

## ABSTRACT

Christina J. Spearman. EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS REGARDING COLLEGIATE TEACHING AND CARING AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY (Under the direction of Dr. Michael Pooch). Department of Educational Leadership, April, 2010.

Parental involvement in higher education has greatly increased, specifically in the last 30 years. Some parents are hyper-involved in their children's lives, and educational leaders often spend almost as much time working with parents as they do students. The body of literature on parental involvement in higher education is limited. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the expectations parents have for a public university's teaching and caring functions while also examining the differences, if any, of parents of first-generation college students and parents with college experience.

This quantitative study explored the expectations of parents of first-year students at a large, public university in the South. This study utilized a survey instrument developed by Young in 2006, the Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC) survey. The study was predicated on Chickering and Reisser's Theory of Psychosocial Development, and focused on vector three, moving through autonomy toward interdependence. The web-based survey was used to collect data from 1,137 parents at the beginning of the spring 2010 semester. Parents rated their expectations regarding teaching and caring in terms of importance. Expectations were analyzed in light of the dependent variables of parent gender, first time college parent experience, and parent college experience, and t tests were utilized to determine statistically significant differences. Expectations for teaching and caring were analyzed using a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

The findings suggest that teaching and caring are more important to mothers than fathers and more important to parents who do not have college background than parents who do. The

findings also suggest that parents who view teaching as important also view caring as important and vice versa. Additionally, the following topics are important to parents: a safe and secure campus, additional support for student academic success, student access to campus resources, the availability and integration of technology, communication and contact with administrators, and individual attention for their children.

Furthermore, the study included various implications for educational leaders, including accepting parents as constituents of higher education and developing a campus-wide approach to working with parents. The study concluded with recommendations for future research.

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS REGARDING  
COLLEGIATE TEACHING AND CARING AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation

Presented To

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

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April, 2010

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## **DEDICATION**

To Gran Ida, who spoiled me rotten and told me I was a genius.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Pooch for his guidance, questions, feedback, patience, and humor. I would also like to thank him for his commitment to helping me create the best work that I could and for tolerating my very high level of nervousness. I would like to thank Dr. Chambers for her prompt responses, countless answers, and guidance through the difficult realm of statistics. I would like to thank Dr. Seay for her attention to detail and for reminding me about the passion I have for this research topic. I would like to thank Dr. Siegel for his insightful comments and probing questions. I would like to thank my entire committee for making this process a pleasant but challenging learning experience.

I would like to thank Dr. Wayne Young for graciously allowing me to use the PECTAC survey instrument. I would like to thank Stephen Gray for all of his help and for providing me with the email addresses that made this research possible.

I would like to thank Waz Miller, my first professional supervisor, for encouraging me to pursue this dream, supporting me through difficult times, and serving as a professional role model and mentor. I would also like to thank my friends, coworkers, and church family for their prayers, support, and encouragement. Specifically, I would like to thank Michelle Wheeler, my best friend, for listening to me vent, helping me focus on the future, and making me laugh when I was stressed.

I would like to thank my family for their love and support, and especially my parents, Marion and Martha Jenkinson, for their constant encouragement and unwavering faith in me. I would also like to thank them for teaching me that education is important and challenging me to always do my best.

I would like to thank my husband, Ben, for being my best friend and biggest supporter. There is absolutely no way that I could have ever completed this without him by my side. It is his personal mission to make my dreams come true, and this dream is being realized because of his selflessness, graciousness, patience, faith, and love. I would like to thank him for proof reading all of my papers, listening to me recount my fears that I would never finish, and ultimately believing that I would see this journey through to the end.

Finally, I would like to thank God for His grace, strength, and peace. When I consider all of my blessings, I am truly overwhelmed with gratitude.



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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

The relationship between higher education institutions and parents has been evolving since the inception of higher education in America. Today's administrators, faculty, and staff not only focus their energies on helping students succeed but also spend a significant portion of their time working closely with parents, which is a recent development. According to Jackson and Murphy (2005),

Presidents, provosts, deans of academic programs and student affairs leaders and professionals at all levels are now more engaged in working directly with parents to better manage their involvement with institutions. Such challenges were almost unheard of 30 years ago. (p. 53)

Parental involvement, a term previously reserved for the K-12 lexicon, has increasingly migrated into the vocabulary of college administrators (Wartman & Savage, 2008).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the expectations parents have for a public university's teaching and caring functions while also examining the differences, if any, of parents of first-generation college students and parents with college experience. This study extends the limited current research on parent expectations and examines parent expectations at a mid-sized, public university in an effort to produce findings that can be generalized to other public universities in the same geographic region.

This study is particularly timely as professional organizations of higher education are also directing time and resources toward the parents of today's college students. The professional association, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, also known as NASPA, hosts a knowledge community focused on parent and family relations that allows

members to share research and best practices for working with parents and families (Parent and Family Relations, 2007). The knowledge community website features 23 different hot topics, compelling issues, and new trends in parent and family relations (Parent and Family Relations, 2007). Started in 1998, Administrators Promoting Parent Involvement (APPI), a professional organization for administrators of parent programs, began with 30 institutional members and now has over 80 college and universities represented (Johnson, 2004). APPI also hosts an annual conference that invites attendees to learn about more ways to involve parents and families in campus life (Administrators Promoting Parental Involvement, 2009). The National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) hosts a parent and family network, which is designed to help members become informed and responsive to the present and future interests of college students and parents (Parent and Family Network, 2007). Higher education institutions, and specifically student affairs administrators as well as professional organizations, have greatly increased the time, attention, and resources they direct toward the parents of college students, as a response to the increased parental involvement, specifically in the last 30 years (Mullendore, Banahan, & Ramsey, 2005; Pavela, 2007; Savage, 2005).

### **Research Question and Hypotheses**

To explore parental expectations in regards to the concepts of teaching and caring, the following overarching research question guided this study:

What expectations do parents hold about a university's teaching and caring functions, and how do these expectations differ in light of demographics including gender and parental education level?

This study is informed by Young's 2006 study of parental expectations of teaching and caring. Seven hypotheses guided this study. The first five null hypotheses were articulated and tested in Young's study.

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no statistically significant difference between the gender of the parents and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no statistically significant difference between first-time college parents and parents who have previously sent children to college on the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no statistically significant difference between the gender of the parents and the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

H<sub>0</sub>4: There is no statistically significant difference between first-time college parents and parents who have previously sent children to college on the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

H<sub>0</sub>5: There is no statistically significant difference between the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children versus the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

The final two null hypotheses were developed after examining the current literature on parental involvement and expectations, which is explored in-depth in chapter two.

H<sub>0</sub>6: There is no statistically significant difference between the college experience of the parents and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.



H<sub>0</sub>7: There is no statistically significant difference between the college experience of the parents and the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

The term "ability" in the research hypotheses refers to the university's provision of particular teaching or caring functions. This study did not attempt to measure the university's ability to provide teaching and caring functions. It attempted to measure parents' expectations of the university's teaching and caring functions.

Research questions and hypotheses were explored by analyzing the results of the Parent Expectations of Teaching And Caring (PECTAC) survey. Using the PECTAC, Young (2006) explored parental expectations to determine whether a university's teaching or caring functions were of greater importance to parents. Young also explored parental expectations involving teaching and caring in relationship to gender. He found that there were significant differences in the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their students and care for their students based on the gender of the parent. He also found that there was a significant difference in the importance parents place on the university's ability to care for their students versus the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their students, with parents reporting that it was more important for the university to care for their students than teach their students. Young's study was the first in-depth exploration of parent expectations. However, it was conducted at Creighton University, a Jesuit, Catholic university in the Midwest with an enrollment of approximately 6,100 students, half of which are between 18 and 24 years old (Young, 2006). To expand upon these findings, Young's survey could be administered at a different type of university – one that is larger, non-religious, and located in a different area of the country. Also, Young's study examined the differences between first-time college parents

and those who had already sent a student to college. He found there was no significant difference between these two groups. As more and more students come to campus as first-generation college students (whose parents did not attend college), it is beneficial to explore the differences, if any, between parents who attended college and those who did not.

This chapter serves as the introduction to this research study which focused on expectations of the parents of first-year students in regards to collegiate teaching and caring at a growing public university and includes the following sections: an overview of the theoretical construct that establishes the framework for the literature review, Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Theory of Psychosocial Development, an examination of the question of whether college students are children or adults with a focus on historical information and the changing role of administrators through landmark legal developments, an overview and preliminary descriptive information on the current generation of traditional-age college students, descriptive information about the parents of today's college-age students and a preview of the challenges many of the parents of today's college students provide to today's educational leaders, factors that affect parental involvement, an exploration of the current relationship between higher education leaders and many of the parents of today's college students, and research about the parents of college students that focuses on a variety of different areas.

This chapter also explores the purpose of this study with sections that detail demographic and descriptive information about the research site, the research methods, and the significance of the study. The final section of this chapter focuses on the limitations of the study and its potential contributions to student affairs practice.

## **Theoretical Construct**

As Mullendore et al. (2005) note, “As parents continue to increase their level of involvement, we [student affairs administrators] have the opportunity to think differently about the way we work with them to build an effective alliance” (p. 1). In order to conceptualize and understand how to build parental partnerships, this study provides information on the expectations of the parents of today’s college students. The theoretical construct this study is predicated on is Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) Theory of Psychosocial Development, which articulates seven vectors of student development. The first vector, developing competence, involves developing intellectual competence, physical and manual skills, and interpersonal competence. Vector two, managing emotions, encompasses identifying emotions and expressing them through appropriate channels. Moving through autonomy toward interdependence, vector three, is explained in greater detail below. Developing mature interpersonal relationships, vector four, involves appreciating the differences in other people and developing the capacity for intimacy. Vector five, establishing identity, is a culmination of the previous vectors and also includes developing comfort with self and personal stability. Developing purpose, vector six, comprises the ability to clarify goals and persist through obstacles. Vector seven, developing integrity, involves personalizing values and developing congruent actions. In chapter two, the literature review provides a specific focus on vector three, moving through autonomy toward interdependence. Developing autonomy and interdependence requires some sense of separation and independence for students, which is challenging for many of the traditional-age college students of today due to the close and connected relationships they often share with their parents (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Additionally, administrators often experience frustration while trying to promote the development of autonomy and interdependence in the midst of highly involved

parental interactions (Merriman, 2007). An exploration of this theory outlines the concepts of autonomy and interdependence and reinforces the benefits of parental partnerships to help students develop autonomy and ultimately interdependence. A review of the historical context provides a frame of reference for understanding how students and parents have changed since the inception of higher education in America and highlights heightened parental involvement as a newer phenomenon.

### **The Recent Increase in Parental Involvement**

Understanding parental involvement and the challenges it brings requires an understanding of the way higher education in America has evolved. Specifically, a focus on the changing student demographics and involvement as well as legal developments identifies factors that have influenced the evolving roles of administrators and the ways administrators relate to students and parents. An exploration of the question of whether college students are considered to be children or adults also provides insight into the tension that is sometimes felt between administrators and parents (Wartman & Savage, 2008). Rudolph (1962) notes that higher education in America began as paternalistic, taking its cue from the English tradition. *In loco parentis*, literally meaning in place of the parents, was the acceptable standard in higher education until the 1960s (Boyer, 1990). Early students were white males from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Higher education evolved over time to meet the needs of the growing American society (Rudolph, 1962). The student body began to include women, students of color, and eventually a number of minorities, thanks in part to scholarships and legislation including the Morrill Acts and the GI Bill (Rudolph, 1962).

Over the course of the 1960s, the concept of *in loco parentis* was abandoned through a series of court decisions and changes in policies on campus. This development shifted the

university and student relationship, with students being recognized more as adults, and administrators releasing many of the paternalistic traditions that had persisted since the inception of higher education in America (Boyer, 1990). Adding to this change in the nature of the relationship between universities and students was federal law essentially redefining the relationship between universities and parents. The Buckley Amendment, also known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 or FERPA, limits the information that can be disclosed to parents by higher education institutions, again affirming that college students are adults. While legally recognized as adults, the courts have also found institutions to be liable for some student actions.

The recent surge of parent activity and involvement in higher education in the past 30 years runs counter to legal and policy developments over the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, and has resulted in an outpouring of new parent services and offices on campuses across the United States. According to the 2005 National Survey of College and University Parent Programs, which polled 186 institutions, over 60% reported that they had not begun offering parent services until after 1990 (Savage, 2005). Only 10% reported offering parent programs continuously since 1970 (Savage, 2005). In addition to new offices and programs, campuses that previously offered only a handful of activities for parents reported expansion and development of multitudes of programs designed to reach the needs of today's parents (Savage, 2005).

This increase in parental involvement is concomitant with the arrival of today's college students, sometimes known as "millennials," which includes any student born after 1982 (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Millennials are the most diverse generation in history and they may also be the largest (Coomes & DeBard, 2004; Yax, 2004). While not all practitioners and researchers fully ascribe to the millennial model, certain shared generational characteristics have been noted.

Many of today's college students grew up as wanted children who were made to feel special and sheltered. They have also been some of the most protected and programmed children ever (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Out of this protection stems a constant connection to their parents.

### **The Parents of Today's College Students**

Generational changes and parenting shifts have converged to create many highly involved parents. These parents are sometimes known as "helicopter parents" because they are hyper-involved and often hover over their children (Pope, 2005). While not all of the parents of today's college students can be categorized as helicopter parents, many of them are more involved in higher education than ever before. Currently, parents can be seen visiting campuses for tours, helping their children through the admissions process, attending parent orientation during the summer, and returning to campus for family weekends (Savage, 2005). Many of the parents of today's college students, used to intervening in their students' lives since birth, only continue their hyper-involvement once their students enter higher education. In fact, today's parents have a major influence on students' selection of a college (Turrentine, Schnure, Ostroth, & Ward-Roof, 2000) and now take on the role of completing routine campus business for their students and attempting to continue managing the students' experiences as they did during high school (Jackson & Murphy, 2005). Educational leaders who work in student affairs now spend almost as much time dealing with parents as they do students.

Many of today's parents also reflect a shift in parenting philosophies having integrated attachment parenting, which focuses on forming and nurturing strong connections between parents and children which often results in continued parental dependence and societal changes (API's Eight Principles of Parenting, 2008; Howe & Strauss, 2000). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2001 more than one-half of men ages 18 to 24, and almost one-half of women

ages 18-24, lived with their parents, a sharp contrast to the empty nest syndrome of the past (Step, 2002).

Many of the parents of today's students are challenged to define the length of adolescence. In the past, adolescence was generally believed to end around the age of 18. However, the Society for Adolescent Medicine now treats patients 10 to 26 years old (Step, 2002). A National Academy of Sciences Committee reviewing adolescent programs discussed extending the age of adolescence to 30 (Step, 2002). Prolonged adolescence is one of the factors complicating the relationships between parents, students, and higher education institutions.

The closeness between many of today's students and their parents has been enhanced and increased by technological changes and developments, including cell phones, email, instant messenger (Terry, Dukes, Valdez, & Wilson, 2005), and newer technological trends such as blogging and Facebook (Young, 2006). College students today are often a tech-savvy group and utilize technology to have frequent communication with their parents, and most college students today have more communication with their parents than any previous generation (Trice, 2002).

