Lexi said she is glad her roommate and she decided to attend as much as possible. Without that week to explore, she never would have known all her options on campus and keeping busy also really helped her relieve some homesickness. Although the quantity and quality in this example may have been overwhelming, it is still an example of a time that Lexi's, like many other students, involvement on campus was imperative to their transition to campus, engagement with the new community, and connection to future interests.

Involvement takes time and energy. Marge shared when discussing her move to college.

"Freshman year was kind of like trying to figure out what I had time for, what was plausible with a college workload… I was used to being the smartest kid in class." This was a common sentiment, trying to navigate college schedules and workloads is difficult for students of all kinds. Even those that come to college the most prepared academically can struggle with taking over their own lives completely and keeping up with the new normal of college life independence.

Reba, a young woman from a few hours away explained:

"I probably wasn't expecting to be as homesick as I was. I thought I was going to be fine… Being that far away from home and no car my freshman year to go home, was a bit more challenging than I thought."

Reba, quoted above in reference to homesickness, was a somewhat involved and high performer academically, but shared about her transition to college feeling much more difficult than she expected. It is important to remember, in any case, that college is a huge

transition, and these young people are doing their best to develop academic competencies, social growth, and personal goals for their future. That is a lot of pressure, and it was nice to see that students were willing to share their failures and triumphs around these feelings of their new life in college.

Like their reporting on their living situations opening doors for them, these student examples show that transitions look differently for everyone, but their impact is felt in student development because of the importance of that transition into their new lives. Transitions are difficult and this time of uncertainty and constant change, as Arnett (2005) depicts, is emerging-adulthood taking place. These transitions will continue throughout this stage of life for traditional college-age people, whether they are in college or not. However, the ways students discussed what helped them and what they struggled with during this time helped to drive home the point that transition to college can be improved by getting involved early to begin creating a new "home" for themselves. In Reba and Marge's cases, they struggled a bit more with uncertainty in the beginning. As opposed to Shannon and Sonja, who thought they were ready for college and were still able to share some hurdles they came across during their first semester or two of college life. Regardless of their preparedness and background, these students all shared one sentiment, that moving to campus and the college lifestyle, in general, was not what they had imagined.

College involvement, and high-impact practices, are especially important for the first-year student experience (Kuh, 2009). Many examples of high-impact practices were mentioned by students, Sandy, Beau, and Emily all talked about their opportunities in their programs for experiential learning and study abroad. All of them shared important reflections, Sandy saying that studying and working at Disney "really helped me to come

out of my shell", explore different career options and interests, and generally get a sense of the world outside of my home state. Beau shared about his opportunities to do a summer research internship abroad never having been part of his engineering program, but his elective undergraduate certificate program helped find this interest and turn him on to this opportunity. Emily shared her ROTC training and summer opportunities helping her to connect to people all over the world via the military connections, and further network in her newly declared career aspirations to work in national intelligence. These examples may not include specifics from every single interview, but throughout my research high-impact ideas were mentioned often by students engaged in this project, and Kuh's ideas about their importance in the first year really hit home in some students' lives here. Several talked about their living learning communities' impact on their community and academics (CJ, Lucas, Charity, Marge, Bridget, Annie, and others), there was mention of research opportunities (Ellen, Lainey, Beau), internships and work in their career fields (Kaylee, Emily, Shawna), as well as service opportunities (Sonja, Lexi, Mandy). Not to mention, the specific first-year experience courses that several students in this study were required to take, and how that experience was able to get them exploring their opportunities and digging into their interests across campus and academics.

The themes here, as they were set up to discuss from the interview protocols, are those about general student involvement theories, and how those involvement opportunities can be an important part of student transition and overall student experience in their first years of college. The first-year experience options, being a huge part of the high-impact practice (Kuh, 2009) but also something that may have been required for students to partake in for their major program curriculum, scholarship or fellowship

requirements, their living learning group, or simply as an encouraged option from their advisor. No matter how they landed on this courses and experiences, the student interviewees reflected on that practice and what they learned fondly. The need for connection and resource knowledge early on was mentioned by several students, even if at the time of those courses they might not have appreciated them so much. In the end, involvement opportunities in general, especially those first-year options that so many engaged in, came out in almost every single interview. Connecting these discussions to what we know about involvement theories and high-impact of first-year engagements was simple, because it was mentioned by most students when discussing both their move to college, their transition to campus life, and their overall involvement in choices.

Agency & Adulthood

As was planned in the protocol, questions about connecting their experiences and involvements to growth were weaved throughout all the interview sessions. Several student stories show that growth was happening, often skills, ideas, and practices that directly related to emerging-adulthood and feelings of growing agency. Being able to discuss with students how their choices and growth in decision-making skills impacted their experiences was integral to seeing these connections. As Arnett (2004) explains, emerging-adulthood is a constant state of transition and change, so discussing how and why students made the decisions to engage with and when they did, was incredibly enlightening. These ideas about what they did, why they chose things, and how they moved through them often exemplified what Arnett speaks about in the stage of emerging-adulthood, moving from adolescence into adulthood, and how that movement itself becomes another whole period of life. The

examples students shared about their college involvement experiences often pointed to this movement.

> "I feel like I've definitely gotten better since the beginning of college of being able to self-reflect and be like 'Right now you're setting standards too high for yourself' or maybe 'You can push yourself to go further…' So, understanding what my limits are and still being restful. But, still also pushing myself to succeed and accomplish my goals. Setting reasonable, achievable goals has definitely been a big thing," Ellen reflected when she thought about her growth in her college years both personally and academically.

Learning to be able to self-regulate and motivate was a big part of the changes she was feeling as a result of her campus life, from balancing her engagements with her high academic standards. Ellen was able to become a leader in her Christian dwelling, located just off campus, while also helping lead theatre and art projects, and being chosen for an undergraduate research fellowship program. Being able to balance her connection to her spirituality, along with her engagement with the arts and performances on campus, and her academic achievements, helped her to learn a lot about herself and about the world around her. Ellen's story really drove home the idea about personal growth in relation to her faith community and art community leadership opportunities teaching her to be self-aware and exercise self-care when she needed it.

Lucas shared how he feels about not only growth in taking care of finances and "adulting" skills, but also on his own personal identity, and how those around him may affect that. Saying, "I definitely feel more grown up overall. Like, I feel like I discovered new interests (in changing majors and finding a new certificate area) that I wouldn't have

discovered previously. I actually feel like I'm taking into consideration like the people I hang out with, what I do… Started thinking more about these things and what I'm doing with my time, where I'm putting it." Lucas struggled a lot with changes in his academic goals, but he had a great support system around him from his original LLP roommates and friends. Although he did not end up in their STEM major, he was able to stay connected with them, and created great living situations that also supported each others' academic goals. He found a group that helped him when he was down, but also became his study and social group. That feeling of accomplishment when he finally found the right major, and still having a great group of friends showed him that he was able to utilize and act on his agency, while still being able to lean on his friends when he needed help.

> "It's the outside of class moments that are really gonna shape and like teach us as a person. Because, definitely like being in a sorority of 350+ people completely different from you and all believing different things… And they choose different paths and lives than you. So, it's good to get those interactions with some opposite minded or just different people," Cate said in explaining why her sorority and peer network was just as important as her academic one in many ways."

She wanted to learn from people different from her, both inside and outside the classroom, to help her be more aware of differences in the world and help her build a solid network of people both socially and within her desired career area. Cate said she feels good about how much she's grown in many personal aspects over the years, because she was able to explore and meet people through her Greek connections and her major connections. She highlighted that working with people in study settings or service settings really taught her

82

so much about different people in the world and how we all, herself included, have different strengths to bring to any project.

A few examples of these students' feelings about agency are shared here:

"I did feel a sense of freedom, it was very freeing, that's just getting out of my household… made me feel very independent. It was a lot of freedom, but it was also a lot of figuring out that it's my choice," shared Deb about her experience being an off-campus student. Deb shared feeling very connected to campus and free of her home life while she was studying in classes and on campus every day. She was not involved formally, but she was beginning to see the results of the growth toward independence and agency when she was able to be alone and studying on campus.

"It's like, there's just a push to be… I don't know, independent. And to have a drive for success," explained Sandy, who was very introverted, came from a divorced household and admitted that she had not had a place that really felt like home until she moved into her own apartment during college. Sandy also shared about getting involved with an on-campus job and being more open in her classes by coming out of her shell, all helping her to feel like her own person as she grew throughout her college experience.

"I'm more adult than I was and the experience is not what I expected. I grew in ways I wasn't really thinking about… An adult as in – I can manage my money and like all of that stuff. Plus, I became more adult in my mindset and how I take care of myself" said Bailey, an admittedly shy and anxious student. Not only did she grow in some areas she may have expected, like chores and money management, but also in how to be more adult in her self-care and self-reflection practices as she learned more about herself in her identity and plans for her future. Bailey was one who took a while to come out of her shell

83

but reported that she was finally coming into her own and feeling comfortable making her decisions and acting on them the closer she got to graduation.

"I didn't talk to him then; I was too scared. But I went to like five more movies and finally talked to his brother. The job was more of a graphic design position to make posters to go around campus" explained Sandy. She was recommended to visit a friend's brother for a job in the campus cinema. She not only developed some competence during her time, learning graphic designing after landing the job, but this whole process also helped her to better manage her emotions and grow in confidence about her abilities. Sandy also reported finding connection via new interpersonal relationships at the cinema, which she called "her people" and established an identity and community via this group engagement. Finding this job not only helped to make her money, but to see growth in many of the steps during emerging-adulthood (Arnett, 2004) as well. Sandy's was just one notable example of a shy and introverted student stepping out of her comfort zone to get a job, for connection and income, that turned out to be so much more. This on campus work led her to a permanent group of friends, new skills, and interests, and eventually a change in her career-trajectory.

Emily talked about developing autonomy and independence, while also realizing that she would not just all the sudden feel like an adult, as she may have expected. "I think I thought I would just like magically be more grown-up when I got to college. Then, that didn't really happen… the independence, I had that. But still like to call my mom all the time." This experience shows some growth in emerging adulthood competencies, but also helped the student realize that college was still a growing opportunity; going to college did not mean she automatically felt like a "grown up." Emily was still dependent on calling home, while developing more autonomy and independence at the same time. Just as Arnett

(2004) explains, this additional phase of growth in emerging-adulthood is all about the feeling of being in limbo between young life and adulthood, and it may feel like a constant change or struggle to people experiencing it. However, in the end, as these students shared, these changes and decisions being made in their college experiences helped push them into feeling more grown-up.

These discussions were how I was able to help students identify feelings of agency, and growth toward what they thought would be adulthood, and what they have actually learned feels more "grown up" in many cases. These differences in expectations were important to rectify, and to compare with each student, so they could truly look back and reflect on how they feel they have grown toward emerging adulthood and their own identity in the beginning of self-authorship. Those discussions are the ones that both interview sessions were leading up to; being able to end the sessions with these questions that lead students to be more reflective and reflexive, both personally and more generally, about how college involvement and campus life has supported this growth in each of them.

First-Generation College Students

First-generation status is an interesting sub-category to explore, especially in the region served by this college. The population of first-generation students at this campus is steadily between 15-20% of each cohort for all of the recent past, increasing to just above 20% in the last few years. I thought it was an important designation for the students to self-identify in the survey, and it made for some compelling analysis when breaking down the different groups to compare like stories. This particular group was women that identified themselves in the survey data as first-generation, all of which had many other characteristics in common throughout their high school and college experiences with

involvement. Shawna, Kaylee, Emily, and Annie all reported being highly involved and high academic performing students in high school and having a great need to perform just as well if not better when they came to college. This almost seems like it could be a complex for not just women, but first-generation women specifically, because they have a bigger need to prove their success if not to the world, to themselves.

Their four stories start differently; However, during their interviews, I found their overall feelings about agency and adulthood were very similar to the point where they all four have shared the exact same sentiment about their growth and futures. All four of their reflections about their growth link back to feeling like they have always been "self-starters" or feeling as if they "had to prove themselves" which are often traits I have seen in or heard from first-generation students that excel academically.

All these young women not only got involved in college right away as they planned, but they all held some sort of leadership role in their communities or organizations. Two of these young women, Kaylee and Shawna, held executive positions in student government and similar groups, both were also applying for Law School to begin in 2023. Emily grew up internationally with a military family, immediately found connections in ROTC and has held leadership positions and traveled throughout her college life to do specialized training for her future career, likely in military intelligence. And Annie came from out of town with something to prove, quickly got engaged with her LLP, new student orientation groups, and another large campus-wide organization, where she held executive board positions beginning in her second year. Again, these four examples may not be the same in every way, but their push to engage early and to not simply participate but help lead in their chosen involvement areas was their expectation from the start of college. I

found their sentiments about being "self-starters" to be reflected directly in their drive to not only get involved, but to lead, from the very start of their college years.