Many of today's college students are joint decision makers with their parents and recognize that their parents are "very demanding" (Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. 4). Part of this demand stems from the increasing cost of higher education and its contribution to the development of a sense of entitlement (Daniel, Evans, & Scott, 2001). The concept of academic capitalism and the heavy recruiting and marketing done by higher education institutions contributes to the consumerist mindset of today's students and parents (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Students tend to approach campuses as consumers of a product, and parents, who are often providing some if not all of the financial support, also approach campuses as consumers (Levine & Cureton, 1998). Many of today's parents view college as a major investment, thus

they are quick to intervene to insure they are getting their money's worth (Mullendore et al., 2005).

While many of today's parents are certainly involved in their students' higher education experience, it is also important to note that socioeconomic status and parental education level impact the type and scope of parental involvement in important areas such as college preparation and the college selection process (Lareau, 1987; Wartman & Savage, 2008). Research has shown that parents of higher socioeconomic status and education levels are more involved in the lives of their children's educational journeys and specifically more involved in college preparation opportunities and the college selection process (Auerbach, 2004; Avery, Fairbanks, & Zeckhauser, 2003; Karabel, 2005; Lareau, 1987; McDonough, 1997; Wartman & Savage, 2008).

### **The Current Relationship between Administrators and the Parents of Today's College Students**

As parental perspectives on adolescence have changed, Johnson (2004) notes, "It is the rare administrator or faculty member who does not have a troubling story to share about inappropriate parent involvement" (p. B11). In order to effectively integrate parents as partners in their students' higher education experiences, colleges and universities are encouraged to educate parents about appropriate expectations and behaviors (Coburn, 2006; Lowery, 2004; Mullendore et al., 2005). Although education is the primary purpose of higher education institutions, few do very little, if anything, to educate parents (Johnson, 2004). Educating parents about forming effective partnerships with higher education administrators begins with exploring parent expectations (Young, 2006). Jackson and Murphy (2005) state that administrators should ask themselves what are reasonable expectations for parents to have of our



institution. Jackson and Murphy also state that the answer to this question is partly found in exploring the parents of each specific institution and learning about their expectations. Howe and Strauss (2003) note that colleges and universities must manage parental expectations, however it has been noted that there is virtually no research on what parents expect from the college experience (Forbes, 2001; Young, 2006). Anecdotal evidence and impugning accounts of inappropriate parental involvement are often shared, yet research about parental expectations of higher education is lacking (Forbes, 2001; Johnson, 2004; Lowery, 2004). Young states that failing to study parent expectations is "...dangerous in light of the mounting evidence that students and parents of tomorrow are different from generations past" (p. 61). Colleges and universities need an accurate assessment of what parents expect. Research that explores parental expectations is needed to establish a baseline of information and help institutions of higher education proactively design programs, support structures, and outreach opportunities.

The body of literature on parental involvement in the higher education experience once students matriculate or research on parental expectations of higher education is limited. However research on the high school experience and the college preparation and selection processes illustrates that many parents of lower socioeconomic status and education levels are less involved and have differing expectations than parents of higher socioeconomic status and education levels (Lareau, 1987; Tierney, 2002). This study not only explores parental expectations in general but also explores the differences, if any, of parental expectations in terms of parental education level by exploring expectations of parents of first-generation college students and parents with college experience.

## **Research Site**

One of Young's (2006) recommendations for future research is that his study should be replicated in a different setting. Young specifically noted that the parents of students at public institutions of varying sizes and in other geographical regions should complete the PECTAC to gain insight about their expectations. Additionally, Young chose Creighton University as his research site because Creighton has a large number of traditional-age students and was beginning to reach out to parents in a more in-depth manner. However, no one at the University had explored parental expectations. In considering a research site that was different from Creighton in relation to type, size, and location, but similar in terms of parent outreach and partnerships, a large, public university in the South was chosen.

The research site is a doctoral degree granting university with a total enrollment of 27,677 students for the 2007-2008 academic year (Fact Book 2007-2008, 2007). The university has a growing distance education program yet is also seeing increases in the number of traditional-age students with increasingly large freshman classes enrolling each year (Fact Book 2006-2007, 2006; Fact Book 2007-2008, 2007). The university has an Office of Parent Services, which exists to communicate with and support parents. There are also summer orientation sessions for both parents and students and a yearly Family Weekend. There has been no formal method of exploring parental expectations and most issues are addressed in a reactive manner once a complaint has been received by a university employee (A. Hunt, personal communication, September 20, 2006). Thus, the research site fits the criteria of being similar to Creighton in terms of parent services yet different as a large, public university in the South.

## **Research Method**

The Office of Parent Services collected the email addresses of parents of incoming first-year students at summer orientation. Parents of current first-year students were contacted via email and asked to fill out an on-line survey, the Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC) survey. The PECTAC was developed by Young and utilized to gather data in his 2006 study. Parents of current first-year students were contacted in January and given one month to complete the PECTAC. The results of the study were analyzed and used to determine the parental expectations of teaching and caring for parents of first-year students at the research site. The results of this study were also examined in light of Young's study to determine if there were differences related to the nature of the institution studied.

## **Significance of the Study**

In the midst of generational, technological, legal, and economic changes, little research has been done to explore the expectations of the parents of today's college students in regards to higher education. As noted by Young (2006), Turrentine et al. (2000), and Habben (1997), there is little research or writing on the parents of college students. Also, Young (2006) and Forbes (2001) state that there is virtually no information on what parents expect from the college experience. Many parents are involved, outspoken, and co-purchasers of their students education. This study explores their expectations, builds upon previous research, examines the parents of first-generation college students, and provides implications for practice. As noted by Mullendore (1998), parents who understand institutional functions, interact with faculty and staff, and develop open communication lines with their students can be institutional advocates and positively impact retention. This study attempts to provide practical information for educational leaders and foster knowledge that will help them form partnerships with the parents

of today's college students and help support parents as their students navigate the difficult task of moving through autonomy and developing interdependence. Additionally, as the beginning of this chapter points out, higher education has devoted a large amount of staff, time, money, and resources to working with parents. Learning how to do this most effectively is beneficial as higher education administrators, especially those who work in student affairs, are often asked to more with less.

### **Limitations**

There is a lack of research addressing parental expectations. Most college and university policies and procedures established for working with parents flow out of anecdotal knowledge, past experience, or assumptions. This study begins to address this area and continue where Young's study left off. This research study does have limitations. The findings of this study are applicable to the research site but may not produce results that can be generalized to the entire population of parents of today's college students. Additionally, if parents had views that were not captured in the survey, those views were not addressed. The survey was web-based and required Internet access to complete. Parents who were not comfortable utilizing technology may have chosen not to complete the survey and parents who did not provide an email address were not contacted. Finally, while there are trends and patterns of behavior for many of today's college students and many of today's parents of college students, not all parents subscribe to the values of attachment parenting or fit the model of hyper-involved parents that is often portrayed. Ultimately, parental interactions with educational leaders are impacted by individual experiences and may not always fit a standard model. Thus, the results of this survey may not be applicable to each individual parental interaction. With these limitations in mind, this research contributes to our knowledge by confirming and/or disaffirming Young's (2006) findings and testing their

broader and narrower applications. In so doing, this study helps inform practice by adding to the research about parental expectations and offering concrete data for administrators to review when planning programs and initiatives that target the parents of today's college students.

### **Conclusion**

In 2001, Daniel et al. noted that many of the parents of today's college students have been more involved in their children's education in the K-12 system, and a natural progression suggests that colleges and universities will soon experience even more parental involvement. In 2007, Merriman reported the results of a nationwide survey of upper-level student affairs administrators and found that 93% of respondents had experienced an increase in parent interactions in the last five years. Scott and Daniel (2001) note that, "In today's environment, parents expect to be involved in their student's college experience. They do not abdicate their control to the institution as readily as in the past. Thus, partnering with parents affects much more than resolving isolated issues presented by families" (Scott & Daniel, 2001, p. 88). Student affairs administrators and educational leaders are encouraged to partner with parents to promote student success. This study seeks to support the mission of partnering with parents by providing additional information about parental expectations related to the areas of teaching and caring. This study provides data to supplement the anecdotal evidence about the parents of today's college students and help educational leaders understand the expectations of important college constituents: parents.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

In 1995, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, also known as NASPA, published a paper entitled, “The Power of Association: Defining Our Relationship with Students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” In revisiting the paper in light of the Virginia Tech tragedy, Gary Pavela (2007) notes, “Twelve years later it seems to us the student-university relationship can’t be properly understood without including a third constituency: parents” (para. 1).

This review of the literature explores the current research literature and highlights the importance of studying the expectations of the parents of today’s college students by focusing on the unique challenges many of today’s college students and their parents present to higher education administrators and reviews the current research on the parents of college students and the limited research on parental expectations of higher education administrators. The review is presented in six sections. The first section explores the theoretical framework of Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) Theory of Psychosocial Development, including an overview of the theory, a synopsis of relevant studies that have been conducted utilizing Chickering and Reisser’s theory, and a summary of studies focused on autonomy development and interdependence. This section ends with a review of current psychological views of adolescent development, which supports the concepts of autonomy development and the importance of interdependence in young adults while highlighting positive student development as a shared goal of administrators and the parents of today’s college students. The second section features research about the current generation of traditional-aged college students, sometimes called millennials, centering on the idea of examining shared generational characteristics. This section is followed by a discussion

about many of the parents of today's college students, sometimes referred to as helicopter parent (Cline & Fay, 1990) and lists several of the specific challenges that many of today's parents of college students face, such as the cluttered nest syndrome, the lack of clarity concerning the age when adolescence ends, and technological developments that support connectivity between parents and children. The fourth section provides a context for understanding how the relationships among students, parents, and administrators have changed over time. While parental involvement is well-defined and even expected in K-12 education, there is not an overarching view of parental involvement in higher education (Wartman & Savage, 2008).

The fifth section details the current relationship between higher education leaders and many of the parents of today's college students. This section highlights the anecdotal evidence presented by administrators, faculty, and even legislators who have been asked to intervene in higher education settings at the requests of parents. This section ends with a focus on the recommended strategy for working with the parents of today's college students, which is forming strong parental partnerships. The fifth section reflects the handbook or guidebook format of the current information published by educational leaders in relation to working with parents. This information is based more on experience and anecdotes than research. The section also addresses the research on the parents of college students and highlights the lack of research, especially in the area of parental expectations.

The final section of the literature review explores the research that has been conducted on the parents of college students. This section provides an overview of the research focused on areas of parental impact on student's pursuit of higher education, impact on student alcohol consumption, parental attachment, impact on adjustment and transition issues, parental alcohol use, parents as referral agents, conversations with parents, and parental goals. This section also

examines the limited research on parental expectations, and specifically references Young's (2006) study that examined parental expectations of collegiate teaching and care at Creighton University. Young's study was one of the first to examine parental expectations in an in-depth manner, and while his study provided much needed empirical research about what parents expect from higher education institutions, it focused on one type of institution.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Student development theory provides a framework for understanding the choices, behaviors, and feelings of college students (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). It is particularly important for student affairs professionals who deal with students outside of the classroom and seek to supplement classroom learning with out-of-class growth experiences (Evans, et al., 1998). Student development theory helps to provide direction for college administrators and define the purposes of the educational environment. Chickering and Reisser (1993) note that having a developmental philosophy at the core of the college experience provides meaning and transforms the college environment into more than just a dispensary of services, a training ground for jobs that may not exist, or a holding tank for those unsure of their next steps.

The theoretical framework that undergirds this review of the literature is Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Theory of Psychosocial Development, specifically the third vector, moving through autonomy toward interdependence. An understanding of the importance of this theory and the concepts of autonomy and interdependence is crucial for understanding some of the unique challenges that many of today's college students and their parents bring to higher education today, as well as understanding the concerns of many higher education administrators as they seek to facilitate the development of autonomy and interdependence in the students they



work with. Chickering and Reisser's theory is one of the predominant theories of student development.

### **Background of Student Development Theory**

In their book, *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice*, Evans et al. (1998) provide a brief history of the formation of student development theory. As they note, student development theory began in the early twentieth century when theorists from the fields of psychology and sociology started exploring the collegiate environment. As a reaction to the vocational guidance movement in the 1920s which focused mostly on vocational preparedness, philosophers asserted that the rational and emotional selves of students needed to be integrated and that higher education must address the multi-dimensional needs of students, not just vocational preparation. From 1925 to 1936, there was extensive research conducted at various institutions to examine students' abilities and performance, resulting in the American Council on Education's 1937 statement, "The Student Personnel Point of View." This report asserted that educators must guide the "whole student" and continue to promote the personal and professional development of students. The American Council on Education revised the "Student Personnel Point of View" in 1949 with an expanded focus on the objectives and goals of student affairs administration.

Student development theories began to be articulated during the 1960s and the field of student development theory experienced an explosive time of growth from the late 1960s to today (Evans et al., 1998; McEwen, 1996a). While there is no one overarching model of student development, existing developmental theories can be grouped into several categories, including psychosocial theories, cognitive-structural theories, and typology theories (Evans, 1996; Evans et al., 1998; McEwen, 1996a). Psychosocial theory examines the personal and interpersonal lives

of individuals (Evans, 1996; Evans et al., 1998). According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), “Psychosocial theories view development as a series of developmental tasks or stages, including qualitative changes in thinking, feeling, behaving, valuing, and relating to others and oneself” (p. 2). Psychosocial theorists claim that human development continues throughout the entire life span and that basic psychosocial principals guide this development (Erikson, 1980; Evans, 1996; Evans et al., 1998; McEwen, 1996a, 1996b; Rodgers, 1990). Many psychosocial theories flowed out of the psychological tradition that began with Freud (Evans et al., 1998). Erikson (1968, 1980), a student of Freud, proposed a theory of identity development that described the changing patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving in college-age students. In addition to Erikson, Sanford (1962) and Marcia (1966) published works on identity development beyond adolescence, but Chickering built upon these theories and produced perhaps the most well-known and influential work on the psychosocial development of college students (Evans et al., 1998; Foubert, Nixon, Sisson, & Barnes, 2005; Martin, 2000; McEwen, 1996a., 1996b).

Psychosocial theory is most relevant as a theoretical framework for this study, because it focuses on the personal and interpersonal lives of students as well as the importance of relationships with others, including relationships between children and parents. Further, Chickering and Reisser’s theory is an appropriate psychosocial theory because it focuses on the development of autonomy in the context of interdependence and specifically addresses parental relationships. This study examines parental expectations of teaching and caring and provides information about the expectations parents have for instruction, communication, and oversight of their children. These expectations also provide insight into the types of relationships the parents of college students want to maintain with their children, and provide information about potential challenges and partnerships for the development of autonomy in today’s students.

## **Chickering and Reisser's Theory of Psychosocial Development**

Arthur Chickering first outlined his theory of psychosocial development in his 1969 book, *Education and Identity*, based on his research of achievement tests, personality inventories, student diaries, and detailed interviews. In his book, Chickering outlined seven vectors of psychosocial development that students travel through during their time at college. Chickering used the word vector to suggest direction and magnitude, but vectors can be overlapping and repeated at later points of development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The vectors are somewhat sequential and do build upon each other (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The seven vectors he proposed were developing competence, managing emotions, developing autonomy, establishing identity, freeing interpersonal relationships, developing purpose, and developing integrity.