To each of them, these leadership roles and job training opportunities meant more checks on their lists leading them to success, despite their backgrounds that may not have been so supportive or understanding of their goals. All four had experiences in jobs or internships that connected to their future careers during college, and two were graduating early because they were so far ahead and pushed themselves so hard in course work during their three years of college. The idea of looking forward to what comes next and pushing on toward their goals in the future was a constant discussion point for all these young people during their interviews. It seems like Shawna, Kaylee, Emily, and Annie came to college with goals for academics and campus life, all of which reported immediately engaging with and succeeding in those goals for their personal and professional accomplishments.

No matter what involvement or experience these young women mentioned, they were able to link it to their growth and how it supported their goals academically or in future job preparation. They also all shared some sort of sentiment about "self-awareness" and how they had to keep themselves on track, not only academically, but checking in with their mental and emotional well-being often, and how they had learned to do that regularly early on to stay successful and not be overwhelmed. And interesting contrast, that they all wanted to succeed and "prove themselves" but often felt as if they were alone in that endeavor and had to learn to support themselves via self-sufficiency and regulation. At the same time, they were able to be self-reflective and reflexive, they all also discussed their struggles with being too self-sufficient or too controlling and having to learn during their

higher-level courses or via their leadership roles, that asking for help was necessary and they needed to know how to do that to succeed as well.

In the cases of Shawna, Kaylee, Emily, and Annie, they stand out for their resiliency and drive to succeed no matter what, learning how to reflect and utilizing that to better themselves throughout, and simply their grit and gumption to overcome and prove themselves regardless of their backgrounds. These students can be supported and have found some resources, but these women shared that their best assets were often themselves, and their drive to succeed no matter what struggles they were facing personally, academically, or socially on campus. I found these stories to be exceptionally compelling, similar to the group of URM men, in their similar feelings reported on their own growth. Although they may not all be graduating early, their overall sentiments about being "self-starters" and having to learn to ask for help were very telling. This group is a great example of what involvement can push students to achieve, personally and professionally, if they set their goals accordingly.

<center>Involving Differences</center>

Marge and Annie are two URM women who came to college prepared to get involved right away. These two moved into the STEM LLP in their first year of college and were simultaneously shocked at how much that living connection, along with academic requirements, affected their college experience. These effects are still being felt by both, as Annie shared about being an RA in the same LLP in her sophomore year, helping her to build mentoring and teaching skills, while also becoming more immersed in her studies and connected to her major professors. Bridget reported being a part of the healthcare LLP that helped her find her way in this area, discovering that maybe Nursing or Medical School

<center>88</center>

was not her path, but the exploration in the LLP and through connections to professors early on, she was able to pinpoint a better option of medical profession for her interests. Also as mentioned previously, Bridget was able to become a leader early on in other organizations on campus, helping her to not only develop her career connections, but also her network of like-minded people that were driven by the same social justice ideals she was. These two things connected, leading her to her chosen career path in the last year of college.

Because of their backgrounds and their success in the living learning groups they were assigned to; all four women were all able to express some clear growth they felt in self-confidence and self-knowledge. Also, they all pointed to the importance of their growth in networking skills and network connections they made as a result of their involvement with their career-related groups, leadership roles, and RA positions. Identifying these networks, and their own confidence, as the most important part of their growth thus far in college. These connections and skills learned from organization leadership were incredibly integral to their paths to success, although their backgrounds may be much different and their goals for careers also diverge into different fields. Overall, their feelings about agency, decision-making, leadership and mentorship skills, and networking abilities are great accomplishments for women; even though Marge, Annie, Charity, and Bridget came to campus feeling unsure of themselves, unsure of the importance of their LLP and living situations, and unsure of their decisions to move away from home to a place where not many people looked like them or had characteristics like theirs.

As they all reported, feeling confident as a female URM student is difficult in the small southern city that this university resides in. According to Bridget, Charity, Annie, and Marge, they had to push harder to feel accomplished in the way they saw their white or male counterparts. They were often forced to recognize their needs and voice them, and as a result found ways to grow in all their experiences even though they do not totally align. This group had some of the same feelings about their futures going into their fourth year of college – agency and self-confidence were central to their goals, and they were well on their way to achieving feelings of both. I think it is likely that women of color often feel disconnected, and on a campus this large, they could be a group that got lost in the sheer number of options and opportunities. These four women, however, were not willing to let themselves fail or fall to the wayside. They realized early on that they were their only shot at succeeding, and so taking advantage of their resilience along with their LLP and major network connections, was what they needed to do. Taking the reins, learning to ask for help when they need it, and feeling growth through those two opposing ideals must be difficult, but these four examples are likely the stories other young women need to hear. They all have great success stories, even though they admittedly came into this experience without many resources, they found what they needed, and they ultimately lead themselves to success.

The struggles that URM students, first-generation students, and women in-general feel in preparing for or transitioning into college life are real. These three student groups highlight some issues that are likely more widespread and prominently felt by more than just a few students in this cohort. Struggles of first-generation students are explored often at this university in my experience, but seemed important to investigate this particular

group individually, as women who are struggling with proving themselves and finding success despite their backgrounds. The same rings true for URM women, who also reported to me that they felt the need to prove themselves, while also struggling with asking for help. These two groups show a convergence in what students plan to experience and how they actually feel when they come to college and keeping a balance of pride in themselves as resilient and powerful women, while also feeling the need to reach out for help must be a difficulty that most women face in college. I can definitely identify with this feeling, even being a highly involved and high performing student during my undergraduate career. In addition, this feeling is only intensified by these women identifying in a URM or first-generation designation as well.

The URM male students were also feeling these struggles, but on a different level and were easily able to cover those feelings up with easy social connections early on, in these example cases. So, recognizing the struggle to find themselves in college is something that had to be acknowledged within this data. The students who reported their URM or first-generation status can, often unbeknownst to them, pinpoint the struggles that we see are invasive in these groups.

In all these cases, the stories show how their experiences have helped them grow into agency and adulthood, but they were also able to distinguish their struggles and concerns for the future. Self-awareness and reflection is such an important part of this data. These groups' reflections relating their backgrounds and demographics to their experiences in college became a straightforward way to show some answers to the research questions. When talking about the involvement choices and how they influenced these students' growth, the student backgrounds had to be kept in the front of mind. Although their

outcomes may be similar overall, when it comes to agency and adulthood for students so close to graduation, these three URM and First-Generation groups also show some struggles in that process that others in this project may not personify. These three groups being identified and discussed help to deepen the data and explore what agency means to all types of students at this time in their lives.

Discussion

As Klemencic (2015) explains, there are many steps during this transitional time that can affect a person's feelings of agency. The students also described being able to make goals, work toward them, make good decisions, and move toward a career they are planning (Davis Poon, 2018). Although they may not have had the vocabulary for an idea of agency, once the idea was introduced, they really opened up about how some of their skills, decisions, and ideals had shifted in college to make them feel more in control of their lives and their future goals. In talking about the expectations versus reality of feeling more "adult" during college, Joe was able to share about his shift in mindset that helped him become more in control and positive about his movement through college: "It wasn't what I expected, there being more freedom, but with that freedom you need to be responsible and use your time wisely. Just because you're not going to school 8am-3pm every day doesn't mean that you can go off and do whatever you want."

Another student, Sonja, talked about her experiences in a young entrepreneur group and business fraternity she was connected to via her major:

> "…Service and philanthropy, via volunteer work. We also had resume building and interview tips. I think it's a really good way, especially freshman year, for me to kind of get my bearings and learn a little more about professionalism."

Sonja talked about how her ability to explore in a "scholar" program on campus helped her to find the right major after beginning in one that did not really match her desired career outcomes. This program helped her explore her options and transition into her real "niche" in the business world, while also making great networking connections to professors and advisors in the business and economics college community. Because of this engagement early on, she was able to work on Executive Boards, peer mentorship programs, and Sustainability Council during her second and third years, while continuing her "scholar" work in her college and her honors college requirements as well. Sonja reported that she feels very prepared for the career world and is grateful for her engagement early on that lead her to a great major and wonderful network for her next steps after graduation.

These ideas about better decision making, feeling good about their control over their decisions was identified in many student participants' stories, especially as they began to be more self-reflective in the final interview, which Klemencic (2015) and Davis Poon (2018) also pointed to as an indicator of stronger agency. There were many students who were able to identify different areas of their lives that felt more independent, like they had more freedom of choice and decision-making than others, but the majority did report feeling more agentic now (in their third year) than when they began college. "I think not being able to go home forced me to be more independent. And being able to start doing stuff on my own, meeting new people and creating my own life..." was one of the final reflections from Shannon, who really struggled in the start of college. She struggled in her first year and fell behind a bit academically, but now is finally able to feel comfortable with her plan and her ability to succeed in her future.

Student involvement in college does seem to positively affect the students' feelings of agency (Klemencic, 2015) and development toward adulthood (Arnett, 2004), or what they might think of as "adulting". Students shared their experiences in transitioning to a huge campus, in struggling in their first year, and in feeling overwhelmed at the start. These stories almost always turned into reflections about how different clubs, groups, experiences, jobs, or opportunities on campus helped the student turn their academics around and succeed in whatever they decided to get involved with. The support of a community, faculty and peer engagement, and their personal reflections all encourage student personal growth in decision-making, freedom of choice, goal orientation, and identity. These types of growth may not be seen in a classroom or at the surface level of their stories. But, when the interview participants dug deeper into their experiences, they were able to reflect and articulate just how their different experiences had brought them through this uncertain stage of emerging-adulthood and how they might be feeling more agency as a result.

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

This study was developed to explore the relationship between college student involvement and their personal growth through emerging-adulthood and toward feelings of agency. As previous research and theories would suggest, involvement quality and quantity, as well as the timing and type have been shown to create different impacts on student life in the past. To further understand and try to explain these impacts on student life, this study was created and conducted in a large research institution with one cohort of students, resulting in survey data and two hours of interview data from 24 total students discussing their experiences related to their campus involvement and their ideas about personal growth as a result of their college life thus far. In order to collect this data, the institutional office of analytics and data was engaged to get the contact information for this cohort of third-year students, and I then surveyed and interviewed that group according to the methodological breakdown discussed in several collection stages. The result, as was planned, shows that there are some major themes in areas of influence and growth reported by these students as a result of their engagement opportunities and involvement experiences on this campus.

The outcomes of the study point toward a few important ideas that seem to connect student involvement on campus to their reported feelings of growth. In the end, themes that showed through were ones that applied to not just the levels of involvement or just one demographic group, but across all student types and experiences. The students' descriptions of their experiences mirror historical involvement theories (Astin, 1984; Pace, 1982), but also reflect ideas of student development and growth toward adulthood (Arnett,

2004; Klemencic, 2015). Themes I was able to identify throughout the levels of involvement and demographic identifiers include: the need for connection (with both peers and faculty) and feeling community on a large campus, the imperative nature of involvement on a large campus especially early in the college experience, and the opportunity to explore different engagements and areas of interest during college life. The themes, as were hypothesized, helped to support growth in student feelings of agency and movement toward feeling more adult in both their career-academic lives, and in their personal lives.

Investigating the involvement levels and different demographics were used as a way to see different outcomes and influences according to some new ways of categorizing the student participants. These breakdowns ended up being incredibly important in pulling out some of the big takeaways in the project, by making connections between a certain group of students to a common feeling about their growth. The data was broken down to analyze in several sections, and although the influences and experiences of each student or group may look different, often their feelings of agency and growth toward adulthood being reported were the same.

In these pathways, I was able to uncover some similarities between the levels of student involvement and the outcomes reported by those students. I saw that, although one student was reported as "not involved" in high school or college, that involvement in the formal sense that many understand as club or organization membership, may not be the only way to connect on campus and growth through the community engagements of college life. The one student I spoke with about their "not involved" report, Deb, actually shared that she was able to find outside-the-classroom connections via friendships and study

partners. These things may not be what students or we as faculty or staff traditionally categorize as involvement, but her story shows that these informal connections, outside of any registered student groups or class requirements, really helped her develop a sense of community that carried throughout her college experience, even during pandemic shutdown. This "pathway" of non-involvement in both high school and college may be different from what I was expecting, but I think Deb's example could explain a great deal about how formal versus informal involvements could be just as influential in growth of student connection and personal reflections as well.

In the other involvement pathways, I was able to identify some connections between levels of involvement and their influence on the desired outcomes for growth and development. Those students in the "in-between" categories, that were involved in high school but not in college or vice versa, were also an interesting group to pull out and explore. I was able to learn a little more about how informal examples of involvement may be important, and about how although living assignments and communities may not be considered "involvement" in a student's mind does not mean that they do not encourage growth in decision-making, goal setting, and feelings of agency.