While Chickering's theory of psychosocial development maintained prominence in relevance and popularity, it was not without criticism. Chickering, like many researchers of his day, faced the criticism that the results of his research could be skewed because the research population was almost exclusively made up of white males (Evans et al., 1998). In 1993, with the help of Linda Reisser, Chickering revised his theory to incorporate new research findings and include various student populations (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans et al., 1998). Chickering and Reisser (1993) relied heavily on Pascarella and Terenzini's 1991 study *How College Affects Students: Findings and Insights from Twenty Years of Research* as a foundation for updating the seven vectors. Reisser also had over 120 students and professionals complete a developmental worksheet to provide updated qualitative support for the revised theory (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggested that the vectors are maps that help to provide context for student behaviors, but cautioned against attempting to oversimplify college student

development. Students can move along the vectors at different rates and interact with movement along several vectors at once. Chickering and Reisser stated that, “Development is a process of infinite complexity,” yet also noted they do believe that college students live out reoccurring themes and the vectors best encapsulate those themes in a comprehensible manner (p. 34).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) re-ordered the seven vectors and also renamed two of the vectors. The revised theory states that the seven vectors are developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Establishing identity was moved to a later vector, in part because identity encapsulates the concept of forming mature interpersonal relationships. Also, Chickering and Reisser argue that most colleges will prod students along the first four vectors simply due to the nature of higher education. Hopefully, movement along those four vectors will equip students with the tools to begin establishing their own identity.

According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), vector one, developing competence, involves developing intellectual competence, physical and manual skills, and interpersonal competence. Intellectual competence involves mastering content and developing new frames of reference. Physical and manual skills include athletic and artistic achievements, fitness, and competition. Interpersonal competence encapsulates listening and communicating effectively and also the ability to flourish in group relationships.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) state that managing emotions, vector two, entails first acknowledging emotions and then learning appropriate channels for releasing fear and irritation. They note that some students have to gain control over their emotional expressions and other

students need to tap into their emotions and begin expressing emotions as opposed to repressing them.

Vector three, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, focuses on increased emotional independence and stresses the importance of connectedness. Vector three will be explored in detail later in this chapter. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), vector four, developing mature interpersonal relationships involves two components. The first is tolerance and appreciation of differences. The second is a capacity of intimacy. Tolerance and appreciation of differences allows students to respond to people as individuals and not as stereotypes. The capacity for intimacy relates to healthy relationships and the ability to make lasting commitments based on honesty and regard for others.

Establishing identity, vector five, is in part a culmination of the previous vectors. Identity development involves seven aspects: comfort with body and appearance, comfort with gender and sexual orientation, sense of self in terms of social context, clarification of self-concept through roles and life-style, sense of self in response to feedback from valued others, self-acceptance and self esteem, and personal stability and integration.

Vector six, developing purpose, involves an understanding of who students want to be and where they want to go in life. Developing purpose entails the ability to clarify goals, make plans, and persist through obstacles. Students who develop purpose have an understanding of their vocation, whether paid or unpaid.

The final vector, developing integrity, is tied closely to vectors five and six. Developing integrity involves three steps. The first is humanizing values. This involves balancing individual interests with the interests of others. The second is personalizing values. This involves a conscious affirming of one's own core values. The third is developing congruence, which

involves matching personal values with socially responsible behaviors. The present study focuses on vector three as an integral aspect of student development as well as a potential challenge for today's college students due to their high levels of communication and connectivity with their parents.

### **Vector Three: Moving through Autonomy toward Interdependence**

Moving through autonomy toward interdependence, vector three, was originally titled developing autonomy. Chickering and Reisser (1993) expanded the name to include the importance of interdependence and reinforce that autonomy for the sake of autonomy is not the ultimate goal. Their research in this area was heavily influenced by the work of Robert Kegan, a cognitive theorist. Kegan's (1982) book, *The Evolving Self*, proposed a five stage model of "evolutionary truces" that require people to change the way they construct meaning in order to move from stage to stage. Kegan portrayed the struggle of autonomy coupled with interdependence saying, "the yearning to be included, to be a part of, close to, joined with, to be held, admitted, accompanied the yearning to be independent or autonomous, to experience one's distinctness, the self-chosen-ness of one's directions, one's individual integrity" (p. 107).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) also integrated the work of Jane Loevinger's cognitive stage theory. Loevinger (1976) presented a nine stage theory that focused on impulse control, character development, interpersonal style, conscious preoccupations, and cognitive style (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Loevinger described moving from the conformist stage, where individuals only want to belong, to the conscientious stage, where behavior is more aligned with internal values, as the process of being self-aware. Chickering and Reisser integrated this concept into their third vector, because of its natural fit with the development of college students

who often move away from their family influences, reflect on the values taught in their homes, and consider different points of view before adopting their own ideas.

As stated by Chickering and Reisser (1993), moving through autonomy toward interdependence is characterized by increased emotional independence, which includes less need for reassurance and approval from others, and instrumental independence, which includes self-direction and the development of problem-solving ability. The sense of autonomy is coupled with an understanding of interdependence, or their connectedness to others. Chickering and Reisser stress the importance of separation and individuation. Separation involves the physical distance. Many students experience this when they attend college. Individuation involves becoming one's own person and taking responsibility for self-support.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) identified three components required for moving through autonomy toward interdependence. The first is emotional independence. This can be described as freedom from the continual need for reassurance, affection, and approval from others. The beginning of emotional independence requires some level of separation from parents with an increasing reliance on peers, authorities, and institutional resources. Students must rely on cognitive skills and begin gaining confidence in their self-sufficiency. Students who come from difficult backgrounds or who experienced a great deal of tension in their families may want to immediately disengage and assert their emotional independence. However, students who felt safe and loved in their families of origin are less likely to disengage emotionally or psychologically from their parents at all. As later sections will explore, establishing emotional independence may be difficult for many millennial students, as they often share close connections to their parents, which are aided by technology, even after entering higher education (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

The second component is instrumental independence (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This includes the ability to solve problems in a self-directed manner and the freedom and confidence to pursue opportunity or adventure. Self-confidence and self-sufficiency become important tools as students seek to solve their own problems and manage solutions for their everyday lives, as emotional independence and instrumental independence are linked and mutually facilitating. Disengaging from parents is an important step in developing instrumental independence.

Autonomy can also be defined as the independence of maturity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Students who display autonomy exhibit coping behaviors for social and personal challenges. Students who display autonomy also develop renegotiated relationships with their parents. They move from a child-to-adult relationship to an adult-to-adult relationship. The fifth section explores the anecdotal evidence presented by college administrators that supports the idea that many of today's college students and their parents often struggle to renegotiate relationships in which the students are viewed as adults.

The third component of developing autonomy is interdependence. Interdependence is defined as an awareness of one's place in and commitment to the welfare of the larger community (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Interdependence requires a season of independence. As students move through their world independently, they will encounter other individuals and begin to see that their actions do have an impact on those around them. Interdependence requires respecting the autonomy of others while also being willing to give and take. Interdependence gives context to the new renegotiated relationships with parents. Although students are autonomous beings, they are not completely disconnected from the parents and family units. Students can begin to appreciate the interdependence only after first experiencing the freedom of autonomy. Students may still choose to involve their parents in their decision making or



continue to call their parents for advice. However, the new adult-to-adult relationship means that parents may serve as one of many trusted advisors. Also, students may begin to reintegrate their parents as influences because their experience of autonomy has proved to them that their parents do have valuable insight. Thus, the third vector focuses on relationships between students and parents and the challenge of renegotiating these relationships in an adult context. Also, this vector identifies developmental goals that both college administrators and parents can assist students with, which lays the groundwork for discussions of building partnerships between campus administrators and parents.

**Research featuring Chickering and Reisser's theory.** Much research has been done to validate and challenge Chickering and Reisser's theory. Lounsbury, Huffstetler, Leong, and Gibson (2005) studied identity development in 434 first-year students at a large, public university by administering the Adolescent Personal Style Inventory and examining the students' GPAs. Lounsbury et al. reported that identity formation is an important task for college students and that Chickering and Reisser's vectors represent multiple pathways to identity development. Lounsbury et al. affirmed that Chickering and Reisser's concept of identity development as an overarching criterion of student development is highly appropriate and pertinent.

The Student Development Task and Lifestyle Inventory, also known as the SDTLI, was developed by Winston, Miller, and Prince (1987) and based on the original iteration of Chickering's theory. The SDTLI uses self-reported data to provide information about students' development in several of the vectors. Thus, many studies utilizing the conceptual framework of Chickering and Reisser (1993) utilized the SDTLI as a research tool. Cooper, Healy, and Simpson (1994) utilized the SDTLI and conducted a three year study of 256 students at a doctoral-level institution with an enrollment of 12,000 students. These authors found that

students developed across the vectors as postulated by Chickering and Reisser, with members of student organizations reporting more development and reaffirming that involvement in college promotes development in the seven vectors (Cooper et al., 1994). Martin (2000) utilized the SDTLI and conducted a longitudinal study of 354 freshmen at a small, liberal arts college. Martin reported that developing purpose and competence are influenced by college experiences. Foubert et al. (2005) utilized the SDTLI to study 274 students across a four year period at a mid-sized public university in the southeast. Foubert et al. found that students reported developing in the later vectors, specifically developing purpose, throughout their college careers, not just at the end. This supports the concept that vectors are not hierarchical, yet Foubert et al. challenged the idea that the vectors were in the correct order and postulated that development be viewed more horizontally.

**Research focused on vector three: Moving through autonomy toward interdependence.** Much research has been done to validate and challenge Chickering and Reisser's concept of moving through autonomy toward interdependence. Recent research has focused on gender differences in terms of the process of developing autonomy. Josselson (1987) and Gilligan (1982) posited that gender differences affect the way that students develop autonomy, with a focus on how female students develop autonomy. Josselson affirmed Chickering and Reisser's concept of moving through autonomy toward interdependence by framing development as the problem of separating and becoming different while also maintaining connections. Straub and Rodgers (1986) administered the SDTLI and found that female students scored significantly higher on the relationships scale than the autonomy scale, implying that women may first need to develop autonomy in their relationships before developing autonomy in their own right. Kenny and Donaldson (1992) studied the relationships

of parental attachment, psychological separation, and adjustment in 162 first year women at a private, urban, Jesuit university. Their findings supported previous research (Kenny, 1987, 1990; Kenny & Donaldson, 1992) that most college women remain positively and closely attached to their parents. Kenny and Donaldson (1992) also suggested that educational leaders should help female students preserve and enhance feelings of connectedness to parents during times of transitional struggle, and that interdependence is more beneficial for female students than complete autonomy and separation from parents. Taub (1997) studied the development of relationships and autonomy in 331 female students at a large, public, predominantly White university and found that senior students were significantly more autonomous than first-year students and even junior students, findings that are consistent with Chickering and Reisser's theory. However, statistically significant gains in autonomy were not seen until the women's senior year, which challenges Chickering and Reisser's concept that autonomy is developed early in the college experience (Taub, 1997). Additionally, Taub found that although autonomy did increase significantly with class years, parental attachment did not decrease significantly. This study suggested that college women may become more autonomous without experiencing a break in parental attachment (Taub, 1997). Based on her findings, Taub suggested that college administrators find ways to include parents in the students' experiences throughout the college years. Taub's findings support the concept of interdependence. Although students must separate from their parents in some ways to begin to develop autonomy, students also have the opportunities to renegotiate new adult relationships with their parents and thus develop interdependence as well.

Other research has focused on themes and processes of autonomy development in traditional-age college students. Mather and Winston (1998) interviewed 10 seniors enrolled at a

large, research university in the Southeast. Mather and Winston determined that there is no single path for autonomy development. Additionally, Mather and Winston found that the process of autonomy development is vital and crucial for college students and the process is remarkably similar to the model proposed by Chickering and Reisser. Mather and Winston reported that the ease of difficulty in which students negotiated new relationships with parents was contingent to a large extent on parental support for developing autonomy. They also reported that the students who appeared to be most autonomous typically had parents who were supportive of autonomy development. Finally, Mather and Winston found that students whose parents supported autonomy development were likely to proceed through their development without significant emotional separation and thus less attention was needed to renegotiate an adult relationship with their parents.

### **Current Psychological Views of Adolescent Development**

Current psychological views of adolescent development assert that complete parental detachment is not ideal for adolescent development. One of the greatest challenges of adolescent development is to separate from the family while connecting with it in new ways (Hauser, 1991). Psychiatry professor Hauser (1991), author of *Adolescents and Their Families*, notes that, until recently, many theories of adolescent development viewed gains in independence as requiring detachment from the family, with a focus on breaking the dependent bonds between the adolescent and the family. These theories overlooked the fact that throughout the process of gaining independence, adolescents continue to forge new and close connections with parents and siblings (Hauser, 1991). These older theories of adolescent development viewed the development of independence as a linear process in which teenagers exchanged dependence on their families for dependence on their friends (Hauser, 1991). However, current theories of

adolescent development view the process of acquiring independence as a complex combination of adolescent differentiation and enduring family bonds as adolescents make progress toward autonomy while also relying on and transforming existing parental relationships (Hauser, 1991). Chase-Lansdale, Wakschlag, and Brooks-Gunn (1995) echo the need for autonomy and connectivity and state one end goal of adolescent development is the establishment of an identity that is separate from parents, with a strong sense of autonomy, but integrated in newly-defined more peer-like close emotional bonds with their parents.

Contemporary views in developmental psychology support the development of autonomy and interdependence in adolescents, although psychologists utilize the terms individuation and connectedness (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Hill & Holmbeck, 1986; Kenny & Donaldson, 1992). According to Kenny and Donaldson (1992), “Individuation takes place optimally within a caring parent-offspring relationship that is transformed rather than broken during adolescence” (p. 33). Additionally, Kaplan and Klein (1985) reported that a differentiated sense of self can be achieved without severing emotional ties to parents.

College has traditionally been a transition to adulthood, with campus life and academic experiences providing students with knowledge, skills, tools, and challenges that create a sturdy foundation on which students build their personal and professional lives. But that foundation is eroding because parents are now wielding the tools—such as problem solving, resourcefulness, critical thinking, and exploration—and responding to those challenges. (Merriman, 2007)

Adolescent development eventually requires some degree of withdrawal and separation from parental influences. Americans’ most common separation ritual is sending children off to college (Hine, 1999). As Hauser notes, the path from adolescence to adulthood is often framed

by the family landscape (Hauser, 1991). The literature on adolescent development supports the difficult challenge that parents have to renegotiate relationships with their children in the context of an adult framework. The college years are a natural opportunity for parents to promote autonomy development in their children. The current literature on adolescent development supports the development of autonomy and interdependence, the key concepts of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) third vector. These shared outcomes provide a starting point for forming parental partnerships, as administrators and parents may share the same goals, which include the positive development of students.

Although moving through autonomy toward interdependence is only one of the vectors of Chickering and Reisser's model, it is an important vector that offers challenges for today's students and parents. Chickering and Reisser's revised theory was published in 1993, well before the first millennial students entered higher education. Now the largest generation has entered higher education with many of their highly involved parents hovering over them, and facilitating the development of autonomy seems like a daunting challenge for college administrators, as the following sections will explore (Sells, 2002). However, moving through autonomy toward interdependence is beneficial for students and parents. More importantly, autonomy is one of the hallmarks of adulthood. As Chickering and Reisser (1993) point out,

When students can rely on their own ability to get the information they need, move toward goals of their own choosing, and navigate from one place to another, physically and psychologically, they can function as responsible adults with the will to survive and succeed. (p. 117)

## Today's Traditional-Age College Students

One way of exploring today's traditional-age college students is to consider shared generational characteristics. The term generations refers both to people born at a common moment in time and a group of people who live through common momentous events (Levine & Cureton, 1988). Since World War I, sociologists and researchers have been searching out the distinctive characteristics in each new generation of young people, identifying ways the current generation appears different from the last, and giving the new generation a fitting and sometimes humorous name (Levine & Cureton, 1998).

Howe and Strauss (2000, 2003) are authors and speakers who address generational issues. They have written numerous books addressing several generational cohorts. For their book, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, Howe and Strauss (2000) surveyed 660 high school students and 200 elementary, middle, and high school teachers and collected statistical information, anecdotes, and historical information about the millennial generation. This book provided an in-depth look at the millennial generation in the context of past generations, current issues, and future opportunities.

Millennials, a term first coined by the American Broadcasting Company, are people born in or after 1982 (Howe & Strauss, 2000). As noted by Howe and Strauss (2000), millennials are unlike any other generation in living memory. Many people worried that millennials would be a continuation of Generation X, people born between the years of 1961 to 1981, who are characterized by pessimism, selfishness, and neglect from authority figures (Howe & Strauss, 2000). However, millennials represented a sharp break from Generation X in many ways, one of the most obvious being the numerical increase of the millennial generation, which numbered 76 million by the year 2000 (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Millennials are more numerous, better

educated, and more ethnically diverse than any other generation. Millennials report identifying closely with their parents' values, with nine out of 10 saying they trust and feel close to their parents (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Many millennials also consider their parents to be some of their role models and they embrace their parents' involvement in their lives (O'Briant, 2003).

Howe and Strauss (2000) describe the millennials using seven distinguishing traits: special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, achieving, pressured, and conventional. These traits have been mentioned and studied by other researchers, however not everyone ascribes to Howe and Strauss' views of the millennial generation (Hoover, 2009). As Hoover (2009) notes, "Everyone in higher education has pondered 'the Millennials,' people born between 1982 and 2004 or thereabouts (the years themselves are a subject of debate)" (para. 5). He notes that, "...Millennials talk is contagious" (Hoover, 2009, para. 5). Many practitioners have embraced Howe and Strauss' ideas because they provided a formula for understanding today's students in an era of increased marketing and competition for college applicants (Hoover, 2009). Some researchers have affirmed the concept of generational characteristics with Twenge (2006) concluding that when people were born shapes them as least as much as where they were born or who their parents were. She also supported the concept of today's students identifying as "special," although her description carried a more negative slant and spoke of students as borderline narcissistic due to the constant praise of their parents (Hoover, 2009; Twenge, 2006). In addition, the idea of today's students sharing close relationships with their parents has been affirmed by other authors and researchers (Hoover, 2009). However some criticize Howe and Strauss' view of millennials, claiming it is singular in its approach and overlooks a large number of today's current college students, including minority students and students of lower socioeconomic status (Hoover, 2009). Bonner, a researcher who examined the experiences of



non-white students, believes that the prevailing generational descriptions focus too narrowly on the experiences of majority populations (Hoover, 2009). Ultimately, Howe and Strauss (2000) provide a generalization about today's students, and Hoover notes that, "...generalizations are often necessary as lifeboats; they allow people to navigate a sea of complexity" (para. 78).

While not all of today's college students fit the millennial model, there are some shared experiences that have shaped the current traditional-age college students. Today's students were born at the end of a cultural shift during which the concept of having children gained newfound popularity and notoriety (Howe & Strauss, 2000). From the 1960s to 1980, there was a societal aversion to children, as children received negative media attention and many grew up as unsupervised "latchkey" children, which was evidenced in many of the negative aspects associated with Generation X (Howe & Strauss, 2000). However, in the early 1980s, the public's attitude toward children began to evolve and was marked by news coverage of celebrity pregnancies, "Baby on Board" signs, and commercial establishments offering toys and high chairs to provide a welcoming environment for toddlers. After a decline in the national fertility rate for 20 years, there was an increase due to members of the Baby Boomer generation, people born between 1943 and 1960, who began having children. Many of today's students have shared a close relationship with their parents since birth (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Hoover, 2009). DeBard notes that many students received trophies for participation rather than for victory, cementing their status as special just for their existence and not for their achievements (DeBard, 2004).

Today's students grew up during the most sweeping child safety movement in history (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Born during a shift in parenting philosophies, many students have been raised in the era of "attachment parenting," which includes toddlers sleeping with parents and

parents taking children to work (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Literature about parenting during the millennial era shifted from a “follow your instincts model” to a programmed and structured model that stresses insuring children always feel “safe and watched” (Howe & Strauss, 2000). For many of today’s college students, their lives have been programmed since birth to include day care options, after-school program, recreational centers, music and dance lessons, and arts programs, all of which reinforced the presence of authority figures as problem-solvers (DeBard, 2004). As Wellberg noted in Howe and Strauss (2000), many of today’s college students were seldom exposed to spontaneous or unsupervised play. Hence, they tend to be sheltered and are perhaps the most protected and programmed children ever (Howe & Strauss, 2000). As such, today’s students tend to rely on authority figures to solve their problems, such as teachers, coaches, referees, and of course, parents.

Today’s students are often team-oriented and happy to congregate, as long as there are expectations and structure is provided (DeBard, 2004). Due to rising high school standards and educational accountability, today’s college students have been frequently pushed to be the best and brightest since birth (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Although many of today’s students share these millennial traits, they do not necessarily act or think certain ways simply because they were born during the same time period. Many of today’s students exhibit similar traits because they have lived during shared experiences and expectations, especially in terms of the relationship with and connectivity to their parents.

Today’s students present a variety of unique challenges to educational leaders. They have been made to feel important by almost everyone, including colleges and universities who have competed for them as applicants (DeBard, 2004). They are cognizant of the high expectations of others and often have high expectations of themselves (DeBard, 2004). Today’s

students have been raised to follow the rules, and thus almost always expect rules to be communicated clearly and enforced with due process (DeBard, 2004; Martin & Tulgan, 2001). For educational leaders, policies must be clearly articulated in the syllabi or handbooks if they are to be enforced (DeBard, 2004). Many students have a high regard for the idea of “fairness,” which should be criteria-based and not subject to interpretation (DeBard, 2004). Administrators who interpret institutional policies or academic standards may face the ire of students who feel the situation was not handled fairly (DeBard, 2004).

The confidence of today’s students emboldens them to negotiate levels of acceptable behavior with parents, teachers, and even employers (DeBard, 2004; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). They are usually confident in their abilities to meet the expectations of others as long as their own expectations of beneficial outcomes are met as well (DeBard, 2004). When they encounter difficult people, they often expect authority figures to protect them (DeBard, 2004; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Dealing with unruly roommates or low performing group members in an academic setting can be unsettling for today’s students, who may expect administrators to step in and “fix” the situation (DeBard, 2004).

Today’s college students bring new challenges to the environment of higher education. They are technically adults, yet they remain connected to their parents like no other generation in higher education history. Because of that, understanding today’s students is only half of the equation.

### **The Parents of Today’s College Students**

The direct corollary to today’s college students is the often hyper-involved college parents of today (Pope, 2005). Lum (2006) notes that the parents of today’s college students have been more involved in the lives their children than any other generation in American

history. Although Cline and Fay (1990) used the term helicopter parent in their book *Parenting with Love and Logic: Teaching Children Responsibility*, the term gained notoriety when it was featured in a *TIME* Magazine article by Gibbs in February 2005 entitled “Parents Behaving Badly” (Gibbs, 2005; Young, 2006). The term helicopter parent was coined to describe parents who often hover over their children, unafraid to frequently intervene and swoop in on their child’s behalf (Pope, 2005). In many cases, the hovering, or hyper-involvement including possible interference, begins in kindergarten and continues throughout college (Pope, 2005). The term helicopter parent is a pejorative term that is frequently used in the media, with recent distinctions being made about the different levels of hovering that parents can do (Colavecchio-Van Sickler, 2006). “Black hawk” parents, named after the military helicopter, are those who do unethical things, such as write their child’s term papers (Colavecchio-Van Sickler, 2006). While not all of the parents of today’s college students fit the definition of helicopter parents, they are more involved in higher education than ever before. While research pertaining to parents of college students has been conducted and will be explored in-depth in a later section, there has been little academic research regarding today’s involved parents and most of the information is anecdotal and self-reported by college administrators.

Unlike the parents of college students in days past, particularly those before 1960 during the prominence of *in loco parentis*, many of today’s college parents no longer abdicate their control when they send their students to college (Daniel et al., 2001; Young, 2006). Parents of today’s students are better educated than at any time in the past, and have been privy to much more information about their students’ college experiences due to a proliferation of college guides and Internet resources (Sells, 2002). As such, many of today’s college parents are active participants in their student’s college experiences (Daniel et al., 2001). Instead of facing “empty

nest syndrome,” many of the parents of today’s college students face a “cluttered nest” by remaining the decision makers for their adult children (Daniel et al., 2001; Kingsmill & Schlesinger, 1998). As such, the parents of today’s college students often still feel responsible for their adult children and parents expect quick answers when they have questions, often expecting instant responses to emails or phone calls (Daniel et al., 2001; Gibbs, 2005). Coupled with the “cluttered nest” idea is the parental view that college-age students are still considered children (Daniel et al., 2001). As such, many college students now suffer from an extended adolescence (Daniel et al., 2001). The idea of childhood today is expansive, extending to at least 16 and usually older (Hine, 1999). In a study conducted by Arnett (2000), he found that people between ages 18 to 25 were uncertain about what age they reached adulthood. Arnett classified the ages of 18 to 25 as “emerging adulthood,” which is a time of exploration and uncertainty about accepting adult responsibilities. Beginning in the 1980s, a growing proportion of middle class youth began entering higher education and remaining dependent on their parents, often until their mid-twenties (Graham, 2004). Parents today often continue to speak on behalf of their college students, insisting the student is “too young” to be expected to handle adult situations (Merriman, 2007). Many parents often find it difficult to allow their college-age children to transition from children to adults and struggle to let go while remaining connected to their students (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Karen and Madge Treeger (2003), authors of *Letting Go: A Parents’ Guide to the College Years*, describe the competing emotions that parents of college students feel. “The mature, rational part of us [parents of college students] wants them to solve their own problems and believes they can, but another part of us wants to stay connected, be in control, feel needed, and protect them from any pain they will have to face” (p. 7). Many parents have a need to continue caring for and guiding their children well past the beginning of their

collegiate experience (Arnett, 2000; Austin, 1993; Erikson, 1968; Forbes, 2001; Mullendore & Hatch, 2000; Newman & Newman, 1992; Young, 2006). In a study of perceived parental influence in commuter and residential students, Sessa (2005) found that college residential students, those with a physical distance between them and their parents, perceived that their parents monitored their behavior to a greater extent than commuter students, who actually lived at home with their parents.

The relationship between college students and their parents is unlike any other generation in history (Howe & Strauss, 2000). A unique aspect of their relationship is the use of technology to maintain connectivity, closeness, and information sharing. The next section provides an overview of the various technological changes that are utilized by college students and their parents.

### **Technology as a Means of Connectivity**

Technological changes have greatly enabled the information sharing and connectivity of students and their parents, furthering complicating the issues of separation and independence. Today's college students have been labeled as the "Internet generation" because they are usually very tech-savvy and often experience a level of comfort with technology that is unlike any other generation (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Tapscott, 1997; Young, 2006). Many parents have adapted to the technological changes and utilize technology to stay in contact with their students (Braskamp, Trautvetter, & Ward, 2006). Technology such as cell phones and email means that parents and students can stay in continual communication, no matter how far away (Braskamp et al., 2006). The rapid pace of new technological developments suggests that the closeness and connectivity of many college student and their parents will only continue and perhaps increase.

The pervasiveness and intensity of the use of cell phones by students prompted Richard Mullendore, former vice president of student affairs at the University of Georgia, to claim that cell phones on college campuses are “the world’s longest umbilical cords” (quoted in Shellenbarger, 2005). In a study by the Context research group, anthropologists examined the behaviors of 144 cell phone users ages 16-40 (“The Mobiles,” 2002). According to the study, the cell phone has become a primary mode of socializing for teenagers (Batista, 2003; “The Mobiles,” 2002). The study showed that teenagers are so immersed in cell phone technology that they often saw little difference between meeting face-to-face and talking on the cell phone (Batista, 2003; “The Mobiles,” 2002). Nine out of ten college students now carry cell phones (Student, Phone Home, 2006). In March 2006, the College Parents of America conducted an on-line survey of 900 current college parents. The survey found that 74% of parents communicate with their college students at least two to three times a week, with 34% communicating on at least a daily basis (National parent survey reveals high levels of communication, 2006). Ninety percent of respondents claimed to use a cell phone to communicate with their college students (National parent survey reveals high levels of communication, 2006).

Instant Messenger, better known as IM, is a computer program that allows people to communicate in real time over the Internet using typed text. IM is another technological advance that has impacted parent and student communication. IM communication is easy for working parents and students who spend most of their days in front of computers (Jackson & Murphy, 2005). As Jackson and Murphy (2005) note, using Instant Messenger mirrors face-to-face communication and serves as a surrogate for the face-to-face communication that students used to have with parents at home.

Email, although not as frequent as cell phone communication, also allows parents and students to remain in touch. For The Pew Internet and American Life Project study, *The Internet Goes to College*, researchers surveyed a random sample of 2,054 college students in over 27 institutions, and ethnographers studied the Internet behaviors of college students at 10 Chicago area institutions (Jones, 2002). According to the study, 72% of college students check their email at least once a day, with 66% of college students utilizing more than one email address (Jones, 2002). Trice (2002) studied the frequency and content of first semester students' emails to parents by examining the messages of 48 first semester college students and found that in a five day week, students contacted their parents via email around 6.03 times.

Other technological developments, such as blogging, and social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace, ensure that students are never "far away" from their parents (Braskamp et al., 2006; Young, 2006). Technology has enabled parents to maintain close communication with their college students and continue their parental roles of joint decision makers (Howe & Strauss, 2003).

A large number of the students of today are closely connected to their parents, which represents a shift in parenting and thus a shift in the way parents interact with higher education institutions. The development of new technology adds to this closeness and insures that mom and dad are never too far away and stay informed and connected to their children. The connectivity and closeness shared by many students and their parents present a new challenge to higher education administrators, specifically in the areas of autonomy development and interdependence.