The example students, Sammy and CJ both showed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of having both social and academic connections incorporated into certain engagements. These two example stories show that, although these students may not consider living learning programs or major cohorts as "involvements" that does not mean that those experiences do not encourage growth in connections and community with both faculty and peers. As well as, these Sammy and CJ have stories that show these types of engagements in a selective program or living learning community can help students ensure

that they have made the right, or in some cases wrong, decision about their major or program of study. These experiences that feel more academic to students, such as a major change, can have a social and networking aspect that they also see having influence on their feelings of agency and like they have chosen the right path for their future.

The "highly involved pathway" student group shows some things similar to those above, but also some of their own outcomes connecting involvements to their personal growth. Just as our exemplar student story from Bridget explains, leadership skills, teamwork, decision-making, goal setting and achieving, networking and connections, community and feelings of belonging can all be seen as outcomes from these highly-involved students. Many of these examples started out trying to find their place on campus right away, and this category most often lent itself to supporting things like first-year seminars and shared-experiences because they had taken advantage of these resources themselves early on. These were the students' mentioning things that are a direct reflection of their movement into and through emerging-adulthood. They often discussed the influence their involvements had on their social and networking sides, but also on their self-awareness and identity building. These developments are happening while the students are in the constantly changing limbo that is emerging-adulthood and college life, but often they stated that finding their purpose and interests outside the classroom helped them to be successful all around.

Just like the levels of involvement pinpointed differences in student development via involvement, the different demographic groups also helped to show some differences. The three groups I was able to collect data on and discuss were from highly-involved male students, URM female students, and first-generation female students. All three of these

groups taught different ways their identities and backgrounds may have influenced not only their involvement choices, but the outcomes they felt as a result of those choices.

Male students in general had a smaller sample size in the interviewed group but digging into why the highly involved males had seen growth was still important to understand. It was also important to note that, because of pandemic shutdowns, these men felt as if they had lost a bit of control and agency in their lives. And getting "back on track" was their next big plan to be successful in their academic and outside-class engagements. The URM females were another interesting group, talking about their experiences with living learning programs and how those experiences had influenced their lives in college from leadership opportunities to exploring new interests and changing majors. Although these URM women may have thought they had to prove themselves and learned how to self-reflect often to keep themselves moving forward, they all reported being supported by their experiences toward feelings of better decision-making and feeling like they had their goals in order for their future. And finally, the first-generation female student group helped to show that, getting involved early was imperative for them and even during tough times, they often had good connections to fall back on for support. This group of women also felt the need to prove themselves often and were all high academic performers for their entire lives, that pressure continued with them into college. But finding connections in their first few semesters was a guiding light and grounding force for them when they needed it.

These different involvement levels and background characteristics helped to deepen the data analysis and explore more influences on student outcomes. And though there were many comparable stories that fell into these groups, there were also some overlapping outcomes through all the groups and in all the student stories in the project.

The themes of growth in freedom for decision-making, goal setting and achieving, leadership and teamwork skills, and feelings of increased agency were seen throughout the project in most all participants in some way. Although those that had leadership opportunities may have felt those skills improving more, those with less "involvement" in their eyes may have felt a bigger sense of agency and adulthood in learning how to hold a job and go to school and keep a budget for their lives. Every student story is different, but the goal of this research was to find some connection between student involvements and their development toward adulthood, in every case the students were able to share at least one or two traits they felt had grown in direct result of their experiences on campus, whether formal or informal.

Research Questions Conclusions

This project was designed to answer the following questions:

1. During the transition to college, how were the participating students involved and engaged on campus?

2. What specific involvement opportunities most directly impacted these students' college transitions or most supported their development toward adulthood?

3. In addition to their self-reported involvement choices, in what ways were students' engagement during college linked in any way to their feelings about independence and freedom, self-awareness and decision-making skills, adulthood, or agency?

I believe I have been able to successfully address these questions as a result of the study and learning about how this particular cohort has been influenced by and grown through their engagement opportunities. Whether they have been formal or informal, academic, or social, highly prioritized, or just for fun, involvement examples given by these

students have been able to be linked in their own words to their growth in agency, decision-making skills, goal setting and achieving, and freedom and independence toward adulthood.

The first question about the transition to college and finding community early on in their campus life is pinpointed specifically as an influential area by the first-generation and URM women. This group shared that their initial drive to get involved and feel like they belong had a big impact on their transitional time, but also continued to influence their experiences in college life. Whether these women continued in those early ground and engagements, or if they fell off for more important or career-related engagements, they were still able to explain how those early experiences helped them grow. The opportunities most often mentioned by these two groups of women, and many others in the study, were extended orientation options, Greek life, Student Activities Board (SAB), and living-learning communities. Although not every student was involved in all these areas, these seemed to come to the forefront as examples that many took part in, even if it was only for a limited time at the start of their college life.

The second question is addressed further along in the data collection process, as students were able to share about where they felt they belonged in the campus community and what affected those feelings of community. They were also able to articulate just how their involvements that helped them become part of the community were important in their development of agency, independence and freedom, and movement toward adulthood. Again, the students are all different, and different interests and backgrounds mean diverging stories and examples. However, there were things that students across the board were able to identify as supporting their growth toward feeling more adult. Some of those

include the involvements mentioned above that helped students during their first-year transition, as that initial feeling of community and connection continued for some throughout their college life. There were also some that felt those initial connections may have taught them what they really wanted and helped them to find a different path into different involvement opportunities completely. Again, although no two stories are alike, in looking at the involvement level groups and demographic groups there were some involvements that stood out as most helpful in those situations.

Student involvement on campus, especially during the first year when they are so intently seeking those feelings of community and belonging, has an enormous impact on student life and the overall college experience. Not only did I learn how different groups were supported by specific involvements, I also was able to see through all the stories that involvement outside-the-classroom was impactful for each and every student I encountered. From the least involved and least formal opportunities to the biggest student leadership opportunities available on campus, the impact was felt by the students who experienced these engagements. When I asked about how "grown up" or "adult" they felt, it was a unanimous feeling of growth in all student examples. Maybe some were held back by pandemic life and getting back on track, maybe some felt like they were already full of agency at the start of college and only pushed further as leaders, no matter where they fell on the spectrum of involvement, they were able to share something outside of academics that had influenced their growth into adulthood.

In order to show answers to my research questions and to help lay the groundwork for further research, I found it important to explore more depth than breadth with this study. Again, although there were only 24 students from one cohort at one school, I was able to

really dig into each one of their stories and learn about where they come from, why they came here, and how they have fared thus far in their college experience. Along the way of those stories, I was able to infer that student participants at this college and possibly others are being developed in so many ways in their own personalities and identities that have nothing to do with academic teaching and learning. The experiences these students shared with me, the good, the bad, and the ugly, were all still able to show a connection between what their involvement looked like and how it impacted their growth in emerging-adulthood and increased agency. Their academics, as many of them recognized, are not the only thing being learned and instilled in them during this transitional period of life. The need for community and networking, leadership and teamwork, social belonging, and career-goals are all very real, and because of the influx of ways students can get involved on this campus, they were able to learn a bit about all those aspects of life. Their self-awareness and self-reflection were helpful to show that their engagements on campus not only helped them find community, it helped them to learn about themselves and feel more adult in the process.

Study Limitations

The limitations of this study, as introduced in the first chapter, did make an impact on the data collection process and on the analysis of data. This was recognized and acknowledged early on, as I was able to study at my home institution. Along with that the cohort was chosen because I was able to access them, and they had the experience necessary to answer my research questions. These options likely denote simple sampling, however it made for an accessible group that were able to be explored at more depth because of the access to contact information. Along with the limitations in population

sample, there were also personal influence biases to be considered. I did my best to discuss my connections, and in some instances used my student-status as a way to recruit more participants. In some ways the limitations were for ease, and in other situations they ended up helping to dig deeper into student stories and experiences.

Being a student at this institution, as well as a full-time staff member, access to this student sample was simply obtained. However, it was also because the study was built upon the idea that I needed a large institution where the opportunities for involvement were vast, the campus was large and somewhat diverse. This was easily presented to me, as a person who lives and works in the town where an institution of that caliber resides. I would have chosen these options for a study like this regardless of my enrollment or employment, it was a convenience factor but because of my previous work experience in small schools and other types of higher education, I was aware that this type of institution was necessary for this type of study on involvement. This familiarity with the institution did help me to better communicate and streamline some interview questions, simply through institutional knowledge of certain groups and activities. That connection to the institution, in some cases, helped me to personalize interview questions and target certain groups according to their reported involvements. Although this is a convenience sample, it also helped to dig deeper into the student stories in some examples, where at another institution I may have been struggling just to learn all the different engagement opportunities.

The Fall 2018 cohort at this institution was targeted, specifically, for a few reasons. Although it may seem to be limiting the pool of participants further in this institution, it was first to narrow the number for one interviewer to take, and because of specific cohort experiences they had. This group of students were the last available, at the time of the

study, that had experienced an entire first year on campus without interruption. They were also able to return in their second year, which we know to be a difficult transition to persist through for students everywhere. That return helped them to begin to feel at home and really settled into their campus community, before having COVID-19 shutdowns and pandemic experiences affecting their college life. These students were able to share their high school and college involvement, their transitions to college, and their experiences thus far without impacts from shutdown. I felt this was important, while also recognizing that the project may not be about the pandemic, but addressing its effects was necessary as well. Even though I attempted to avoid COVID-19 discussions, it felt insufficient and ingenuine to completely ignore that part of their experience, and how it may have impacted their involvement. Consequently, narrowing to only this cohort was purposeful, even if the choice did not completely remove the pandemic issue from the conversation.

The contact information and large cohort number meant that FERPA holds, and large survey responses did not hinder my investigation. I was still able to narrow down the large pool of survey participants, first via their selection to volunteer to interview, and then simply by their reported levels of involvement. With that, I was able to invite a sizable number of people who lined up with the institution's total population in demographic and background information. The only real limitation here was having a low number of two categories: URM males and uninvolved students. I did a targeted invite for all the URM male students, following my first round of interview sign ups, which got my participants a bit more balanced. Unfortunately, only a small number originally identified as not involved in high school or college, which could be expected because the student who does not participate in a survey likely does not engage with many outside class activities of any

kind. I invited all of this sample but was still only able to carry out one full round of interviews and data collection for this involvement level group. These were limitations in my total numbers, but I did my best to mitigate them in my recruitment efforts.

Even with these limitations in mind and doing my best work to keep my study as open as possible, there were effects on the data that were felt in analyzing. Without much information from uninvolved students, part of the data is simply missing from the discussion. Although I was able to get some information about one experience, it definitely does not feel like enough to bring forward any themes or ideas about students who do not engage with campus life. Also, in reflection on this one student story, I realized that the ideas of "involvement" and the choices included on the survey may have skewed the participants answers. Coding students as "not involved in high school or college" was already a limited number, and then the one example I did have was able to share contradictory experiences. She shared in her interviews about her life on campus and how some experiences that may be informal could still lead to outcomes I was hoping to find related to involvement. This was an interesting story and opened a door for further analysis in this area about what students identify as "involvement."

Following the data collection and analysis, I do see where these limitations may have held back the study in some ways. I also see how this controlled cohort and number of students, at an institution I know well, also helped me to understand more and in some cases gain more in-depth data as a result. My connection to the school, previous knowledge from my own student life on campus, and controlling for what was a feasible number for one person in a dissertation project all helped me to conduct this research relatively simply. Even with the restrictions from COVID-19 and campus shutdowns, I was able to reach a

large number of students and exceed my original interview sample expectations. Connecting as a student and personal knowledge helped to ease the conversations and develop deeper connections, especially in the second interviews. Plus, being able to connect via a video chat on Zoom was an incredible help to not only reach students who were able to access campus during the summer but allow for participation from almost anywhere. Overall, I think the limitations have been mitigated as much as possible, and some of the familiarity and convenience options for participation helped to keep my sample reasonable for this investigation.

Implications for Higher Education Research and Practice

This project has something to teach higher education personnel about how to best support our students in their co- and extra-curricular involvements. Not only does it tell us that involvement is important to student personal growth and development, but it also tells us that different opportunities can help different types of students depending on their backgrounds, their choices in college, their future plans, and their interests. In the end, it is incredibly important to support students in finding their communities on campus, via engagements, activities, organizations, and involvement, in order to help them develop into adulthood and feel more agency for their choices and in their lives.

With the outline from the historical theories about student involvement quantity and quality (Astin, 1982; Pace, 1982), alongside the movement that is necessary to see during the transitional years of college described by Arnett (2004) in Emerging Adulthood, Klemencic (2015) and Davis Poon (2018) on agency – this research can connect college involvement to student development. This growth is often seen more as academic and classroom learning based, but even more students discovered that outside the classroom

growth toward their personal goals is also taking place. Agency and emerging-adulthood are shown to often be directly connected to the growth students feel as a result of their leadership roles, their group or club involvement, their jobs, experiences on campus, and many other outside-the-classroom activities. The data collected may be limited by convenience and ease for the student-researcher, but it also contributes to the literature in how imperative student involvement on campus during college is to their well-rounded development as people and career-driven young adults.