## **Factors Impacting the Involvement and Investment of many of the Parents of Today's College Students**

As highly involved, co-purchasers of their students' college education, many parents have good reasons to be active in their students' higher education experience. The closeness and connectivity of many college students and their parents, aided by technology, means that parents are informed and aware of their children's experiences on campus. Adding to this desire for connectivity and information are the concepts of academic capitalism and parents as consumers in the age of rising higher education costs, as opinions on college education have evolved from a privilege for some to a right for all. Finally, while the research on parental involvement in higher education and socioeconomic class is limited, there is research from the K-12 arena as well as research on socioeconomic class and college preparation that suggests that socioeconomic class is also a factor of parental involvement. Parental education level is often coupled with socioeconomic status, as Astin and Oseguera (2004) point out that parents' education level combined with parents' income is the best indicator of socioeconomic class. Therefore, this section will also explore parental education levels as factors impacting parental involvement. The following sections will explore these concepts in more detail, and provide a foundation for understanding the additional factors that contribute to parental involvement.

**Parents as consumers and academic capitalism.** Higher education is a great investment of time, effort, energy, and of course, money. While parents of high school students in the late 1970s and early 1980s began to express an interest in receiving more information about the college application process, the parents of today's college students are highly involved in their students' college selection process (Dubble, 1995; Litten & Hall, 1989; Sachs, 2000). Many parents view themselves as co-purchasers because they supply most if not all of the

financial support for their students' education, as well as the emotional support while contributing to the decision making processes of their students (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Additionally, parents are involved in gathering information about financial aid and exploring potential options for financing their child's higher education (Olson & Rosenfeld, 1984). As Lange and Stone (2001) note, while parents increasingly involve themselves in the college selection process, the financial aid process often cements their involvement.

The concept of academic capitalism provides insight into parental involvement in higher education. According to Slaughter and Rhoades (2004), academic capitalism is a new phenomenon, "which sees groups of actors—faculty, students, administrators, and academic professionals—as using a variety of state resources to create new sources of knowledge that link higher education institutions to the new economy" (p. 1). Slaughter and Rhoades assert that academic capitalism is a development of higher education institutions competing for students, marketing the educational experience as a service, offering majors that are in demand by the changing economy, and presenting graduates as products to benefit the economy. Administrators at higher education institutions are competing for enrollment, and parents and students are carefully weighing their options in an effort to get the best return on their investments (Lange & Stone, 2001). In this vein, higher education exists for more than the public good and the passing of knowledge to the next generation, but extends towards private returns in the form of improved salary streams, benefits, and quality of life (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Thus, higher education is tied to advancement and upward mobility in the current economy.

A 2004 study conducted by John Immerwahr of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education found that 87% of respondents said that a high school graduate should go to college instead of taking any decent job after graduation. Seventy-six percent of respondents

said that getting a college education is more important than it was 10 years ago (Immerwahr, 2004). Hine (1999) notes that higher education is becoming ever more expensive and ever more necessary as four years of college no longer guarantees substantial financial rewards. According to Hine, the median income for college graduates is equivalent to the income of high school graduates in 1970. According to former Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (2006), approximately two-thirds of all high-growth, high-wage jobs created in the next ten years will require a college degree. The concept of higher education as a benefit for the elite has faded away. As Kaplin and Lee (1997) state, “An increasing emphasis on students as consumers of education with attendant rights, to whom institutions owe corresponding responsibilities, has further undermined the traditional concept of education as a privilege” (p. 9). Today’s college students have grown up with the idea that higher education is for the masses and have been exposed to the belief of more and more people that higher education is necessary for career advancement in the changing economy. Thus, parents are no longer simply participating in their child’s educational process, but working to insure their child receives a quality education needed for gainful employment and a successful future. The idea of a college degree as a necessary component of economic success increases the expectations of both students and parents, and provides more incentive for parents to be involved and insure a bright future for their children.

An apparent rise of consumerism both nationwide and related to higher education has been noted, which coupled with the rising cost of education has contributed to the idea of parents who view themselves as customers and expect higher education institutions to provide them with top quality customer service (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Lange & Stone, 2001; Levine & Cureton, 1998; Sells, 2002). As the cost of higher education rises, so do the expectations of most parents (Coburn, 2006). In the past five years alone, the average cost of in-state tuition and fees at

public colleges has jumped 35%, after adjustment for inflation (Block, 2007). Over the past 25 years, hikes in college tuition and fees have risen “faster than personal income, consumer prices and even health insurance” (Block, 2007).

Shifts in financial aid have also contributed to rising higher education costs for students. A 2002 study by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education found that there has been a significant decrease in need-based aid. The study showed that the average Pell Grant, a federal tuition grant for low-income students, pays for 57% of the average tuition at four-year colleges, compared with 98% of the average tuition in 1986 (Fletcher, 2002). More students and parents are relying on loans to cover the cost of higher education. The College Board reported that \$74 billion in financial aid was available to students in fall 2002, yet loans accounted for 58% of the aid (Fletcher, 2002). Comparatively, in 1980, loans accounted for 41% of financial aid packages (Fletcher, 2002).

Higher education was not insulated from the rise of consumerism that was seen nationwide throughout the 1980s (Levine & Cureton, 1998). In fact, during the 1990s, higher education was a major focus of consumerism (Levine & Cureton, 1998). Many of the negative aspects associated with consumerism have faded and consumerism is often now viewed as important and necessary, with some going so far as to suggest that it is a patriotic duty (Levine & Cureton, 1998). Students are bringing the same consumer concerns to higher education that they bring to every other commercial enterprise they encounter (Levine & Cureton, 1998). Their parents are doing the same. Again, the view of higher education as a product and parents as customers who are paying for that product reinforces their desire to be connected to their child’s educational experience (Conneely, Good, & Perryman, 2001). As co-purchasers, parents feel it is their right to be informed of their students’ progress, disciplinary issues, achievements, and

problems (Howe & Strauss, 2003; Young, 2006). Additionally, parents are not afraid to insert themselves into campus problems, which will be explored in-depth in a later section.

**Parents' socioeconomic status and educational level.** Parental involvement in the K-12 system is well documented and is also an expectation, based on the No Child Left Behind Legislation (Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Wartman & Savage, 2008). It is important to note that research on the involvement of the parents of K-12 students comprises almost all of the research on parental involvement and can be beneficial and informative when examining parental involvement in higher education (Wartman & Savage, 2008). There is research on parental involvement in the K-12 system that has shown a link between parental involvement and socioeconomic status (Lareau, 1987; Wartman & Savage, 2008). Lareau (1987) studied first-grade students in two different communities, one considered to be “working class” and one considered to be “middle class”. As a participant-observer, she noticed a difference in the amount and quality of interaction between parents in the two different communities (Lareau, 1987). Lareau (1987) noted that parents at the middle class school were more involved and had higher amounts of interaction and higher quality interactions than the parents at the working class school. She attributed this higher level of involvement to the more flexible schedules of the middle class parents and the stronger social networks where they could learn about more opportunities for involvement than working class parents.

As Wartman and Savage (2008) note, the question of whether or not there is a link between parental involvement in higher education and socioeconomic class is relatively unknown and unmeasured. However, there is a fair amount of research on the relationship between socioeconomic class and parental involvement in the college preparation process and the college choice process (Wartman & Savage, 2008). As Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, and

Terenzini (2004) point out, first-generation college students are often at a disadvantage in regards to having basic knowledge about postsecondary education, while individuals with highly educated parents may have an advantage understanding the culture of higher education.

Parents in lower socioeconomic groups without a history of attending college often do not have enough knowledge to help their children navigate the pathways to college, while parents in higher socioeconomic groups often serve as managers for their children's pathways to college (Auerbach, 2004; McDonough, 1997; Wartman & Savage, 2008). This management often begins early with parents of higher socioeconomic status being very involved in their children's college preparation by providing them with the best opportunities, which can include selecting the right kindergarten, elementary school, and high school as well as paying for outside activities such as music lessons, extracurricular involvement, academic training, athletics, SAT preparation classes, and even hiring independent educational consultants to provide guidance during the admissions process (Avery et al., 2003; Karabel, 2005; Lareau, 1987; Wartman & Savage, 2008). Conversely, college preparation programs that target underrepresented students and students of lower socioeconomic status feature many components designed to engage parental involvement, such as parent orientation programs, frequent phone calls to parents to discuss their child's progress, and parent-student advising sessions, yet Tierney (2002) found that one of the biggest challenges for pre-college programs that target low-income and first-generation college students is coordination with parents. From an early age, research has shown that parental involvement in college preparation varies greatly by socioeconomic status and parental education level.

Differences in parental involvement can also be seen in the college admissions and selection processes. Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) found that parental involvement levels in the

college admissions process were higher for students from higher socioeconomic groups than for they are for students from lower socioeconomic groups. It has been well documented that many of the parents of today's college students want a large amount of information about the college selection process and are very involved in the college choice process for their student (Dubble, 1995; Hollie-Major, 2003; Litten & Hall, 1989; Mohler, 1990; Sachs, 2000). However, Smith (2001) found that parents of lower socioeconomic status have a fuzziness of knowledge about the college application process, college finances, the admissions process, and general college life (Smith, 2001). Smith used the term "soft knowledge" to describe the parents' overall knowledge of higher education and found examples of students having to educate their parents about the college process while also navigating it themselves. He noted that parental input for these students was not very useful during the college choice process. Additionally, many first-generation students are members of an ethnic minority (McCarron & Inkelas, 2006), and the parents of these students are often limited in the information about higher education that they are able to share with their children due to minimal exposure and lack of understanding of American higher educational opportunities (Ceja, 2006; Gandara, 1995; Gonzalez, Stoner, & Jovel, 2003; Perez, 1999; Smith, 2001). While these parents often support their children's aspirations of higher education, they sometimes play a limited role during the college choice process, in part because they lack a formal understanding of the process (Ceja, 2006). Since the literature has shown that parents of differing socioeconomic and education levels have different concerns and questions during the college choice process, it is reasonable to expect that these parents may also have differing levels of involvement in their child's higher education experience.

In summary, students are not the only consumers of higher education. The idea of parents as consumers impacts how administrators relate to parents and parents have specific

expectations as consumers who are paying for a product. Academic capitalism and the concept of higher education as a right and not a privilege also impacts what parents expect from colleges and universities and lends credence to the need for parental partnerships. As the cost of higher education increases, it is logical to assume that parents will continue to assert their rights as consumers. However, it is important to realize that parental involvement is impacted by factors of socioeconomic status and parent education levels. While there are trends of parental involvement that will be explored later in this chapter, there is no one template of parental involvement that fits every scenario.

### **Definition of Parental Involvement**

In the monograph *Parental Involvement in Higher Education: Understanding the Relationship Among Students, Parents, and the Institution*, Wartman and Savage (2008) explore the recent phenomenon of increased parental involvement in higher education and also identify factors that impact parental involvement. Wartman and Savage define parental involvement as, "...parents' showing interest in the lives of their students in college, gaining more information about college, knowing when and how to appropriately provide encouragement and guidance to their student connecting with the institution, and potentially retaining that institutional connection beyond the college years" (p. 5). Wartman and Savage also identify five factors that contribute to the phenomenon of parental involvement: generation, changes in parenting, use of technology, cost of college, and demographics. The previous exploration of the millennial generation and the parents of today's college students provided supplemental information about each of these factors.

One of the key questions regarding parental involvement in higher education relates to students. Do administrators consider students to be children or adults? There appears to be no



clear answer to this question, and the following sections provide historical information to illustrate how the answer to this question has changed over time, with a focus on student participation and demographics and the landmark legal developments that have affected the relationship of parents, students, and institutions by impacting the day-to-day practice of educational leaders.

### **A Historical View of Student Involvement and Demographics**

Higher education in America began in Colonial times for the purposes of training future statesmen, clergy, and cultured men for the new society. The ill-fated Henrico College in Virginia began forming in 1619, but the plans were abandoned after the great Indian massacre of 1622 (Cremin, 1997; Rudolph, 1962; Thelin, 2004). Thus, Harvard College, the oldest surviving institution, was founded in 1636 (Cremin, 1997; Rudolph, 1962; Thelin, 2004). The students were White males, typically from an upper socioeconomic class, and they were considered to be the charges of the male educational leaders, although several institutions offered programs or separate schools to educate Native American students but these programs were generally unsuccessful (Thelin, 2004). The students had no say in the curriculum and their behavior was monitored very closely.

By the early 1800s, college began to be seen as a means of getting ahead, which broadened its appeal to those in the middle class and more middle class students began attending college during this time (Rudolph, 1962). By the end of the 1800s, students were beginning to assert themselves and trying to influence higher education to reflect their wishes and desires and seeking to find a voice in their increasingly authoritarian environment (Geiger, 2000; Rudolph, 1962). Nowhere was this clearer than in the development of extracurricular activities. By the 1870s, extracurricular activities, which began as debating clubs in 1753, were forming on college

campuses across the nation. The debating clubs morphed into Greek letter fraternities, which began in the 1820s, while organized athletics began in 1852. The establishment of strong extracurricular activities was a sign that students had succeeded in assuming some influence over college life and had become important elements in the power structure of the American college.

Also during the 1800s, the student population changed drastically with the introduction of women and students of color. Coeducational higher education began in 1837 when Oberlin College enrolled four female students, and by 1900, 71% of all colleges were coeducational (Church & Sedlack, 1997; Rudolph, 1962). The founding of Cheyney College in 1830 allowed students of color to gain access to higher education, and Oberlin College also admitted students regardless of race (Church & Sedlack, 1997). The presence of African American students in higher education grew with the founding of historically black colleges, including Lincoln University and Wilberforce in the 1830s and Howard in 1867 (Cohen, 1998). The founding of these colleges was boosted by the passing of the second Morrill Act in 1890 (Cohen, 1998; Rudolph, 1962).

Another major change that impacted the student population of the 1800s was the introduction of more students from lower socioeconomic classes (Rudolph, 1962). This occurred through the introduction of scholarships and the Morrill Federal Land Grant Act of 1862. Additionally, athletics, and specifically football, also provided opportunities for athletically talented students of lower socioeconomic class to leave their family farms and coal mines and attend college.

By the end of the 1800s, the influence of students had begun to elevate their status from mere charges to be looked after to customers of higher education, a concept that would continue

to develop over time. Princeton president Francis L. Patton declared in his 1888 inaugural address that, “College administration is a business in which trustees are partners, professors the salesmen and students the customers” (Wertenbaker, 1946, p. 9). Additionally, the purpose of higher education had changed drastically. The idea of students as customers coincided with the concept of higher education as a product.

During the 1900s, the purpose of higher education continued to evolve from public service to the beginnings of career advancement. Colleges began to pay more attention to the expectations of their individual students than the expectations of society (Cohen, 1998; Rudolph, 1962). Education as a means for economic prosperity was being recognized as early as 1878, and eventually, American colleges were able to prove that going to college often meant earning more money than not attending. A focus on prosperity as a by-product of education also attracted more students to higher education.

In the early 1900s, student influence was again seen as the elective system was introduced because students wanted the freedom to take classes that interested them (Rudolph, 1962). Also during the 1900s, student government began to take on additional responsibilities with college administrators shifting some of the disciplinary and regulatory responsibilities from the faculty and administration to the students. Again, students were asserting themselves and being heard as important contributors to the growing arena of American higher education.

At the beginning of higher education in America, a small minority of people recognized colleges as agencies of social and economic mobility (Rudolph, 1962). Over time, the idea of higher education being linked to economic and social success became the pervasive viewpoint, and colleges and universities experienced times of extreme growth, especially after World War II. The government financed the education of veterans with approximately 3 million veterans

entering higher education after 1945 due to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, more commonly known as the GI Bill. The presence of veterans in higher education not only impacted the number of college students, but the diversity of students, specifically in the realms of age and life experience.

The unrest and upheaval on college campuses throughout the 1960s and 1970s also permeated the nation. College students began to demand more autonomy and challenged the administrations' policies and procedures regarding individual student rights (Grossi & Edwards, 1997; Wartman & Savage, 2008). These decades were a period of turmoil in higher education, and colleges and universities began to take a more hands-off approach to student conduct regulation (Wartman & Savage, 2008).

The twentieth century also saw the continual growth of higher education, with the number of college students doubling from 1960 to 1970 (Rudolph, 1962). Since 1970, there has also been a large growth in the number of women enrolled in higher education (Mather & Adams, 2007). In the 1980s, the number of women enrolled in higher education surpassed the number of men (Mather & Adams, 2007). This growth continued into the twenty-first century. Between 1970 and 2005, the gender composition shifted and now women represent 54% of the adults enrolled in college (Mather & Adams, 2007).

The diversity of students pursuing higher education also increased greatly during the twentieth century and continues today. Between 1993 and 2003, minority enrollments in higher education increased 51% (Mather & Adams, 2007). By 2005, 31% of college students were minorities (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2007). In 1980, African American students made up 9.7% of the enrollment of higher education (NCES, 2004). By 2007, African American students made up 13% (NCES, 2008). The enrollment of Hispanic students increased

from 3.9% in 1980 to 11% in 2007 (NCES, 2004; NCES, 2008). The number of Asian students enrolled in higher education has doubled from 2.4% in 1980 to 6.7% in 2007 (NCES, 2004; NCES, 2008). By 2007, international students made up three percent of college enrollment (NCES, 2008).

College enrollment reached a record level of 18 million in the fall of 2007. Students of all ages are enrolled in higher education, and the traditional-aged population of 18-24 year olds increased 15% between 1995 and 2005 (Digest of Education Statistics, 2007). However, approximately half of all undergraduate students do not fall between the ages of 19-23 (Wartman & Savage, 2008). Most of today's college students can vote, have their own credit cards, and approach education as vocal consumers who provide input to shape their educational experiences (Wartman & Savage, 2008). This is a far cry from the first students in higher education, who were viewed as children without rights. The student population, once a homogeneous group of individuals, has evolved and now includes the largest and most diverse generation in American history (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Together these students bring new challenges to higher education administrators, as do many of their parents.

### **The Changing Role of Administrators Through the Lens of Landmark Legal Developments**

One of the strongest influences on the relationship between students and higher education administrators has been the legal system (Wartman & Savage, 2008). Legal developments define the contours of how administrators communicate with and relate to the parents of college students. This section offers a brief review of important legal developments that have impacted the role of higher education administrators and impacted the view of students as children or adults.

In the early American colleges, presidents and faculty were male clerics and acted *in loco parentis* (Rentz, 1996; Rudolph, 1962). *In loco parentis* literally means in place of the parents (Boyer, 1990). The concept of *in loco parentis* can be traced to 18<sup>th</sup> century English common law, with origins in ancient Roman law (Edwards, 1994; Moran, 1967). While *in loco parentis* began as an English tort principle, attributing responsibility to educational administrators and other personnel for student conduct, it received much broader application in American higher education (Edwards, 1994; Henderson & Henderson, 1974; Jackson, 1991; Ratliff, 1972). It remained the prevailing doctrine of education until the early 1960s.

Over the nineteenth century, the concept of *in loco parentis* was addressed and affirmed in the American courts. *State v. Pendergrass* (1837) is the first American court application of *in loco parentis*, and the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled that teachers could serve as substitutes for parents. While not a firmly established legal doctrine, Edwards (1994) notes that *People v. Wheaton College* (1866) resulted in an Illinois court affirming *in loco parentis* and stating that, “discretionary power has been given [college authorities] to regulate the discipline of their college...and...we have no more authority to interfere than we have to control the domestic discipline of a father in his family” (p. 187). Bickel and Lake (1999) explain that *in loco parentis* focused on university rights and powers over students, not necessarily university duties toward students. As such, many facets of college governance and student services were designed to exercise the authority of the institution (Young, 2006).

The *in loco parentis* legal standard was followed and supported through the continuing paternalistic tradition and the residential nature of higher education. Dormitories were seen as necessary for higher education to provide students with common experiences and to allow them to be cared for and closely watched (Rudolph, 1962). The idea was that colleges, in

predominantly pastoral settings, would provide environments whereby young boys would be developed into gentlemen.

Although student influence was continuing to grow, students were not viewed as adults, and colleges were seen to have complete authority over students (Edwards, 1994). The courts reinforced *in loco parentis* throughout the 1900s. *Gott v. Berea College* (1913) was the first judicial articulation of *in loco parentis* in American higher education. As noted by the Kentucky Supreme Court, college authorities stand in place of the parents and are responsible for the physical and moral welfare of students, as well as the students' mental development. Therefore, the Court stated there was no reason that college authorities could not make any rule or regulation that parents would also make for the good of the students (*Gott v. Berea College*, 1913). The Kentucky Supreme Court acknowledged *People v. Wheaton College* (1866) as the predecessor for the legal doctrine of *in loco parentis* and explained that the relationship between student and college was one of complete authority, likened to a familial relationship (Edwards, 1994). Thus, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, *in loco parentis* gave higher education administrators practically limitless authority and control over students (Edwards, 1994; Young, 2006).

A major philosophical change occurred in the 1960s when campus administrators were forced to abandon *in loco parentis* (Boyer, 1990; Grossi & Edwards, 1997; Nuss, 2003; Young 2006). The era of *in loco parentis* represented an insular period of higher education law (Bickel & Lake, 1999). The courts were deferential to higher education institutions, trusting that colleges and universities would provide for the students in their care (Kaplin & Lee, 1997). Attending an institution of higher education was viewed as a privilege and not a right by the courts. Therefore, institutions were free to make whatever decisions they deemed were in the

best interests of the students (Kaplin & Lee, 1997). Essentially, students were viewed as children. Administrators did not have to worry about the legal ramifications of many of their decisions during this time period.

The legal demise of *in loco parentis* is credited to *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* (1961), which examined due process for a student facing expulsion from a postsecondary institution (Bickel & Lake, 1999; Nuss, 2003; Young, 2006). *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* clearly set forth the basic principles required in a fair hearing and rejected that a student could agree to expulsion without a hearing (Young, 2006). As quoted by Bickel and Lake (1999) and noted by Young (2006), *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* indicated that "...college was a student/university relationship primarily, not primarily the delegation of family relationship prerogatives" (p. 39). This case delineates that students have rights that cannot be abrogated, unlike the parental context wherein through grounding and other disciplinary measures children can be denied household rights and privileges. In *Dixon*, the specific right the court argues states cannot abridge is the right to due process. The understanding that student rights cannot be abridged as explained in *Dixon* encompassed all rights conferred under the U.S. Constitution.

The demise of *in loco parentis* coincided with a tumultuous period in higher education when students demanded more freedom, began asserting their rights, and sought independence from both controlling parents and institutions (Grossi & Edwards, 1997). Shortly after the abandonment of *in loco parentis*, a fundamental piece of legislation that impacted the philosophical approach of campus administrators was the passing of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, also known as FERPA or the Buckley Amendment after the sponsoring senator James L. Buckley (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 1974).



FERPA contributed to the idea that students are adults and not children and reinforced students' increasing independence (Wartman & Savage, 2008). FERPA was intended to protect the rights and privacy of students; however, it ushered in a variety of changes regarding the relationship of parents and higher education administrators. In summary, FERPA states that students' records are private and protected from release without parental consent, other than several exempt situations expressly set forth in the legislation. FERPA also states that the rights of parents transfer to students who are 18 years old or attending postsecondary institutions (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 1974). Thus, students' college records, including grades, discipline history, class attendance, and other information cannot be disclosed to parents without the students' written consent. As such, higher education institutions now found themselves in a precarious position— between students and parents. Although there are exceptions to FERPA (parents need no written consent to access the records of students who are defined as legal dependents for tax purposes), upholding FERPA often means higher education institutions are withholding information from parents, actions that parents often have difficulty understanding.

The abandonment of *in loco parentis* and the passing of FERPA ushered in a brief period where higher education administrators took a more hands-off approach in the oversight of student conduct (Wartman & Savage, 2008). This coincided with a period of time when the courts viewed higher education institutions as bystanders, and the courts upheld the idea that an institution's liability for students' actions was limited (Bickel & Lake, 1999; Wartman & Savage, 2008). Several important cases that illustrated the bystander era were *Bradshaw v. Rawlings* (1979), *Baldwin v. Zoradi* (1981), and *Rabel v. Illinois Wesleyan University* (1987). In each of these cases, the courts viewed the university's responsibility through the lens of "duty" versus "no duty" (Bickel & Lake, 1999; Wartman & Savage, 2008). The *Bradshaw* case

involved a student who was injured when coming home from an off-campus school-sponsored picnic, while the *Baldwin* case centered on a student who was injured in a car accident after consuming alcohol in his college residence hall (Wartman & Savage, 2008). *Rabel* dealt with a student who fell from a cliff on a camping field trip and was severely injured (Wartman & Savage, 2008). In each of these cases, the students were viewed as being beyond the control of the university and the courts noted that the institutions had no duty for the students' behavior and their safety (Bickel & Lake, 1999; Wartman & Savage, 2008).

The bystander period was short lived, because during the 1980s the courts began holding institutions responsible for personal injuries to students that resulted from numerous different situations (Bickel & Lake, 1999; Wartman & Savage, 2008). A landmark case that ended the bystander period was *Mullins v. Pine Manor College* (1983). In this case, a student was raped by an intruder who entered the campus through an unlocked security gate. The court found the college was responsible because the institution assumed a duty of safety by employing security personnel who patrolled the campus to insure safety. By not checking that the gate was locked, the court said the college did not fulfill its duty of care and thus the college was responsible for negligent behavior happened to the student (Bickel & Lake, 1999; Wartman & Savage, 2008).

The *Mullins* case occurred in the early 1980s when the trend toward more oversight of student behavior and stricter control over students was beginning (Wartman & Savage, 2008). As colleges were increasingly held responsible for actions that occurred on their properties, administrators began to monitor student behavior more closely. This marked the end of institutions being viewed as bystanders and ushered in the view of institutions as facilitators (Bickel & Lake, 1999).

Today, institutions face a number of lawsuits related to student behavior and institutions are expected to assume and regulate more responsibility for students, while students have been experiencing decreasing freedoms due to liability concerns (Wartman & Savage, 2008). The legal system, which in some ways defined students as adults through FERPA and through initial cases in the early 1980s that held students responsible for their own behaviors instead of institutions, has also muddled the idea of students as adults in several ways (Wartman & Savage, 2008). An amendment to FERPA allows institutions to notify parents when students under the age of 21 violate campus policies regarding alcohol or other drugs, and some campuses now automatically send letters home for any alcohol or drug policy violations (Wartman & Savage, 2008). Also, the Campus Security Act of 1999, also known as the Clery Act, was passed because the parents of a student who was murdered on the campus of Lehigh University lobbied to have institutions prepare an annual security report for current students and employees and prospective students and employees (Wartman & Savage, 2008). While this information is available to students, parents often utilize the Clery reports to evaluate schools their children are attending, because safety and security is one of the primary concerns for parents (Lowery, 2005; Wartman & Savage, 2008; Warwick & Mansfield, 2003). Most recently, the 2007 tragedy at Virginia Tech where 33 people were killed raised even more safety questions and resulted in parents and students complaining about the two hours it took University personnel to notify the campus of the impending threat once administrators were aware of the first shots being fired (Rawe, 2007). The fallout from the Virginia Tech incident resulted in more safety notification protocol and systems, including campus wide intercoms, emergency text messaging notification systems, and updated surveillance camera technology (Rawe, 2007). Parents and students have the expectation that any safety threats will be communicated in a timely and transparent manner.

## **The Current Relationship Between Parents and Higher Education Administrators**

Today, administrators that are working in student affairs deal with parents almost as much as they deal with students and most of the information regarding increased parental involvement is presented in handbooks and articles instead of research studies. Parental involvement has been documented mostly by anecdotal evidence and sharing stories across the profession. As Lynette Merriman (2007), Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs at the University of Southern California, stated, “There are actually days when I never even speak with students, a phenomenon unheard of several years ago. A more appropriate label for my field has become ‘family affairs’” (p. B20). Lydia Lum (2006), a journalist and contributing editor for *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* magazine, in her article, “Handling Helicopter Parents”, concurs:

Once upon a time, parents would help their children move into dorm rooms and apartments, then wave goodbye for the semester. Not anymore. Baby boomers have arguably been more involved in their children’s educations—and their lives in general—than any preceding generation of parents, university observers say. And boomers see no reason why that hands-on approach should change just because their children have moved out of the house and onto campus. (p. 40)

Linda Koch (2004), the Vice President for Student Affairs at Loch Haven University, adds that parents often look at their student and see a child instead of someone who is becoming an adult. For parents, it is difficult to outgrow the need to be involved with every decision the student has to make the instant the decision needs to be made (Koch, 2004).

There are notorious negative anecdotes about hyper-involved parents. Take the parent who actually called the parent coordinator at her son’s university because all her son’s

classmates had boyfriends and girlfriends, and she wanted to know what she could do to help her son find someone (Lum, 2006). Then there is the parent who called the housing office to report a burned out light bulb in her daughter's room, or the parent who called the college to complain about a professor who speaks with an accent, or the numerous parents who use the phrase "we" when asking questions, like, "Can *we* still study abroad if *we're* going to be pre-med?" (Merriman, 2007, p. 10). Parents spend time editing their college students' papers, attending career fairs to promote their children to potential employers, and providing daily wake-up calls to insure their children make it to class (Merriman, 2007).

Faculty members report an increase in parent interactions as well. Giegerich (2002) interviewed a number of faculty members for his article "Complaining Parents: College Professors Getting an Earful from Them." According to Stokley, a sociology professor at Louisiana Tech University, he was rarely contacted by parents during the 1990s, but as of 2002, he was hearing from an average of four to five parents every term (Giegerich, 2002). Many faculty members report that parents often pressure them and other college officials to register students in courses that are already filled to capacity and even question the intent of classroom assignments (Giegerich, 2002). Theresa Sherwood, assistant chair of the mathematics department at Western Washington University summed up the challenging intrusions of today's parents. "They just have a hard time letting go" (Giegerich, 2002, p. A2).

Unsatisfied with just speaking to college administrators and faculty, many of today's parents are also turning to state legislators to address the concerns of their individual students (Lipka, 2005). Lipka (2005) found that while legislators have long been involved in budgets and management of public colleges and universities, calls from parents are prompting legislators to intervene on a variety of student life issues. A state legislator from New York estimated that he

called colleges and universities on behalf of upset parents at least 10 times in the year 2004.

While most matters resulted from misunderstandings that were easily resolved, reporting complaints to legislators proves that helicopter parents will do almost anything to intervene on behalf of their children.