This research was designed to further explore the historical student involvement theories, and how these ideas about the quantity and quality of involvement during college can possibly continue to student development. Although there has been a great deal of follow-up research since Pace and Astin published their thoughts on the importance of college involvement, there has not been much discussion of the importance of this involvement for student personal growth. This gap in information is where my project attempted to come into discussion with previous theories, more current ideas about development toward adulthood, and looking for a possible connection between the two. When getting into discussion with Student Involvement Theory (Astin, 1984) and with the ideas about quantity and quality that Pace (1982) explores, I found that these measures of simple numbers of involvements and quality of peer and faculty involvement as he explained it may not be all that matters. Quantity and quality are still important parts of this discussion, but what these theories do not explain are why and how these are important measures for all students and in looking out outcomes for those students. I wanted to explore not only the connection between involvement of any kind and the student growth

outcomes, but also investigate if the types of involvement or the levels of involvement affect student reported outcomes.

The definitions of agency from Klemencic (2015) and emerging-adulthood (Arnett, 2004) came to me in my research attempting to find some developmental milestones and outcomes that have not been explored in relation to student involvement or student organizations within the college experience. However, growth in agency and emerging-adulthood happen to be two things that can be identified specifically in college-age people. So, I created the project in hopes of being able to connect those dotes and further investigate what I believe to be a small opening in the current research on student involvement. I believe I have been able to contribute to the literature in that space, showing the beginning of some future research on involvement influence on growth.

Along with this research, I have also been exploring a new journal that came about in the same window of time that this project was being designed. The National Association for Campus Activities began a new journal in 2019, The Journal of Campus Activities Practice and Scholarship. I have been reading and exploring the issues since they began, and found that some similar ideas are being discussed, but not in a specific case study like mine. There has been some interesting discussion in the journal thus far, however, about different ways to get students to be more invested in campus involvement.

One interesting article from the Fall 2021 journal, written by Kristen A. Foltz discussed the impact of optional extra credit points for students to participate in on-campus activities. Her article discusses the motivation from the extra credit and how it influences student decisions, with a few clear connections to my project about agency and decision-making skills (Foltz, 2021). I found this one to be the start of another discussion that could

further this research on student involvement and how we can encourage them to engage with campus events that they may have not been aware of or may not have attended on their own accord. More interviews with students on how their involvements were influenced, as we discussed their high school choices and first-year experiences, could lead to valuable information for best practices. Not to mention, we could further the literature on student agency and choice, along with their input about involvement opportunities.

This journal has the potential to support more research on student engagement and activities, because they recognize the need for this connection in the first place. In the inaugural edition of the journal, there is an exploration of the importance of campus activities and organization support personnel having more awareness of student development theory. Along with that they explore ideas about the importance of connecting the work that is being done on campuses to what students describe as their outcomes from that involvement personnel work (Love & Goyle, 2019). This discussion is going to continue to be addressed, there has already been one follow-up report on the importance of this scholarship, and what it can influence outside of the personnel practices being discussed. Some of the more recent ideas they have for expanding this scholarship area include using personnel professional development plans to publish as best practices and bases for further research, as well discussion of diversity and inclusion work to further our understanding of students' development as a result of these types of opportunities. I believe these could be very interesting, and even link back to some of what Kuh (2008) defined in his high-impact practices for AAC&U publications.

The work in this project has been beneficial in developing new ideas about how involvement outside of class and academics can influence student development, especially

in this time of transition that is emerging-adulthood and in relation to their feelings of agency. I believe that there are things that could be implemented right away for higher education practitioners or policy makers to help students gain more from their involvement on campus. Some simple things that could happen quickly across institutions include opening access and availability of clubs and organizations across campuses, introducing students earlier on to their involvement opportunities and their benefits, or including a reflection opportunity for student participants and leaders.

These three ideas could look different according to institutional requirements or accessibility, but I believe overall, they could help students in their development toward agency and adulthood. Some thoughts I had on opening access and availability would be simply sharing ideas across campuses about different groups enrollments and recruitment plans. Finding out each school's most successful groups' practices and trying to spread them across their campuses. This may mean allowing clubs to do more organizing and advertising or even simply standardizing recruitment and advertising efforts to ensure all groups are getting equal support from the institution. I know at this institution, as some students in this project mentioned, that because there are so many groups and opportunities, it is hard to keep up with how to find them all or get involved in more than one way. Whether a school has a centralized office for involvement or student organization could have an effect on their accessibility but ensuring even in those huge institutions that do much to support these efforts, to include all opportunities at equal levels for access and availability to all students.

Along with making things more accessible, finding a way to make that access happen earlier on for students would also be important. Just like the discussion of access,

early introduction could be very important for smaller clubs or lesser-known groups on campus, but the introduction would have to be wide-spread enough to include all types of students and all types of involvements. As I heard from many students, things like extended orientation week events and courses can be very influential for them finding their communities on campus. However, I believe that even earlier access could be a better option. As students explained their ease on campus after their early access to their dorms and programming from their LLPs, I got to thinking that maybe that extended orientation could happen before classes begin. Or maybe, a better effort could be made at all summer orientation events to involve student organizations and opportunities, so that families and new students have the option to explore all the ways to get involved before the stress of the first week of classes.

Early move-in may not be possible for all campuses or all students, but the opportunity to do just that has shown in this group of interviewed students to have a great effect on their comfort levels going into those first classes, after having time beforehand to settle in. Some options to get involved earlier, while meeting others and not having the pressure of new college-level classes could be helpful in getting students these connections we know they need, especially in the early years. Orientations at this institution are a huge undertaking, so including all student organizations and involvement options may not always be possible for those weekends over the summer. However, I do believe that an opportunity to engage earlier on throughout the summer in some way could really ease anxiety and provide more comfort in campus exploration in the start of college. Finding a way to help students engage earlier, even if it's just requiring them to submit some inquiries or submit involvement interests for contact before they move to campus, could very well

112

provide the connections they need to be successful once they arrive in finding their involvement communities.

Another idea I discussed as students were reflecting during their interviews, was including an option or even requirement, for students to reflect on their experiences both inside and outside the classroom as they are nearing graduation. It seems like these discussions with the student interviewees helped them to recognize and identify many things they did throughout their time in college that supported their growth toward feeling more grown up and gaining more agency, so why not have students do something like this for themselves as they are finishing college. I know, at this institution and many others in recent years, capstone or culminating projects of some kind are becoming major requirements for most academic programs. I believe that this reflection on their involvement and connections on campus could be in addition to, or in correlation with, a project like these that are being required of students to graduate. For students to not only be able to express their feelings on their own personal growth, while also reflecting on what they have learned in their studies and their plans for the future, could be a great addition to this culminating academic experience. This time creating a project they are interested in for their futures, as many capstones encourage, while also including an aspect of reflection on their growth up until this point, could be very productive for these young people. I believe an opportunity to not only reflect and bring together a final academic project, but also something that helps them see their personal growth into adulthood, could be incredibly beneficial.

This project has opened a lot of doors in my mind, in ways to think about how we support students in their growth during college in a wholistic way. I believe implementing

some of these ideas to help students easily access involvement, and to see what those engagements have taught them could be a great way to further the benefits of what we already know to be an important part of college life. Although this was only a small case study, with one cohort at one institution, I believe is has helped to start filling in a gap in literature around the impact of involvement during college, other than the bulking up of a student resume. Although there may not be enough data to prove any link between a specific involvement opportunity to a specific area of growth, many of these participants were able to pinpoint examples in their life that helped them develop agency and feeling more adult as a result of their engagements. This to me is important to higher education literature, and just as the JCAPS writers have said from their inception, there is a lot to be learned for the expanse of literature and of best-practices in this type of work. Beginning to connect involvement to outcomes will hopefully further research and enforce student outcomes they are feeling during their growth in college and beyond.

Future Research Suggestions & Reflections

Along with the important discussion on contribution to higher education scholarship, I have spent a great deal of time during this project thinking about what future research could look like as a result of this project. So many questions and ideas came up as I was hearing student stories and when reflecting on different student experiences, backgrounds, and characteristics they all have. This case study has been a wonderful experience as a deep dive into one cohort of students, but the limitations of that, along with the questions that have arisen during the entire process, show that there is still so much work to be done in this area.

In listening to student stories during interviews, I have thought many times to myself ... "wow, how interesting, I wish we could talk more about that...," knowing that I had to keep with my line of protocol questioning to get the data I needed. But that does not mean that I have forgotten these other areas that could be so interesting in relation to this work, or as their own research all together. Some of the big ideas that I have questioned throughout this project include thoughts around student development, student transitions, and student motivations, among other things. These three big ideas came up often, when asked during interviews about how and why students got involved, what influenced those decisions, and what they did or did not enjoy about their experiences thus far. However, I was not able to dig into questions further about these and wanted to ensure they do not go unmentioned as a result of this project.

First would be student development questions around adulthood, and how they are really achieved as a result of so many experiences they have during this period of their lives. Emerging-adulthood is a very real stage for people in this time of their lives, and they often feel like going to college means they are already "grown up" or should already feel "adult." The reality, however, in many examples from this project show that students do feel like they have grown, achieved new milestones, and explored their own decision-making skills and agency. That does not mean they are adults, and that limbo feeling at this time of their life may be even more difficult for them to articulate, because there is pressure for them to be adults. Along with that comes the question about stages of development and student development basics, and if there needs to be more exploration about the feelings of uneasiness and tension students feel at this age.

More research in college students needs to explore their reported experiencing and outcomes, to better understand not just what is planned from initiatives for student support but to actually hear their feedback as a result of these. Another reason JCAPS and works in the area of practitioner scholarship is necessary. We need to be able to connect what we are actually doing in daily practice and how it affects student life and what we plan as the ideal developmental outcomes for them. Only then will we know if we can encourage and support this agency and emerging-adulthood, or if they must simply live through these life stages to grow into adults.

In that same area, the question of transitions comes about, because as emerging-adulthood explains, this is a constant stage of change during a young person's life. How can they be expected to transition well from high school to college, through college successfully, and seamlessly into a career or career-related graduate program? All within a 4–6-year window of life, while they are also developing their identities, meeting their lifelong friends, possibly finding a significant other, and making the big decision of what they want to do for the rest of their lives. This seems like too much transition to only consider the first-year students in the struggle of transitions to college. Or just the support needed to transition into a job. I think this transition support is a question that needs to be addressed in further research, because students are changing throughout their college life, and many students pointed to the fact that all this is happening at once for them without acknowledgement.

The discussions I had about decision-making skills and gaining agency shed a bit of light on this area, showing that often students do not feel like they are ready for the "real world" or "adulting" yet, even as they moved into their fourth year of college. More

investigation of student development during this period of constant change needs to be developed, possibly in more discussion-based research, to better understand feelings and struggles different types of students are experiencing along the way. Without acknowledgment, how can we expect them to make it through all these changes at once, and feel secure in their paths into adulthood? Examination of student reported feelings and outcomes, as I did in this small group of interviews, could really help support their needs and show trends in their development.

Discussion of their development and their outcomes as emerging adults could also shed some light about student motivation during their college years. The reasoning for why and how students got involved in many of these stories was through social needs or academic requirements. But those are not the only way students engage. Further discussion of their "why" for engaging with certain activities, organizations, or areas of campus life could help better define student motivation. This could help in practice and theory, to explore involvement reasoning and possibly even academic engagements. Motivation is such an important and personal thing for each student. Being able to reach more students, especially those with lower representation and support, could be eased if we had a better understanding of their motivations. It is a complicated concept, but small projects like the ones in JCAPS on extra credit, and this project as well, could help to show the best ways to reach students of all kinds both inside and outside the classroom. This would also, likely, be in discussion-based studies with interviews or focus groups, to get real student stories with explanations of their decisions. Further surveys like mine are important and could help foreshadow what people may engage with in college, but there is no data explaining their "why". I think those types of discussions could really broaden our understanding of

student motivation and decision-making. And possibly help us teach and engage all types of students, because we understand them better as a result of real-life examples shared.

My final reflections on this project and the future research that could be done are quite extensive. The limitations I had at one school and one cohort, only able to interview a small number as one person, are very impactful. I often felt like student stories would leave me with more questions than answers about their lives and their futures. But I have been able to describe some next steps from this research and from other background literature that I believe could really influence higher education. Studies to better understand how student decisions and motivations, student developmental stages, and student transitions can be impacted or rather impact their involvements on campus could be enlightening. I genuinely believe there is a great deal more work to be done in this area to understand fully how much non-academic or outside the classroom activities and engagements impact student life and student growth.