While highly involved parents are sometimes perceived in a derogatory manner, they can have positive influences on their children's educational experiences and college programs. The 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement reported that students whose parents intervene on their behalf in educational settings (38% of freshmen) are more active in and satisfied with college (Lipka, 2007). Parent coordinators, staff members hired to liaison with and communicate with parents, point out that parent concern and involvement can benefit students (Lum, 2006). Parents of students at California Polytechnic State University were so concerned about the number of unsafe buildings in the surrounding area that the city set up an emergency hotline for students who were living off campus (Lum, 2006). Other institutions report that sending information to parents and students about important things such as residence hall openings and closings provides accountability for the students and the parents provide extra motivation (Lum, 2006).

Whether positive or negative, parental involvement is a reality. Educational leaders cannot ignore the impact of parental involvement on today's students or seek to ignore parents as constituents. As Pavela (2007) states, "We [college administrators] think the best way we can help traditional-age students become full adults is to help them escape from their parents. What if we're wrong" (para. 2)? Working with today's students is inextricably linked to working with today's parents (Coburn, 2006). Perhaps Strauss sums up today's students and their parents by stating, "College and universities should know that they are not just getting a kid, but they are

also getting a parent” (as cited in Lowery, 2001, p. 8). The increased information about their students’ experiences, their involvement in their students’ lives, and the rising costs of higher education are all factors that influence many parents to challenge college policies and practices that do not meet their expectations (Sells, 2002).

Numerous researchers and administrators have posited that the answer for working with the parents of today’s college students is for educational leaders to develop partnerships with them (Conneely et al., 2001; Kreppel, 1985; Lange & Stone, 2001; Scott & Daniel, 2001). Conneely et al. (2001) recommended that housing professionals build a sense of trust with parents and engage them for collaboration and ongoing partnerships. Coburn (2006) stated that the administrators need to figure out how to enlist the already involved parents as partners to help facilitate a mutual goal, helping students grow up. Golden (2001) challenged college presidents to make connections with parents in an effort to establish parental partnerships between the parent and the college. Forbes (2001) stated that parents can be vital partners in helping administrators protect students and promote safety on campus. Forbes also stated that students benefit when the adults in their lives, their parents and educational leaders, work together to facilitate their healthy development. Lowery (2004) pointed out that student affairs professionals specifically bear the burden of creating opportunities for parents to remain involved in their students lives while still allowing students to develop independence, and he stated that forming strong parental partnerships is one way to create those opportunities. Pavela (2007) suggests that parental partnerships can help with the transitions both students and parents experience, stating

...the best approach for educators might be to study and support the family, especially as it evolves with changing social and economic circumstances. We may find that many

young adults and their parents are trying to find ways (some consistent with timeless patterns across the world) to surrender and share authority gradually, not all at once, on some specified birthday. (para. 2)

In addition to the general support for partnering with parents, Coburn specifically challenges administrators to answer the questions of who are your parents and what do they expect in order to form strong partnerships.

### **Research on the Parents of College Students**

Many educational leaders and higher education administrators have published information about working with parents and promoting parental partnerships, yet much of the information is provided in handbook format. The lack of research on the parents of college students becomes clear when compared to the wealth of research that has been conducted on other areas of higher education, such as student involvement (Astin, 1975, 1977, 1984; Baxter-Magolda, 1992; Cooper et al., 1994; Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001; DeSousa & King, 1992; Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991; Morrisey, 1991; Pace, 1984; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), racial identity development (Austin, Carter, & Vaux, 1990; Cokley, 1999; Cross, 1978; Gibbs, 1973; Hall, Cross, & Freedle, 1972; Helms, 1990, 1995; Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Mercer & Cunningham, 2003; Parham, 1988; Parham & Helms, 1985; Poston, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1990; Webster, Sedlacek, & Miyares, 1979; Westbrook, Miyares, & Roberts, 1978), and alcohol consumption (Brennan, Walfish, & AuBuchon, 1986; Broughton & Molasso, 2006; Brown, 1985; Cherry, 1987; Engs, 1977; Gonzalez, 1991; Jennison, 2004; Maney, 1990; Martin & Hoffman, 1993; Sherry & Stolberg, 1987; Walters & Bennett, 2000).



There is research that has been conducted on the parents of college students in a variety of areas, and this section explores research in the areas of parental impact on student's pursuit of higher education, parental attachment, impact on adjustment and transition issues, impact on student alcohol consumption, the impact of parental alcohol use on self esteem, parents as referral agents, conversations with parents, parental goals, and parental expectations. While virtually no literature exists on parental expectations (Forbes, 2001; Habben, 1997; Turrentine et al., 2000; Young, 2006), examining the existing research provides a framework for understanding parental actions.

Research on the impact of parental educational levels on high school students has shown that students whose parents attended college have higher aspirations about higher education. In an analysis of the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal study, Hahs-Vaughn (2004) examined the impact of parents' education level on first-generation college students and non-first generation college students. Hahs-Vaughn found that first-generation students aspired to lower levels of post-secondary education than non-first-generation students. Since many first-generation students are members of an ethnic minority (McCarron & Inkelas, 2006), the parents of these students are often limited in the information about higher education that they are able to share with their children due to minimal exposure and lack of understanding of American higher educational opportunities (Ceja, 2006; Gandara, 1995; Gonzalez et al., 2003; Perez, 1999).

Researchers have also studied parental involvement and its impact on high school students' college aspirations and attendance. Research has shown that parental involvement is associated with a greater likelihood of aspiring to attend college and enrolling in higher education (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Horn, 1998; Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989;

Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Perna, 2000; Perna & Titus, 2005). Additionally, it has been well documented that many of the parents of today's college students want a large amount of information about the college selection process and are very involved in the college choice process for their student (Dubble, 1995; Hollie-Major, 2003; Litten & Hall, 1989; Mohler, 1990; Sachs, 2000).

Parental attachment has been explored in various ways. Armsden and Greenberg (1987) studied parent and peer attachment and their relationships to psychological well-being in college students. They utilized the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, and surveyed 179 college students. They found that perceived quality of parental attachment was significantly related to psychological well-being. They also found that students who reported a highly secure attachment to parents and peers had a higher level of self-satisfaction and a higher likelihood of seeking social support.

Kenny (1987, 1990) conducted two studies dealing with parental attachment. In 1987, she explored the extent and function of parental attachment of 173 first year students at a prestigious, northeastern university. She found that most students indicated their parents as a secure base and source of support, students sought parental help more than a moderate amount in situations of stress, and close parental relationships were positively associated with self-reports of assertion in female students.

In 1990, Kenny studied college seniors' perceptions of parental attachments by surveying 159 college seniors at a large, academically selective, urban university. The students described their parental relationships as highly favorable, while female participants rated their parents as a higher source of emotional support than males did. Students who reported a secure attachment to their parents also reported greater maturity in career planning.

Lapsley, Rice, and Fitzgerald (1990) studied adolescent attachment, identity, and the adjustment to college in 130 first-year students and 123 upper class students at a private, Catholic university in the Midwest. They utilized three survey instruments, including the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment used by Armsden and Greenberg (1987). They found that personal and social identities were significantly predicted by attachment to parents in both sample groups that were made up of first year students and upperclassmen.

In 1993, Bradford and Lyddon studied current parental attachment and its relation to perceived psychological distress and romantic relationship satisfaction. They utilized the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment and a psychological symptom checklist to survey 157 undergraduate students at a public university in the Southeast. They found support for a connection between attachment security and psychological adjustment in young adults, although there was not support of a definitive causal relationship.

In 2004, Schwartz and Buboltz examined the relationship between attachment to parents and psychological separation in college students. They utilized the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment and the Psychological Separation Inventory and surveyed 368 undergraduate students at a medium sized university in the south. Their results suggested a link between attachment and psychological separation although a secure attachment to parents did not necessarily facilitate psychological separation. They also found that the association between attachment and psychological separation with fathers accounted for the most variance, for both males and females, suggesting that fathers play an important role in balancing attachment and separation from the family. As the previous studies illustrate, a healthy sense of attachment to parents can be beneficial to student development, which further supports the idea of forming strong partnerships between administrators and parents.

Parental involvement and influence has been shown to impact students' adjustment and transition to college. In regards to the role of parents and families, Heyer and Nelson (1993) examined the relationship between parental marital status and the development of identity and emotional autonomy in college students by surveying 388 upper class students (sophomores, juniors, and seniors) at a midsized, southeastern, state university. They found that students whose parents were divorced scored higher in the areas of confidence and emotional autonomy than students whose parents were still married or whose parents were divorced and remarried. Heyer and Nelson postulated that students who had dealt with divorce had already begun to develop more independence and self-reliance, thus better equipping them for the task of developing autonomy.

Similar results were found by Hickman, Bartholomae, and McKenry (2000) in their study of the influence of parenting styles on the adjustment and academic achievements of traditional college freshmen. Hickman et al. (2000) surveyed 101 traditional-aged college freshmen at a large, Midwestern university. They found that, when compared to students from in-tact households, students from divorced households exhibited greater overall adjustment to college. Additionally, they found no significant association between parenting styles and academic achievement.

Wintre and Sugar (2000) explored the relationship with parents, personality, and the university transition in 419 first-year students. Utilizing a variety of survey instruments, they found that the role of parents could not be dismissed and that relationships with parents exerted direct influence on university adjustment, with trust and honest communication between parents and students being particularly beneficial to university adjustment.

The role of motivation, parental support, and peer support in the academic success of ethnic minority, first-generation college students was studied by Dennis, Phinney, and Chuateco in 2005. They conducted a longitudinal study of 100 first-year minority students at an ethnically diverse, commuter university on the west coast. The participants were surveyed in the fall of the freshmen year and in the fall and spring of their sophomore year. Peer support appeared to be a stronger predictor of college grades and adjustment than support from the family, most likely because first-generation college students perceive their peers as better able to provide the needed support to do well in college than their family members. The researchers noted that family members could still provide much needed emotional support but perhaps not vital instrumental support.

Researchers have also studied parental impact on student alcohol consumption. Shutt, Oswalt, and Cooper (2006) found that parental perceptions of college student drinking and intent to drink are much lower than students' actual use and intent to drink, indicating that parents' perceptions are not always in line with the reality of student behaviors. However, studies have shown that parental interactions can positively impact student drinking behaviors. Emotionally responsive, positive parental interactions have predicted lower levels of alcohol use among first-year students (Turner, Larimer, & Sarason, 2000). Students who felt they had achieved a healthy degree of emotional independence in their relationship with their parents consumed less alcohol than those students who had not (Haemmerlie, Stern, & Benedicto, 1994).

There have been conflicting results in studies of parental alcohol abuse and its effect on college students in the areas of self-esteem and depression. Taliaferro and Aponte (1990) found that Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA) college students had significantly higher levels of depression than non-ACA college students, while Duprez (1987) found no differences in self-

esteem of ACA and non-ACA students. Lease (1990) found that ACAs from both college and non-college settings had significantly less self-esteem than non-ACAs. However, Churchill, Broida, and Nicholson (1990) reported no significant relationship between parental alcoholism and college students' self-esteem. Kashubeck and Christensen (1995) surveyed a mix of 201 ACA and non-ACAs at a private university and community college and found that the quality of parental relationships, not necessarily parental alcohol abuse, impacted self-esteem and depression, with students reporting a higher quality of parental relationship also reporting lower levels of depression and higher self-esteem (Kashubeck & Christensen, 1995). Garbarino and Strange (1993) studied college adjustment and family environments of students reporting parental alcohol problems and found that students who identified themselves as adult children of alcoholics reported greater difficulties in adjusting to the college experience and reported lower degrees of personal-emotional adjustment.

Research has also explored parents as referral agents for students. Boyd, Hunt, Hunt, Magoon, and Van Brunt (1997) studied the concept of parents as referral agents by enlisting 150 sets of parents to participate in a study that was introduced at two sessions of summer orientation. Parents who chose to participate in the study were given a copy of the *Resource Directory*, a book that served as a guide to campus resources, and attended an orientation session where administrators discussed the uses of the directory and the importance of helping students do things for themselves. Parents from the other orientation sessions, 90 sets, served as a control group for the study. Fifty-seven percent of the participating sets of parents returned a follow-up survey sent after their students' first semester (Boyd et al., 1997). Forty-three percent of respondents indicated that they had used the directory to make recommendations to their student. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference between the treatment and control

groups of students with greater proportions of the treatment group persisting in good academic standing, which included no negative academic action, probation, warning, or dismissal. Thus, Boyd et al. found that equipping parents to act as informed referral agents had a demonstrably positive effect on their children's academic performance during the first year of college. This study provides administrators with an example of a parental partnership that positively impacted academic performance and supports the concept that administrators can equip parents to support their children and reinforce college resources.

A 2004 study by Janosik highlighted the importance of conversations with parents and illustrated that these conversations can result in increased confidence in administrators. He studied parents' view on the Clery Act and campus safety by surveying a random sample of 435 parents of first-year students attending summer orientation at a large, research institution in the southeast. Forty percent of parents responded that they had received the annual campus crime summary in their student's admission packet, with 25% of parents stating that they had read the summary. Almost nine out of ten parents reported hearing college administrators discussing campus crimes and safety issues at summer orientation, and seven out of ten remembered hearing these issues discussed at admissions visits and campus tours. As a result of these conversations, 84% of parents reported feeling an increased confidence in the administrators who are responsible for campus safety. As this study illustrates, printed information is not always read by parents and conversations with administrators were memorable and impactful.

Parental goals have been studied in a limited manner. Turrentine et al. (2000) published "The Parent Project: What Parents Want from the College Experience." This study identified the goals of parents for their first-year students and classified the top goals according to themes. Citing research that parents are major influences as students select colleges (Dubble, 1995;

Galotti & Mark, 1994; Litten & Hall, 1989; McGinty, 1992), Turrentine et al. also noted that parents remain important from a developmental perspective as students move from psychosocial dependence towards autonomy. Turrentine et al. stated that parents are also important as financial supporters, with 76% of first-year students receiving financial support from their parents (Sax, Astin, Korn, & Mahoney, 1997). Turrentine et al. found no studies addressing the significance of parental goals for the college experience, referencing their own work and a search of the literature conducted by Habben (1997).

Turrentine et al. (2000) conducted a two-year qualitative study at two large, public, predominantly white institutions in the southeast with enrollments ranging from 16,000 to 25,000 students. Similar institutions were chosen to highlight whether parental goals are institution-specific or similar across types of universities. Parents who attended orientation in the summer of 1997 and 1998 were encouraged to complete an electronic survey that asked the following question: What are your top three hopes or goals for your student's overall college experience?

The responses were coded based on themes established by the researchers. The top themes for parents at the first institution were job preparation (17%), quality education (17%), and maturity/independence (16%). The top themes for parents at the second institution were the same, but in a different order. They were maturity/independence (18%), quality education (16%), and job preparation (15%).

The theme of job preparation encompassed goals of career decision-making, the theme of quality education included general goals about the reputation and well-rounded nature of the educational experience, and the theme of maturity/independence encompassed psychosocial development as well as establishing specific skills for independence (Turrentine et al., 2000).