Involvement, in my experience and in many of this project's examples, has really enriched the lives of the students. I know the high-impact that Kuh (2009) talks about is not something students may be able to pinpoint in their stories, but there are many examples I found that do show involvement is impactful. There may be formal and informal examples of student involvement in this project, but I believe I was able to prove that no matter the definition of the engagement, it did enrich the student experience in some way. Overall, I believe the students in this study were, more often than not, able to reflectively give examples of their growth as a result of their involvement. Their definitions and descriptions of agency, decision-making skills, freedom, and independence (Klemencic, 2015; Arnett, 2004) were all the proof I needed to further my belief that involvement supports growth.

These may not be traditional milestones or outcomes in higher education, but students becoming more adult and growing into better citizens is what I hope to see in my students. For me, this project may not have identified exact experiences, involvement types, or student groups that lead directly to this growth. Nevertheless, I believe many of these students' stories were able to show their involvement on campus had some positive effect on their feelings of agency and movement toward adulthood.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. APPENDED CHAPTER – COVID-10 DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS

COVID-19 Discussion & Analysis

Although this project was not developed to explore with students during a worldwide pandemic, it was necessary to have a discussion with the participants about COVID-19. Without the acknowledgement of COVID effects as the "elephant in the room," it did not feel like all positions and explanations about these students' experiences and engagements were fully explored and discussed. As a way to better understand student life during these years, the research questions did not involve COVID, but I thought it important to understand the challenges it had created, nonetheless.

This discussion happened during the second interview session, as a way to re-engage the students with the research questions and with my project. It seemed like an effective way to continue the interview process, by first recapping the student information from the survey and first interview. Then, the questions on COVID were simple, but necessary, to understand better how each student was affected in life and school by the pandemic. Beginning with questions about what happened when they found out that spring break had been extended and then discussion on when the announcement about Spring 2020 being finished completely online was the basis of this data. Ultimately, this was not meant to monopolize the discussion in the second interview sessions, but it was what felt like an obligatory side conversation that needed to be acknowledged to get all the data clearly for what the students were feeling and experiencing in their college life in 2020.

Also, it seemed important to look at the student stories, both around COVID and not, to understand better how their involvement was built and then how it may have been

affected with the pandemic changes. Also, being able to get this out on the table helped the interviews to flow better into how the involvements affected their lives and their growth toward adulthood, because it was such an incredibly difficult timing for them during the pandemic. This was simply another layer of discussion that helped frame student engagements and experiences they shared. This discussion also helped them to begin sharing in the second interviews about how their decisions were affected by their situations, and how they learned to grow with them regardless of the state of the world around them.

COVID Policies & Institutional Details

Because this data was gathered from one cohort of students at a single university, it was easy to gather data and details about what was happening behind the scenes for the institution. Decisions being made by leadership, changes in policies that continue today, and even effects of different dates and deadlines for student life, are all able to be explored with the details from the COVID calendar of events. Having these dates outlined helped to see how different waves of policies and events on campus were also affecting student lives, whether they were on campus or taking classes virtually. As the world now knows, these changes are not going to stop, but seeing the difference in approach at different times does help to shed some light on the student information shared about their pandemic college experiences.

Also, as a result of a big push to continue engagement by the university, interesting data has been collected about student involvement during and since the pandemic shutdowns. That data from the student involvement office on campus at the institution has shown some very interesting connections between the student cohort in this study (who are currently 4th year students) and how their engagements have continued at a much higher

rate than those younger than them. Current 1st and 2nd year students at this college are not nearly as engaged in official campus connections, organizations, and events as those who had a semester or year of COVID-free life on campus before the pandemic. That information does align well with what many students shared about their continued energy to stay connected, even when they were completely remote. And, as the return to campus in-person life began, those engagements were likely to pick up or even expand further, as opposed to the younger students who never began any involvement at all. An unfortunate look at what the future may hold for more students as online classes and opportunities grow from COVID-19 experiences and outcomes.

Dates of Institutional Policies & Decision Roll-Outs:

March 6, 2020 – First COVID+ patient at the institution's medical center

March 11, 2020 – President announces an extended Spring Break, to return April 3, 2020

March 17, 2020 – President officially moves remaining Spring 2020 semester course work to online/remote instruction; Refund options for campus housing, dining, and learning are shared; Temporary closing of all campus buildings; Announcement that all supervisors must be open and flexible for employee remote work options

March 23, 2020 – Remote work options and resources for all campus employees announced; Hiring freeze across campus is announced

March 24, 2020 – Basic Needs Assistance is announced as a new support for students in need, Virtual healthcare launches in the Healthcare Enterprise

March 26, 2020 – New Pass/Fail option announced for all students by the Provost

April 3, 2020 – President & Provost announce Summer 2020 courses are all moved to online/remote instruction; Refunds previously promised for housing and courses begin to be distributed

May 1, 2020 – President announces official "Return to Campus" planning for Fall 2020 term

May 5, 2020 – CARES monies from federal and state support announced for future years' enrollees

July 21, 2020 – Required COVID testing announced as "Return to Campus" plan expands & ramps up for the start of Fall 2020

August 17, 2020 – Fall 2020 Courses Begin (on-campus, hybrid, and online options available)

August 21, 2020 – Phase II of required testing protocol for all students on campus begins

September 17, 2020 – Spring 2021 Academic Calendar Released (Beginning 2 weeks later than normal in January, after extended Thanksgiving-Spring 2021 start break)

September 30, 2020 – HealthCorps is officially announced as COVID resource on campus, Positive test results are required to be reported to this group for tracking & safe return to class options

October 30, 2020 – Required testing before leaving campus and before returning to campus for Spring 2021 announced for all

November 30, 2020 – Tuition & fee cap announced to be continued by BOD and President's office

March 3, 2021 – First Weekly Update from the President on Vaccination numbers, incentives, and creation of weekly-emails to share data compiled by HealthCorps for all campus members

March 10, 2021 – In-Person Spring 2021 Commencement Ceremonies Announced

March 12, 2021 – First, "Return to Normal Operations – Fall 2021" plans announced; Vaccination registration for ALL students begins

This list of dates will prove to be interesting in alignment with some of the student stories, especially as it is announced that classes begin in-person and other opportunities to be on campus in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. Although these dates are announced, and options for in-person instruction is happening, there is a lot of reported "hybrid" and "asynchronous" options reported by the students during these terms. These options, although great for some, were not comfortable or simply not good enough for some students. As the institution went through the announcements of different policies and procedures, the interviews show that the students were feeling the effects of these but also the effects of isolation at home more than anything. Connecting some of these waves of policies and decisions to how the students were feeling at the time is an important piece to understand for how the pandemic impacted student learning, student involvement and experience, and student growth during this time.

COVID Student Stories

Some of the biggest impacts students reported during COVID were when the institution was making tremendous changes and announcements, things like moving the remainder of classes to online instruction in Spring 2020. However, it was also interesting to see that during different times when maybe things were just carrying-on in the "new

normal" students reported having the hardest time, or even having the best time connecting with friends and groups on campus, a clear result of the ebb and flow of COVID feelings everyone was living through. As the world now knows, everyone is affected differently and at various times in the quarantine life and those fluctuations were also true for students living at home, alone on campus, or even isolated with their pod of friends in an apartment.

No matter the experiences, all of the students interviewed identified a myriad of feelings and changes of heart during their time away from campus. Not to mention the effects the pandemic has had on their involvement, their feelings of community, and their connection to campus in general. Some of these ideas about COVID life shared by students included many different perspectives and issues they came across. Deb described feeling less connected than ever, as an off-campus student, because there were no on-campus course options to be able to meet people and connect to peers for studying or social time. JOe shared that he would schedule any possible in-person opportunities to meet with advisors, instructors, or class sessions to feel as connected to campus as possible. Joe said that by also buying a meal plan for campus food services, he had a reason to see more friends and spend more time on campus for the days he did come to in-person meetings. Sandy shared that she was doing everything she could think of, even during times of complete shut down and only virtual classes, because she was still in town and wanted to feel a connection to campus, even when there was not one available in class. Sandy kept up with daily bike rides around campus and the town, to feel connected to campus life, even though she also reported that it was an eerie feeling to ride around on an empty college campus at times. This helped her stay connected, but also helped her stay active and gave her a reason to leave the house most days when she likely would not have otherwise.

On the other hand, some things that students did during COVID shutdowns showed that they were making decisions best for themselves, but ones they may not have been able to make as easily without the pandemic restrictions. Things like missing meetings or leaving involvement groups were mentioned often. They also shared that they were feeling less guilty or concerned about their lack of engagement because so many people felt like these virtual options were not giving them what they needed to stay connected anyway. Shannon reported dropping from a Greek organization because the feeling of connectedness and sisterhood was gone, during the pandemic it began to only feel like a requirement to meet on Zoom once per week and not a community. Shannon decided connecting to her nursing peers via classes and clinicals was easier and required a lot of time all on its own. Carrie reported not feeling bad about missing parties or organization meetings and social time, because the reality was that no one could attend. So, instead of feeling bad about missing out on fun with her roommates or activities on campus like she had in previous semesters, she felt okay to stay in and study on a Friday night (everyone else was stuck at home now, too.)

The "new normal" on campus was not the same for anyone, and whether students moved home or were doing their best to stay connected, there were still struggles around every corner. With constantly changing restrictions and rules on campus, moving back and forth between virtual and in-person class sessions, and everyone's constant health concerns for themselves and their families, emotions were high on all accounts. The "new normal" students were trying to find meant some doing everything they could on a partially open campus when those options were coming available or leaving their connections completely because they did not need them to do well in their online-only courses. A myriad of

different outcomes were discussed when students shared about their COVID experiences and looking at the changes in restrictions on the date list included in this section, it is easy to see why things were changing every semester (or more often) making these "new normal" ways of life hard to adjust to comfortably. Changes were occurring on this campus, as well as all over the state and country, from month to month or even week to week in the beginning, so students' lives were in a constant state of transition to their "new normal".

Leaving Campus

One of the biggest reported issues as a result of COVID-19 from almost every student interviewed was the abruptness of having to move off campus or simply the announcement that everything would be remote for the remainder of Spring 2020. Although many students said they "knew" that they would not being going back to campus after Spring Break, it was still a shock to go from a 2-week hiatus to an almost 2-month online experience for some student who had never taken an online or remote course of any kind before. That part was what seemed to be the biggest shock factor for everyone. Hearing the different stories was tough to listen to, because although it may have seemed abrupt and like a huge decision, it was clear to employees that there was a lot of consideration and discussion happening at the institution before any big announcements were made. However, there were still examples from students that were hard to hear and felt like the university was not doing a great amount of service to many students affected by these decisions.

Lexi described hearing the announcement from Florida with her sorority sisters and finding out they would have 45 minutes in their house on campus to gather anything they could and move out for the remainder of the spring semester. Following that shock, they

had to pack up their things to drive home from their Florida trip, gather their things from the sorority house, all while trying to explain to their parents all over the country that they needed help getting home or were going to catch a ride with someone else going to their area.

Deb, an international student that was working on getting a continued visa for education, was sent immediately back to her home country and for several weeks unable to obtain internet connection to gain access to class or contact the university in any way. Not only was she quickly flown "home" to her family, but their inability to gain her connection to classes and such meant she was unable to complete her spring term effectively or be successful in doing much of anything but accepting the grades she was given. Fortunately, later into the summer Deb was still working on all the paperwork to hopefully return to campus and the US officially as a student with the extended education visa necessary. She was given options on how to move forward without the issues from spring term affecting her future.

Lucas, who had luckily just moved into an off-campus apartment with a few buddies to begin the Spring 2020 term, was able to continue with what was about as normal as possible semester. He was simply taking classes at home alongside his roommates instead of walking to campus and going their separate ways each morning. Although this often seemed like some of the best-case scenarios for students in this position, Lucas was unable to continue working and affording the internet access they needed in an old house to all connect to video lectures at once was difficult. So, he did report staying connected to his professors and keeping close friend groups together, the struggle was still there in the

simple logistics of staying online while his roommates also attempted to pass their classes and not drive each other crazy in quarantine in the meantime.

The Disconnect

Another substantial change that affected many students' experiences was not the simple shift to online instruction and the move home, but the resulting disconnect from campus because they were not able to stay nearby. It seems that, although it may have been a tough transition for those who had to work out the kinks and still lived in town near campus, the ones who were further away struggled throughout in a different way. Although many had the option to move back to their parents or family's houses in a separate state or country, they were often greeted with a supportive group that meant they did not have to feel too isolated or alone at home in quarantine. However, that support of family or feeling of being safe at home did not prevent these students from feeling disconnected and isolated from their campus and their college life experiences. Several students, even those who did not report being involved on campus, were struggling more being at home because without the connections during class time on campus, they had no real friends or ways to study with groups as they had before.

Several interviewees discussed living off-campus and feeling disconnected immediately because of their lack of in-person classes. Although they may not have made time to make formal events or find groups on campus, they had previously been successful in making friends in their classes that they were studying with, doing group projects with, and finding time to spend with between classes together. Although these are not official "involvements" as they described them, they soon realized being at home all the time meant any connections and community they did feel they had on campus was totally gone at home,

behind a computer screen, staring at a bunch of black Zoom boxes where their friends' faces should have been. One friendship that Deb begun in class only was able to continue with a daily check-in between the two, and Deb said that person was the one who kept her motivated and connected, even just with one person, to her feeling of community at college.

Bailey, who had felt like she was always a "loner" on campus, had just changed her major before the shutdown happened on campus. This was a devastating loss for her, as she felt like she had lost her chance to try to connect with students and instructors in her new department of study. As a result, she began to look for opportunities right away when the announcement for "return to campus" in Fall 2020 was announced. She decided the only way she would get through the remaining spring term and be successful was to buckle down in isolation, find a job or internship on campus in her new major, and engage with some other groups to ensure her integration into the new course of studies when classes started again in August. Although this meant her Spring and Summer 2020 terms were very disconnected, it also meant that she was doing her best to make connections outside of the classroom. She got another dog to train during COVID shutdown to keep herself busy and really tried to be successful in online classes. Then, she pushed herself to reach out to others, instructors or peers in her program, so that would get her foot in the door for the coursework, research, and ultimately career goals she now had.

Marge and Annie talked about their experience moving home and sharing space with a few siblings and having to learn about boundaries while they were all trying to support each other but not get in each other's way with their course loads. That feeling was supportive, and safe, but also led them both to move back to off-campus housing sooner.

Even though all of Marge's classes in the Fall 2020 still stayed online, she realized staying closer to campus with people around her that were friends from college made balancing that campus life connection and isolated feeling of online classes. Many other students like these two reported that they tried to do things to stay connected to campus, even if it was not their official involvement or events they normally engaged with. Joe also moved back to town after being sent home, to an off-campus apartment with friends. He made it a point to take as many on-campus classes in Fall 2020 as possible, so he felt like he had facetime with his professors. Also, keeping a meal plan on campus, even with limited availability of options, kept him on campus longer each day to feel more like campus life. Joe was a student who identified as not really involved in college at all, but somehow was still making connections and keeping himself engaged with campus life instead of choosing to stay safe at home with his parents for another semester.

Academic Concerns

Academic effects during COVID shutdown, and even with hybrid and some on-campus time in Fall 2020, were very real and different for everyone. Not only did the results people saw in their grades differ by the types of classes and subject they enrolled in, but the outcomes were also affected by the instructors they had, the time in-person or not they were expected to spend on each class, and the feelings they had about the subject itself. Some students really enjoyed the Spring 2020 wrap up of classes being online, others reported that their instructors really struggled with the transition, and they did not learn anything new after spring break. Some students reported that online classes worked well for them, and their subjects leant themselves to be taught in this format. Also, those successful students felt like they were driven and naturally organized, so being able to do

work as they pleased from home was good for their outcomes. Others still felt the exact opposite about classes online, and reported that they had to get back on campus and to in-person classes as soon as they possibly could to keep themselves successfully completing the coursework no matter what subject it was in. All of this is more of a personal preference and much more dependent on student personality, but it was interesting to hear all the different thoughts about how the transition looked in Spring 2020 and their ideas about remote courses in general.

Many interviewees reported general uncertainty and uneasy feelings about taking online or remote classes and said that their grades reflected those feelings. Although none truly felt like what was asked of them online was unobtainable during the Spring 2020 term, there were definitely a few students who felt the instructors did ask too much or for things they did not feel comfortable trying to accomplish without in-person and hands-on experience in class. Overall, the students who reported getting grades that were passable but not great felt like classes they were in simply were not meant to be done anywhere but in a lab or class with their instructors to guide them. In many of these cases, the students reported that instructors did everything they could to try to make it work, but in the end just getting by was good enough for them in this situation.

Several other students reported just the opposite about their grades and online experiences in Spring 2020. Although they may not have loved the remote work, they were able to stay motivated and often reported that they easily obtained great grades in this format. Also, some reported feeling like they had extra time each day without the walk or ride to campus and then in between rushing from class to class. That helped several students feel like they could decompress and really grasp what they needed from each class, without

having to be hurried all the time as they felt they were on campus some days. Many successful online or remote students simply reported that, especially for those asynchronous courses, they were able to accomplish a great deal because it was on their own schedule and flexible enough to give them the grace they needed to succeed in each class. Also, some simply said that staying organized and on task worked for them both on-campus and during remote instruction, so even with a combination of Zoom lecture times and asynchronous options, they were able to carve out what they needed from every day to get the work done smoothly.

Involvement Struggle

The last big COVID effect discussed in the interviews was how successful each student was in staying connected to their involvements outside of class, if they had them. Not only were they successful in staying connected, but how and why did those efforts work for them in this isolated experience everyone was living through. Different areas of campus accomplished keeping events going, campus connections thriving, organizations meeting regularly, and remote life working for them. The involvement office on campus made a huge effort, offering all types of events and fun engagements, especially throughout the summer of 2020 to keep as many students engaged as possible during the total shutdown. But, outside the support of the offices and advisors on campus who developed online options, there were also student connections and involvements that were able to be kept up throughout the 2020 year. Also, there were many people who almost immediately felt disconnected and dropped out of the organizations or stopped registering for events they normally would have been spending a lot of time engaged with if they were back at school.

With campus closed, several students lost on-campus jobs and connections in that way, one of which really hurt a student's involvement with her peers. Sandy was employed at the movie theatre at the student center, and it was shut down, disconnecting her from all her closest friends and her favorite place on campus. This place had become her home away from home, and although she did not consider herself very involved in college, she was invested and engaged with the job at the theatre and all the friends she gained from that experience. Not only was this an effect on Sandy's life during the shutdown, but the connections were also not able to be made in Fall 2020, because employment at the theater was taken over by another campus office, and they were not able to return to their jobs. However, she did report that those people from her job are still her closest friends, and that they stayed connected during the shutdown by making plans virtually together regularly and moving back to town together.

Shannon, Carrie, and Cate admitted that COVID had a major effect on their involvement, and ultimately their decision to drop out of their Greek organizations during 2020. Although these organizations are some of those that made the biggest efforts on campus to stay connected, still having weekly meetings, they also felt to these students like just another Zoom meeting in their week full of them for classes. Being able to recognize that commitment to the organization was not as important as their mental health in isolation. Nor was it as important as the time they allotted for schoolwork. However, this still proved to be a difficult realization to act on for these young women. None of them were happy to report that they did not feel connected via these weekly Zoom calls with 200+ women, but they also did not feel like their dues, or their time was well spent by those obligations. In the end, Shannon, Carrie, and Cate all reported that they either lived with

their fellow Greek sisters, or studied with them often, so their connections to the closest friends in those organizations would continue. Still, for organizations that made such a huge effort, it seems like it may have backfired for many because Zoom fatigue and lack of real engagement was really damaging for these students.

Two interviewees talked about how they kept their organizations connected and afloat during the COVID shutdown in Spring and Summer, by making concentrated efforts but not overwhelming everyone with required remote events. Both of these young people, Bridget and Ellen were leaders of one or more student organizations on campus, and felt with the support of the involvement office, that they were able to keep some good engagement throughout the 2020 year. However, they both did acknowledge that this was hard work, and they likely did lose many members, but kept up with the work to engage those that were willing to show up. Things like virtual game or movie nights, fun ice breakers and sharing during meeting times, and special speakers were reported by these student leaders to get the highest amount of engagement. It was always difficult to have executive board team meetings or general meetings for an organization, attendance was often low, and yet these leaders were able to keep their groups going. These may not have been the most fun things to plan at times and were often more difficult than just a fun pizza party at the end of a term they enjoyed most with their executive teams, but they did help connections continue. These student leaders, along with others interviewed, recognized the importance of keeping connections and feelings of community during quarantine life. It may have been tough to accomplish, but there were groups doing this right during 2020, and it was encouraging to hear about how these students not only kept up with their academics but also with their teams, organizations, and affiliations from afar.

Student COVID Discussions

Academic, involvement, and connection concerns were things all students seemed to battle no matter where they moved to, whether it was home across the country or just outside of campus with a few roommates. These struggles may have been more prominent in certain cases than others, but there was discussion of most of these feelings of loss of a college experience on the whole by almost every student interviewed in this study. It was incredibly interesting to really hear some student perspectives, especially from this cohort that had come to college under "normal" circumstances, only to have their second year completely fall apart. They all recognize that this is likely what was best for everyone, but the experience they got as a result was not what they were expecting and was disappointing for so many reasons. Those that were able to survive and some that even thrived through remote instruction still felt a disconnect from their communities and engagements on campus, both inside and outside the classroom.

These three big reasons for concern were why the discussion of COVID-19 and the shutdown of campus was a necessary part of the interview process. Although the research questions were not based on COVID life, this "elephant in the room" was part of these students' experience, and they were happy to discuss how it affected not only academics, but social and community connections for them in 2020. Some students had a much easier time than others, but in the end, they all had a story to share about how their lives were changes by being sent "home" (wherever that happened to be) in the Spring term of 2020, and the impacts it had on their college experience and future semesters as well.

COVID Implications & Effects

The effects of COVID-19 shutdown on students were different for everyone, and yet there were some outcomes and implications highlighted above that were felt by everyone during this time. Everything from the announcement about Spring 2020 being remote beginning in April, to the re-opening of campus and the changes that existed made an impact on each student life. And, as they shared, the implications for how it can continue to affect student life are great. Everyone may not have had the same feelings about the shutdown, some may not have even thought it was necessary at all. However, there was one thing that cannot be denied about the shutdown of the university, it changed the outcomes for everyone academically, socially, and mentally. Some of them are still feeling and experiencing those effects now.

The first substantial change happening with the transition to remote and online instruction had a huge effect on student life, where they lived and how they studied. However, that also had implications for the future of education for years to come, as remote learning becomes more popular everywhere at every level. The transition to "home" was difficult for some, simple for others, and just not a huge change for some students at all. That does not mean that during that transition time there were few ways lives were changed and the future of education was altered. Moving into remote work, the world did not realize (not at this institution or any others) that online and remote education was going to continue and ultimately come out with a stronger case for widespread opportunity for this type of learning. However, even with young people at home learning alongside their parents working, there continues to be movement toward normalizing these types of learning from home in any area or level of education. This implication is one of the largest COVID outcomes, and it will affect how education is developed in the years to come.

Other implications may not be as widespread as a total educational pedagogy and delivery reform, but there are some things that we have seen change and will likely not return to pre-COVID status. The realization that people, no matter how introverted, do need in-person social connection was a great one. Although some people were thrilled to retreat into their homes and take classes or do homework alone, most everyone had some sort of struggle with finding human connection again. And students often reported that being able to continue relationships they built with classmates, clubs, or instructors on-campus previously, was an incredibly important part of their survival and success during the quarantine period in 2020. This implication is true, not only for students trying out a new way of learning from home, but also for most of the world that transitioned to working at home as well. These previous social and academic connections were essential to continue through and be successful during the fully remote period of education and overall life.

Academic effects are still playing out for this cohort of students, as well as all those behind them. Although some really enjoyed and succeeded in online or remote schooling, there were other implications for how that could carry-out long term. Not only in the expansion of remote education everywhere, but also in how they could return to in-person coursework or even graduate and move forward with this academic experience. Many students reported good outcomes and transitioned back to on-campus classes as soon as they could, but others continue in fully remote access classes now. And still others have returned to in-person instruction but have felt very behind or ill-prepared for what comes next. Some may have enjoyed the online experience, but often are reporting that returning to class was tough academically and socially, not to mention how it affected their future courses of study and grade point averages.

Finally, the implications for student involvement and engagement on campus in the future could end up being widespread, as more options for remote education happen. As was mentioned previously, the office at this institution that supports student groups, organizations, and events had made a huge effort to keep people engaged during the Spring and Fall of 2020. But the data also shows that there is a decline in involvement on campus for those newer students, in their current first and second year of college now. So, the implications for student involvement on college campus in the future could be incredibly great, or as we move away from the 2020 year, there could be more students enrolling and engaging with student groups than in the last few years as well. This is a hard data point to predict, and there is a lot of work being done to help evaluate student interest to get involvement on an up-swing again in the future years at this institution especially. The implications for the future of student engagements on campus and involvement opportunities seem to be uncertain currently and following along with future trends will be important to best understand the changes resulting from the quarantine shutdown in 2020.

Even with this data from the interviews, the future of student involvement on campus seems unclear right now. There is data being developed by this university about the involvement levels of different cohorts, and now that it has begun, there will hopefully be more information on why certain groups are engaging more than others since 2020. However, this is simply data from one school, and the student experiences need further exploration with other areas to fully understand the impacts and effects COVID has had on college student involvement and higher education in general. There are many links highlighted here between the Spring and Fall 2020 experiences to the student outcomes that involvement on campus can support. But this was just 24 student interviews from one

cohort of students. Digging deeper into COVID outcomes and influences will be an interesting study area for years to come, and student campus life and involvement will only be one small part of the things that have changed as a result of the remote education terms.

UK Third Year College Experience Survey

Start of Block: Introduction

**The letter below is asking you to choose whether or not to volunteer for a research study about your involvement on campus during your first two years of college. We are asking you because you are a third-year student here at UK and we are looking for input on your cohort's experience. **
Third-Year UK Student:

Researchers at the University of Kentucky are inviting you to take part in an online survey about your experience and involvement on campus here at UK during your first two years of college.

Although you may not get personal benefit from taking part in this research study, your responses may help us understand more about how to support new student in important involvement and engagement opportunities on campus. Some volunteers experience satisfaction from knowing they have contributed to research that may possibly benefit others in the future.

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

The survey/questionnaire will take about 5 minutes to complete.

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

We will not know which responses are yours if you choose to participate, unless you provide your contact information to participate in the interviews. As part of the study interviews will also be conducted on a voluntary basis, and you can share your contact information if you are willing to be interviewed at the end of the survey. If you choose to share your contact information, your responses to the survey will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law.

When we write about the study you will not be identified.

If you choose to disclose your contact information: Identifiable information such as your name may be removed from the information collected in this study. After removal, the information

may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informedconsent.

We hope to receive completed questionnaires from about 5,161 people, so your answers are important to us. Of course, you have a choice about whether or not to complete the survey/questionnaire, but if you do participate, you are free to skip any questions or discontinueat any time. You will not be penalized in any way for skipping or discontinuing the survey.

Please be aware, while we make every effort to safeguard your data once received from the online survey company, given the nature of online surveys, as with anything involving the Internet, we can never guarantee the confidentiality of the data while still on the survey company's servers, or while en route to either them or us. It is also possible the raw data collected for research purposes will be used for marketing or reporting purposes by the survey/data gathering company after the research is concluded, depending on the company'sTerms of Service and Privacy policies. All survey and interview answers, and identifying information that may be volunteered, will be deidentified and kept behind a firewall-protected computer with both password and physical protection.

If you have questions about the study, please feel free to ask; my contact information is given below. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this important project. Please completethe survey by_.

Sincerely,
Jamie N. Taylor, PhD Candidate
Education Policy & Evaluation Department, College of Education, University of Kentucky
PHONE: 513-675-7300
E-MAIL: jnhunt3@uky.edu

The above Graduate Student is being directed by faculty advisor: Jane Jensen, PhD and can be reached at jjensen@uky.edu

If you have complaints, suggestions, or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the University of Kentucky Office of Research Integrity at 859-257-9428 or toll-free at 1-866-400-9428.

Do you consent to taking part in this survey? Please select Yes or No and continue the survey accordingly.

◯ Yes. (1)

○ No (2)

Survey Instructions
Please fill out all questions to the best of your abilities. All answers will be anonymous unless you share personal identification info, your answers will not be shared with anyone outside of this project. This survey should take around 5-7 minutes to complete.

Which best describes your grade level?

○ Junior, finalizing 3rd full year at UK (1)

○ Junior, finalizing 3rd year, transferred to UK (2)

○ Other (3) _____

Cumulative GPA for each Semester

	1.5-2.0 (2)	2.0-2.5 (3)	2.5-3.0 (4)	3.0-3.5 (5)	3.5-4.0 (6)
Fall 1stYear (1)	○ ○	○	○	○	○
Spring 1st Year (2)	○ ○	○	○	○	○
Fall 2nd Year (3)	○ ○	○	○	○	○
Spring 2nd Year (4)	○ ○	○	○	○	○
Fall 3rd Year (5)	○ ○	○	○	○	○
Anticipated Spring 3rd Year (6)	○ ○	○	○	○	○

Which best describes your course modality/instruction in your time at UK?

	100% On-campus Classes (1)	Mixed Modality - Some on-campus, Some online (2)	100% Online Classes (3)
Fall 1st Year (1)	○	○	○
Spring 1st Year (2)	○	○	○
Fall 2nd Year (3)	○	○	○
Spring 2nd Year (4)	○	○	○
Fall 3rd Year (5)	○	○	○
Spring 3rd Year (6)	○	○	○

Which best describes your living situation at UK?

	Dorm or Apartment oncampus (1)	Apartment or Home off campus, with friends or alone (2)	Apartment of Home off campus, with family/guardians (3)	Living Situation unstable/not permanent during this time (4)
Fall 1st Year (1)	○	○	○	○
Spring 1st Year (2)	○	○	○	○
Fall 2nd Year(3)	○	○	○	○
Spring 2nd Year (4)	○	○	○	○
Fall 3rd Year (5)	○	○	○	○
Spring 3rd Year (6)	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Which of the following did you expect from your college experience before you came to college? Select all that apply.

☐   To learn & enjoy academics (1)

☐   To find friends & make connections (2)

☐   To develop a career plan (3)

☐   To be free from home & independent (4)

☐   To get involved & socialize on campus (5)

☐   Other (6) _____

From the above, which of your selections were available during your first or second year at UK? Select all that apply.

☐   To learn & enjoy academics (1)

☐   To find friends & make connections (2)

☐   To develop a career plan (3)

☐   To be free from home & independent (4)

☐   To get involved & socialize on campus (5)

☐   Other (6) _____

Page Break

Thinking back on high-school & life before UK, were you involved in anything extra-curricular? Select all that apply.

☐　　　　Sports teams (varsity, travel, etc) (1)

☐　　　　Academic teams (debate, quiz/trivia, etc) (2)

☐　　　　Social clubs (3)

☐　　　　Service (Boy or Girl Clubs of America, etc) (4)

☐　　　　Volunteer work (5)

☐　　　　Musical/Theater groups (Choir, Band, Orchestra, Performance, etc) (6)

☐　　　　Church or Religious groups (7)

☐　　　　Shared interests groups (8)

☐　　　　Other (9) _____

Which, if any, of your selections above were able to carry-forward into your time at UK? Whether they were the same groups/volunteer opportunities, or simply related ones you joined during college?

☐   Sports teams (varsity, travel, etc) (1)

☐   Academic teams (debate, quiz/trivia, etc) (2)

☐   Social clubs (3)

☐   Service (Boy or Girl Clubs of America, etc) (4)

☐   Volunteer work (5)

☐   Musical/Theater groups (Choir, Band, Orchestra, Performance, etc) (6)

☐   Church or Religious groups (7)

☐   Shared interests groups (8)

☐   Other (9) _____

Page Break

Gender

> ▼ Male (1) ... Prefer not to say (4)

Ethnicity

> ▼ American Indian/Alaskan Native (1) ... White (9)

Are you the first in your family to attend college?

> ▼ Yes (1) ... Don't Know (3)

In which city did you attend High School?

_____

In which state did you attend High School?

> ▼ Alabama (1) ... I do not reside in the United States (53)

Page Break

I want to thank you for your time. If you are willing & able to continue this conversation in an interview setting with the student research, please leave your name & best contact information (email preferably) below. I look forward to meeting you all if you're willing to chat with me & there will be a financial incentive for a follow-up interview time. Thank you, again!

Contact information for interview:

_____

End of Block

APPENDIX 3. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol: Interviews with Third-Year Students

Volunteers from initial survey, invited to interview at the end of the survey. They would qualify as third year students at UK, who have now completed almost their entire third year (coming up to the end of their 3rd spring term), to reflect on their engagement in high school, those connections to engagement in college, and the implications this engagement has had on their overall first-year experience, as well as second & third-year success.

INTERVIEW 1:

This interview is meant to be a deeper dive into some of the information you shared in the survey about your high school and college engagement. We are hoping to get as much feedback as we can from our third-year students about their experience thus far, how engagement and involvement has played into their college experience. From there, we will likely invite you to a second interview session for more information as well, if you feel up to it. Overall, we want you to be honest and know we're asking these questions to understand many different perspectives and experiences, so that we can attempt to make your transition to college and your experience on campus the best it can be, while also better understanding what you're going through during these years on our campus.

High School Engagement:

1. Reflecting on your answers to the survey question about your high school involvement (mention of some of their answers) …
    -   How do you think that was connected or reflected on your interests in your first-year of college?
    -   Did any of your engagements carry-over college in the same types of groups?
    -   Did any of your high school engagements drop off or become more intense in college?
2. As you think about your transition to college overall…
    -   Were you able to make this move easily without many hiccups, or was the transition a struggle in the beginning?
    -   Why do you feel you were (or weren't) successful in moving into college?
    -   Did any of your involvement opportunities during the transition particularly help you to settle in or transition to the college life?

Transition of Engagement & Expectations:

3. Now, thinking about your life in high school versus the first few years of college…
    -   Was your engagement experience what you expected?
    -   How might your experience compare to your pre-college expectations of being in college?
4. Thinking about all that engagement and your initial college expectations…
    -   Why do you think you chose what you did to get involved in here at UK (mention some of the options they selected in the survey)?
    -   Are you happy with those choices? Do you feel like you've missed anything?
    -   Were any of your choices influenced by your academic plan/advisors in any way, even if those involvements weren't directly related to your studies?
    -   Why do you think these are encouraged? Were they required or suggested?

We really appreciate all your honest answers and feedback. I am happy to invite you back for a second interview, where we'll shift from your transition and engagement into what your life & college looked like during COVID. Plus, we'll talk more about your overall experience, and your feelings about how you're developing as a student and person during your college years. Plus, any other feedback you may remember or want to share, we'd be happy to hear there as well. If that's something you're interested in, after this, I will send you an email recap & another Calendly invite to sign up for a second interview. Please look for that in a few days, as I review your interview answers and make notes from our conversations to keep track of your details & connect again during our second session. Are you willing to meet again? Great -- Do you have any questions for me now?

INTERVIEW 2:

Continuing the conversation from the survey & our previous interviews, I want to shift gears to talk about your involvement & engagement during the time of COVID restrictions. Keep in mind, your experience may have been hindered or not so by these restrictions, depending on your previous terms, where you were living, etc. Don't be afraid to share anything you think was important or influential about your shift from "normal" college experience to COVID experience, good or bad. This isn't about reflecting on the restrictions as much as it's about telling us what happened to you because of them. And, anything else you want to share from our previous conversation or previous questions is always helpful.

COVID or Other Restrictions:

1. Thinking about all your engagement in first- and second-year (mention some we talked about previously), were they affected or restricted by anything (whether in your control or out)?
2. Thinking about these restrictions, your initial college expectations, and what actually took place in classes and extracurricular…
   - Did your first- and second-year experience live up to what you hoped it would be?
   - What was missing?
   - Were you able to engage in more of the things you wanted to, or things that were required during your first & second years than once the shift to online/hybrid began?
   - How did the closing of school & move-out from campus affect you?

Adulthood & Agency:

3. Did any of those suggested or your chosen (refer to previous conversation) involvement/engagements seem to connect you further on campus (especially during COVID)?
   - Did you find other opportunities that weren't required?
   - Were there any involvements you were able to keep up during COVID shutdown?
   - Did anything you stayed involve with have a particular influence on your time during shutdown?
4. Switching gears, thinking back to your pre-college life, did you think you would have more agency (ie: autonomy, ability to make & achieve goals, taking your education on as your responsibility, decision-making skills, and choice in your educational/career path) once you went on to college?
   - If yes, did that actually occur on campus? Describe how you know you were gaining that agency.
5. Do you feel that your newly found agency on campus was hindered in any way?

- Was it as you anticipated before college in that you were responsible for and able to make decisions and guide your own educational path?
- Did you feel yourself growing from any of your experiences?
- Was your newly found agency enhanced by any of your engagement opportunities?
- Which ones were the most influential on your finding your agency?
- Do you feel more adult? If yes, describe how you know that feeling is "adult".
- Do you feel as if there has been anything holding you back (outside the classroom) from learning & having your expected college experience?

6. Is there anything else you want to share that you think is important for us to know about your college transition, involvement & activities, or development as a student & an adult?

Note:

Defining Student Agency (for guidance & clarification during interviews)

Student Agency in college combines the want to be responsible and make goals, and the actual action of making these things happen for oneself. Agency in student development is somewhat of a guide to becoming more self-sufficient and self-aware, a movement toward adulthood and self-authorship.

According to Education Reimagined (2018), the steps in agency are…

1. *Setting advantageous goals (ie: awareness, forethought, intentionality)*
2. *Initiating action toward those goals (ie: choice, voice, free will, autonomy)*
3. *Reflecting and revising goals, to move onto further goals (ie: self-reflection, discipline, perseverance)*
4. *Internalizing self-efficacy (ie: a growth mindset, empowerment, locus of control)*

Interview Option

For those who volunteer but are not engaged in HS or college, not to be included in above interviews, only for those selecting options of not being involved.

High School & Transitions:

1. Reflecting on your answers to the survey question about your high school involvement (mention their lack of involvement to confirm) …
   - What was/were the reason(s) for you lack of involvement outside of class in HS?
   - How do you think that was connected or reflected on your interests in your first-year of college?
   - Did anything you may not have had time for in HS become available or possible for you in college?
2. As you think about your transition to college overall…
   - Were you able to make this move easily without many hiccups, or was the transition a struggle in the beginning?
   - Why do you feel you were (or weren't) successful in moving into college?

Transition of Engagement & Expectations:

3. Now, thinking about your life in high school versus the first few years of college…
   - Was your engagement experience what you expected?
   - How might your experience compare to your pre-college expectations of being in college?
4. Thinking about all that engagement and your initial college expectations…

- Why do you think you chose what you did to get involved in here at UK (mention some of the options they selected in the survey)? – OR – Are your reasons for not being involved in college the same as they were for HS?
- Do you feel like you've missed anything?

COVID or Other Restrictions:

5. Thinking about COVID restrictions, your initial college expectations, and what actually took place in classes and extracurricular…
   - Did your first- and second-year experience live up to what you hoped it would be?
   - What was missing?
   - Were you able to engage in more of the things you wanted to, or things that were required during your first & second years than once the shift to online/hybrid began?
   - How did the closing of school & move-out from campus affect you?

Adulthood & Agency:

6. Thinking back to your pre-college life, did you think you would have more agency once you went on to college?
   - If yes, did those feelings/actions actually occur?
7. Do you feel that your newly found agency on campus was hindered in any way?
   - Was it as you anticipated before college?
   - Did you feel yourself growing from any of your experiences?
   - Was your newly found agency on campus was enhanced by any of your engagement opportunities?
   - Which ones were the most influential on your feeling of agency?
   - Do you feel more adult? If yes, describe what that "adult" feeling or characterization is like.
   - Do you feel as if there has been anything holding you back (outside the classroom) from learning & having your expected college experience?
8. Is there anything else you want to share that you think is important for us to know about your college transition, involvement & activities, or development as a student & an adult?

APPENDIX 4. IRB CONSENT DOCUMENTS

Consent Documents

Interview 1 Consent Document

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
KEY INFORMATION FOR THIRD-YEAR STUDENT INTERVIEWS

We are asking you to choose whether or not to volunteer for a research study about your involvement on campus during your first two years of college. We are asking you because you indicated in your student survey that you were open to participating in a follow-up interview about your involvement and college experience. This page is to give you key information to help you decide whether to participate.

We have included detailed information after this page. If you have questions later, the contact information for the research investigator in charge of the study is below.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE, PROCEDURES, AND DURATION OF THE STUDY?
We are requesting your consent for 1-hour interview, conducted remotely via Zoom, in mid- to late-2021. By offering this follow-up after the initial survey of third-year students, we hope to learn more about how students navigate their campus involvement and transitions during their first two years of college.

WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS STUDY?
This research is being done to help provide an adequate support for first-time students and students in transitions to college. Volunteering may not have an immediate benefit for you, beyond an opportunity to reflect. But, your contributions could help future students more smoothly transition to college and find their opportunities for involvement and development sooner.

WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE NOT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS STUDY?
There is no known risk to participation for the student, beyond what you might undertake on a day-to-day basis. However, interview may include reflective questions that encourage students to think about some of the more difficult moments in their transitions to college and involvement during their first two years.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?
If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer.
As a student, if you decide not to take part in this study, your choice will have no effect on your academic status or class grade(s).

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?
This research focuses on your responses to a series of interview questions. You will be asked to meet remotely with the primary researcher for an interview at a time of your choosing. This interview will ask you to share your personal experiences relating to your high school and college involvement and your experiences in development

during your first two years of college. You are free to speak as you wish, refuse to answer any questions, or stop the interview at any time.

You will be asked if your interview can be video and audio recorded via Zoom, and if not, whether written notes can be taken instead. Recorded interviews will first be stored on the researcher's computer in a secure folder and then de-identified and inputted as a transcript into a separate, locked folder. These interviews will be deleted after the research is concluded.

You may be asked to participate in a second round of interviews of the same type and set up described above to continue gaining feedback on your experience and involvement at UK.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS?
If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding this study or you want to withdraw from the study contact Jamie Taylor graduate student of the University of Kentucky, Department of Education Policy & Evaluation at jnhunt3@uky.edu or Faculty Advisor for this project Jane Jensen at jjensen@uky.edu

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

DETAILED CONSENT:

ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU WOULD NOT QUALIFY FOR THIS STUDY?

Only members of your cohort who have completed 60-100 credit hours, or are classified as junior level students that identified willingness to participate in interviews on their survey answers. Thus, as you are invited, you qualify to participate as a student who has expressed interest in this work and volunteered your contact information to continue participation.

WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TIME INVOLVED?

The research procedures will be conducted via Zoom based on your scheduled preference(s). This consent form is for only one interview as a follow-up to an online survey; thus, your time commitment is only for the time required for one interview (approximately 1 hour). There may be a follow up interview requested, of the same duration and scheduling set up. Your consent will be obtained in the same fashion for the second interview session.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this voluntary, remote interview discussion.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in this study. There may be benefit in your reflection, as stated previously, but no physical benefits as it's simply a sharing of your thoughts and opinions in an interview setting.

WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?

There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?

When we write about or share the results from the study, we will write about the combined information. We will keep your name and other identifying information private. We will make every effort to safeguard your data, prevent anyone that who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, but as with anything online, we cannot guarantee the security of data obtained via the Internet. All survey and interview answers will be deidentified and kept behind a firewall-protected computer with both password and physical protection. We will keep confidential all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court or to tell authorities if you report information about a child being abused or if you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. Also, we may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Kentucky.

CAN YOU CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY EARLY?

You can choose to leave the study at any time. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will receive $20 in payment via Venmo or gift certificate for taking part in this interview.

WILL WE CONTACT YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN FUTURE STUDIES?

The research staff may like to contact you with information about participating in future studies. If so, you may receive information via email from Jamie Taylor. Contact will be limited to once per year.

Do you give your verbal permission for the investigator or staff to contact you regarding your willingness to participate in future research studies?   ☐ **Yes**

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

If you volunteer to take part in this study, only other UK students will also be participating. The primary investigator for this research, Jamie Taylor is a doctoral candidate in Higher Education; She is being guided in this research by Dr. Jane Jensen as her faculty advisor.

WILL YOUR INFORMATION BE USED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH?

All identifiable information (e.g., your name, email) will be removed from the information collected in this study. After we remove all identifiers, the information may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

INFORMED CONSENT

This consent includes the following:

- Key Information Page (Page 1)
- Detailed Consent (Pages)

You are the subject. You will receive a copy of this consent form after it has been signed. If you have questions or concerns, contact the principal investigator, Jamie Taylor, at jnhunt3@uky.edu

Interview 2 Consent Document

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
KEY INFORMATION FOR THIRD-YEAR STUDENT INTERVIEWS

We are asking you to choose whether or not to volunteer for a research study about your involvement on campus during your first two years of college. We are asking you because you indicated in your student survey that you were open to participating in a follow-up interview about your involvement and college experience. This page is to give you key information to help you decide whether to participate.

We have included detailed information after this page. If you have questions later, the contact information for the research investigator in charge of the study is below.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE, PROCEDURES, AND DURATION OF THE STUDY?
We are requesting your consent for 1-hour interview, conducted remotely via Zoom, in mid- to late-2021. By offering this follow-up after the initial interview session, we hope to learn more about how students navigate their campus involvement and growth during their first two years of college.

WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS STUDY?
This research is being done to help provide an adequate support for first-time students and students in transitions to college. Volunteering may not have an immediate benefit for you, beyond an opportunity to reflect. But, your contributions could help future students more smoothly transition to college and find their opportunities for involvement and development sooner.

WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE NOT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS STUDY?
There is no known risk to participation for the student, beyond what you might undertake on a day-to-day basis. However, interview may include reflective questions that encourage students to think about some of the more difficult moments in their transitions to college and involvement during their first two years.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?
If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer.
As a student, if you decide not to take part in this study, your choice will have no effect on your academic status or class grade(s).

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?
This research focuses on your responses to a series of interview questions. You will be asked to meet remotely with the primary researcher for an interview at a time of your choosing. This second interview session will ask you to share your personal experiences relating to your college involvement and your experiences in development during your first two years of college. You are free to speak as you wish, refuse to answer any questions, or stop the interview at any time.

You will be asked if your interview can be video and audio recorded via Zoom, and if not, whether written notes can be taken instead. Recorded interviews will first be stored on the researcher's computer in a secure folder and then de-identified and inputted as a transcript into a separate, locked folder. These interviews will be deleted after the research is concluded.

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DETAILED CONSENT:

ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU WOULD NOT QUALIFY FOR THIS STUDY?
Only members of your cohort who have completed 60-100 credit hours, or are classified as junior level students that identified willingness to participate in interviews on their survey answers. Thus, as you are invited, you qualify to participate as a student who has expressed interest in this work and volunteered your contact information to continue participation following your survey and initial interview responses.

WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TIME INVOLVED?
The research procedures will be conducted via Zoom based on your scheduled preference(s). This consent form is for only one interview as it will be the final session and opportunity for data collection about your experiences; thus, your time commitment is only for the time required for this interview (approximately 1 hour).

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?
There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this voluntary, remote interview discussion.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
You will not get any personal benefit from taking part in this study. There may be benefit in your reflection, as stated previously, but no physical benefits as it's simply a sharing of your thoughts and opinions in an interview setting.

WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?
There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?
When we write about or share the results from the study, we will write about the combined information. We will keep your name and other identifying information private. We will make every effort to safeguard your data, prevent anyone that who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, but as with anything online, we cannot guarantee the security of data obtained via the Internet. All survey and interview answers will be deidentified and kept behind a firewall-protected computer with both password and physical protection. We will keep confidential all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court or to tell authorities if you report information about a child being abused or if you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. Also, we may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Kentucky.

CAN YOU CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY EARLY?
You can choose to leave the study at any time. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
You will receive $20 in payment via Venmo or gift certificate for taking part in this interview.

WILL WE CONTACT YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN FUTURE STUDIES?

The research staff may like to contact you with information about participating in future studies. If so, you may receive information via email from Jamie Taylor. Contact will be limited to once per year.

Do you give your verbal permission for the investigator or staff to contact you regarding your willingness to participate in future research studies? ☐ **Yes**

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

If you volunteer to take part in this study, only other UK students will also be participating. The primary investigator for this research, Jamie Taylor is a doctoral candidate in Higher Education; She is being guided in this research by Dr. Jane Jensen as her faculty advisor.

WILL YOUR INFORMATION BE USED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH?

All identifiable information (e.g., your name, email) will be removed from the information collected in this study. After we remove all identifiers, the information may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

INFORMED CONSENT

This consent includes the following:
- Key Information Page (Page 1)
- Detailed Consent (Pages)

You are the subject. You will receive a copy of this consent form after it has been signed. If you have questions or concerns, contact the principal investigator, Jamie Taylor, at jnhunt3@uky.edu
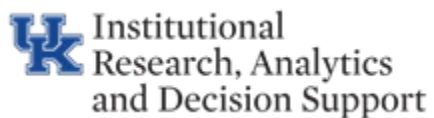
APPENDIX 5. LETTER OF SUPPORT

Hi Jamie,

Sorry for the delay. Absolutely, we will be happy to provide the data necessary for you to complete your study, in accordance with the approved IRB proposal (and exclude anyone who has a Privacy Flag placed on their record by the Registrar's Office).

Thanks,

Todd

Todd Brann
Senior Assistant Provost and Executive Director of Analytics
University of Kentucky
Institutional Research, Analytics and Decision Support (IRADS)
202B Main Building
859-576-2063
Todd.Brann@uky.edu

APPENDIX 6. BUDGET

Project Budget for Incentives

Budget Information	
Description	**Cost**
Interview Incentives – $20 Gift Cards/Direct Payment for 20+ Initial Interviews	$400+
Interview Incentives – $20 Gift Cards/Direct Payment for 20+ Second Interviews	$400+
Dedoose membership for coding - $10.95/month	$65.70+ (approx. for 6 mos.)
Total:	**$865.70+**

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VITA

EDUCATION:
Morehead State University (2013-2015), MA of Adult and Higher Education

University of Kentucky (2007-2011), Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and German Language Studies

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS HELD:
University of Kentucky, Graduate Medical Education in Internal Medicine – Senior Medical Education Specialist (August 2019-Present)

University of Kentucky, College of Public Health – Academic Affairs Admin (Sept 2017-August 2019)

Bluegrass Community and Technical College – Registrar (Jan 2016 – Sept 2017)

ITT Technical Institute – Admissions Representative, and most recently - Registrar (Oct 2014 – Jan 2016)

JAMIE NICOLE TAYLOR, PhD, MA