The results of the study identified a set of parental goals that was remarkably consistent across genders, residency status, and institutional type. The study featured a non-random sample and both research sites lacked a vast amount of racial and ethnic diversity. The study was the first step toward understanding parents' hopes and goals for their students, and in a way, their expectations of higher education institutions. As Turrentine et al. (2000) point out, "When parental goals are consistent with institutional values, administrators can use the results of this study to shape collegiate experiences for students that genuinely meet the expressed hopes and goals of parents" (p. 42).

The brief research on parental expectations of higher education focuses on the due process, notification practices, and expectations regarding the areas of teaching and care. Janosik (2001) studied the expectations of faculty, parents, and students regarding due process for campus disciplinary hearings that could result in suspension. He surveyed 155 faculty members, 146 parents, and 163 students from a large research university in the southeast, and asked them to respond to eighteen due process procedures based upon case law and common practices in campus judicial systems (Janosik, 2001). All three groups surveyed supported the variety of common due process practices typically employed (written supplemental information about the judicial process, the opportunity to meet with an administrator to discuss things before the hearing, etc.), even though the courts require only a minimum amount of due process protections, even in serious judicial cases (Janosik, 2001). Janosik also found that faculty expectations regarding due process procedures about the hearing itself were routinely lower than parents' or students' expectations. He postulated that this was because faculty may be more familiar with the established judicial process and have greater understanding of the educational nature of the process (Janosik, 2001).

Since 1997, Forbes (2001) has conducted an anonymous survey of the parents of incoming students at a small, liberal arts college in the South. Forbes reported that parental expectations of notification from the college showed certain trends, some which were surprising. Parents almost unanimously expressed that they expected the college to contact them if their child had a major illness, was the victim of a crime, had a major psychological problem, violated a major campus disciplinary policy, or was having academic problems. Parents were only a little less likely to expect to be notified if their child was using drugs or missing class. Finally, parents expected to be informed if their son or daughter had an outstanding athletic achievement, had applied to study abroad, or were caught drinking underage. Forbes' surprise at these findings can best be summed up by the quote of one parent, "In some cases, it is my son's responsibility to inform us. Of course, if he did not, I would appreciate hearing from the school" (Forbes, 2001, p. 15). Forbes found that parents not only expected educational leaders to know what the students were doing at all times, many also expected educational leaders to share that information with them. As Howe and Strauss (2000) noted, the parents of millennial students, used to solving all of their children's problems and hovering protectively over them, expect to be contacted about everything that involves their children. According to Young (2006), "Parents want to be involved and if possible participatory. But, laws, regulations, and conventions often impede communication" (p. 5).

While Turrentine et al. (2000) focused on parental goals, and Janosik (2001) and Forbes (2001) focused on parental expectations about the disciplinary process and notification processes, Young's (2006) study is one of the first in-depth studies to address parental expectations on a larger scale and hone in on two distinct areas of the college environment, teaching and care.

## **Young's Study of Parental Expectations**

In 2006, Young studied parental expectations of teaching and caring at Creighton University, a Jesuit, Catholic institution in the Midwest with a large number of traditional-age first-year students. To facilitate proactive partnerships with parents, the institution first had to explore parental expectations to better understand what parents wanted from the University. To frame the study, Young worked from the premise that parents do have expectations of higher education institutions, specifically in the areas of teaching and caring. He noted that it is reasonable to believe that parents expect instruction and academic learning, and his review of the literature supported an expectation of care, specifically due to the paternalistic history of higher education institutions, a caring stance parents need to develop with emerging adult children, and the generational changes in parenting that have occurred throughout the last 30 years (Young, 2006).

To explore parental expectations, Young (2006) developed, piloted, and validated the Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC) survey. The survey participants were parents of students accepted into the fall 2005 Freshman class at Creighton University as of May 19, 2005. All parents fitting this criteria (1,867 people) were contacted either by email, for those listing an email address, or by letter. The survey was available on-line for 26 days. Four hundred seventy six people completed the survey for a response rate of 25.49%.

Young (2006) focused on five research questions that dealt with the importance parents place on collegiate teaching and caring. Young explored whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the importance parents place on the university's ability to teach their student and care for their student based on the gender of the parent and whether the parent is a

first-time college parent. He also focused on whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the importance parents placed on teaching versus the importance parents placed on caring.

Young (2006) found that there was a statistically significant difference in the importance parents place on a University's ability to teach their student based on the gender of the parent, with female parents considering this to be more important than male parents. He found that there was not a statistically significant difference in the importance parents place on a University's ability to teach their student based on whether a parent is a first-time college parent. Young also found that there was a statistically significant difference in the importance parents place on a University's ability to care for their student based on the gender of the parent, with female parents considering this to be more important than male parents. He found that there was not a significantly statistical difference in the importance parents place on a University's ability to care for their student based on whether a parent was a first-time college parent. Finally, Young found that there was a statistically significant difference in the importance parents placed on a University's ability to teach their student versus the importance parents placed on a University's ability to care for their student, with parents reporting that the University's ability to care for their student was more important than the University's ability to teach their student.

Young's (2006) study was the first to explore parental expectations in an in-depth manner and he outlined several areas for future research. His first recommendation for future research is that his study should be replicated with consideration for participation from campuses that are public, private non-religious, of varying size, and located in other geographic areas of the United States. Replicating the study will, "...increase the discussion on how well higher education understands the expectations parents have as well as to further investigate whether parents place

more importance on the caring functions versus the teaching functions at other institutions” (Young, 2006, p. 134). As Young noted, “Higher education must devote more study to the parents of college students. As a major stakeholder in higher education, parents’ wants, hopes, desires, and dreams are important considerations for colleges and universities” (Young, 2006, p. 134).

As the following review of the literature has illustrated, parents can impact a student’s desire to attend college, adjustment to college, student alcohol consumption, and academic performance. In addition, parental attachment and alcohol abuse can also impact student development, the transition to college, and self esteem. The limited research on parental goals and expectations provides a framework for understanding parental actions and serves as a basis for proactive programs and outreach. In addition, a continued study of parental expectations is useful for administrators when assessing the practicality and feasibility of meeting parental expectations.

### **Summary**

The purpose, scope, and population of American higher education have changed drastically since its inception in the 1600s (Rudolph, 1962). Students have become more involved and engaged and now approach high education as customers. Parents regained the control they once abdicated and are now willing to insert themselves into campus concerns. Today’s college students and their parents are unlike any students and parents in history and present new challenges to college administrators. Many students and parents share close relationships, products of attachment parenting and enabled by technological developments that foster a high flow of information. Economic changes, specifically the idea of parents as consumers and academic capitalistic perspectives, have also contributed to highly involved

parents who expect a certain level of customer service for the monetary investment they are making in their children's futures.

Developmental theory supports the idea of forming partnership with parents, specifically the need parents have to continue to exhibit a certain level of care for their adult children and the need for students to move through autonomy toward interdependence. Current theoretical views on parenting reaffirm the need for parents to re-establish relationships with their adult children through the lens of autonomy. Thus, parents and administrators share a common goal: helping students develop autonomy and recognize interdependence while re-establishing adult relationships.

Perhaps the greatest reason for administrators to explore parental expectations in an effort to establish strong partnerships with parents is the inevitable involvement that today's parents will have in their children's educational experiences. As Scott and Daniel (2001) point out, "From the changing dynamics of families emerges the growing phenomenon of parental involvement in the college student's experience. Although institutions may resist, the parents' of today's college students clearly expect to exercise that prerogative (Scott & Daniel, 2001, p. 83)." Jackson and Murphy (2005) echo those sentiments. "College and university leaders must also understand that today's parents want to play an important role in the continuing developmental and educational process of students enrolled in their institutions (Jackson & Murphy, 2005, p. 54)." As Young (2006) noted, it is implied that today's parents will be involved in their child's academic journey, whether intentionally engaged by an administrator or left to their own devices. Thus, "The choice for an administrator becomes whether they wish to have that involvement be intentional, developmentally helpful, and proactive to the educational

process or allow it to be haphazard and without guidance from knowledgeable University personnel” (Young, 2006, p. 7).

Understanding the importance of parental partnerships again underscores the need for more research on parental expectations, specifically in the two major areas that parents focus on: teaching and caring. Young’s study began to fill the gap in the research but it is a first effort in a much-needed area. This study picked up where Young’s study left off by exploring similar research questions in a very different population.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

The purpose of this study is to examine the expectations parents have for the teaching and caring functions of a public university, while also examining the differences, if any, of parents of first-generation college students and parents with college experience. Guiding this inquiry was the following question: What expectations do parents hold about a university's teaching and caring functions, and how do these expectations differ in light of demographics including gender and parental education level?

This study was informed by Young's (2006) study of parental expectations of teaching and care. As such, the first five hypotheses were articulated and tested in Young's study.

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no statistically significant difference between the gender of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no statistically significant difference between parents of first-time college students and parents who have previously sent children to college on the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no statistically significant difference between the gender of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

H<sub>0</sub>4: There is no statistically significant difference between first-time college parents and parents who have previously sent children to college on the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

H<sub>0</sub>5: There is no statistically significant difference between the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children versus the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.



As illustrated in the review of the literature, socioeconomic status and parental education level are key factors in parental involvement. Thus, two additional hypotheses were added that dealt specifically with parental education level.

H<sub>0</sub>6: There is no statistically significant difference between the college experience of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

H<sub>0</sub>7: There is no statistically significant difference between the college experience of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

### **Research Design**

The research questions were answered through survey research methods. This study replicated a study done in 2006 at a small, private, religiously-affiliated university in the mid-west. Utilizing the Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching And Caring (PECTAC), this study examined parental expectations of teaching and caring at a large, public, research university in the south. By replicating the study in another location at a different type of institution, comparisons were made and cross-institutional trends were identified. Also, this study examined a new dimension not considered in the original study, which is whether or not the parents attended higher education institutions.

### **Research Site**

Young's first recommendation for future research urged that his study be replicated in a different setting. He stated, "Consideration should allow for parent participation from campuses that are public, private non-religious, of varying sizes, and in other geographical areas of the United States (Young, 2006, p.134)." Also, Young chose Creighton University as his research

site because the University attracted a large number of traditional-age students (18-24) and because the University was attempting to establish stronger ties with parents but had not explored parental expectations in any format. To successfully further the research collected by Young's study based on his recommendations, the research site had to be different from Creighton University in terms of size, location, and affiliation, but similar to Creighton University in terms of parent outreach and partnerships. All of the criteria listed above were considered in choosing the research site.

The research site is a public university located in the South. It is a doctoral degree granting university offering 103 undergraduate degrees and 96 graduate degrees. Total enrollment for the 2007-2008 academic year was 27,677 students, including distance education students. The institution is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Eighty-nine percent of students are in-state residents. Minority students represent approximately 25% of the total enrollment. Although the institution has a thriving distance education program that meets the needs of many non-traditional students, the university is also seeing large increases in the number of traditional-age students, enrolling the largest freshman class in the university's history, 5,246 students, in fall 2006. (Fact Book 2006-2007, 2006; Fact Book 2007-2008, 2007)

With the growth in the freshman class and the large number of traditional-age students, the research site, like Creighton University, does reach out to parents through a variety of avenues. However, the university has not attempted to examine parent expectations. The Office of Parent Services is still a relatively new office on campus and is now a part of the Dean of Students Office (Office of Parent Services, 2009). The Office of Parent Services works closely with the Ombuds Office, the Parents Council, the Parents Council President, and the Parents

Association (A. Hunt, personal communication, September 20, 2006). The Office produces several newsletters a year and also hosts a web page and answer help line for parents (Office of Parent Services, 2009). Also, the university hosts summer orientation for both students and parents and hosts an annual Family Weekend (Office of Parent Services, 2009). Another new office on campus, The Office of the First-Year Experience, has also been charged to develop strong partnerships with parents and engage parents as members of the University community (A. Smith, personal communication, July 9, 2007). The university is attempting to involve parents, but there has been no outlet to explore the expectations of parents in a proactive manner. Concerns are typically addressed after a problem has been brought to the attention of a university employee (A. Hunt, personal communication, September, 20, 2006). Thus, this institution was an ideal research site, being a mid-sized, public university that has attempted to reach out to parents, but has not examined or explored parent expectations.

### **Development of the PECTAC**

The Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC) was developed by Young and heavily influenced by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Young, 2006). The NSSE grouped items into subsections which spoke to teaching and caring (Bridges & Kuh, 200; Young, 2006). The PECTAC was constructed to better understand parents as partners and specifically examine the importance parents place on the teaching and caring roles of the higher education institutions (Young, 2006). The PECTAC contained 86 items, broken down into three distinct sections: demographic information, teaching functions, and caring functions (Young, 2006).

Sections two and three asked parents to indicate the importance placed on each item using a five-point Likert scale with the following options: Very Important, Important, Neutral,

Somewhat Unimportant, and N/A Don't Know (Young, 2006). Section two contained various subsections, and the first focused on technological resources (Young, 2006). The second subsection focused on teaching and active learning (Young, 2006). The final subsection focused on the importance of out-of-class learning opportunities (Young, 2006).

Section three focused on care and was broken into three subsections. The first subsection focused on the care of students by administrators and faculty. The second subsection focused on a caring university community. The third subsection focused on universities forming caring partnerships with parents (Young, 2006). The survey instrument was edited to remove items specific to Creighton. Specifically, item 73, "Courses where he/she is instructed by a Jesuit priest," was changed to "Opportunities to be involved in community service" because the original question had no relevance to a public university. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in the appendix.

### **Instrument Validity**

According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (1999), a valid instrument measures that which it is constructed to measure, including both content and constructs. An eleven-member expert panel was formed to review the instrument and establish validity. After the panelist review, Young administered two pilot studies and held a focus group made up of parents from the pilot studies to gain additional feedback on the survey instrument. Finally, a faculty focus group reviewed the instrument (Young, 2006).

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The research site has no formal method for collecting parent email addresses (S. Gray, personal communication, Aug. 2009). The Admissions Office does not collect parent email addresses at any point in the admissions process, and the Campus Living Office does not collect

parent email addresses during the housing sign-up process. In order to build a database of parent email addresses to aid in their work, the staff of the Office of Parent Services sets up tables at each summer orientation session and asks parents who attend to provide their email addresses. The Office of Parent Services has been collecting these email addresses for the past four years.

During the summer of 2009, the Office of Parent Services collected parent email addresses at the eight summer orientation sessions. The list contained 3,497 parent email addresses in an Excel spreadsheet. The list of parent email addresses was compiled throughout the summer and formalized during the month of September. After proposal and Institutional Review Board approval, each parent on the list was contacted via Outlook email software at the beginning of the spring 2010 semester and asked to complete the PECTAC on-line. The parents were given 30 days to complete the survey, and two reminder emails were sent during the 30 days. The on-line survey was constructed using Perseus software. For the purpose of this study, “parents” was defined as those who assume responsibility for the student and define themselves as serving in the parental role(s).

Data from the on-line survey was imported into SPSS for data analysis. Data analysis began with an overall descriptive statistical account of results using frequencies and means for each survey item as appropriate. Data was then combined in vectors by sections of the PETAC survey in order to facilitate hypothesis testing. Descriptive statistics of the vectors were calculated followed by t-tests to explore research hypotheses as follows:

$H_01$ : There is no statistically significant difference between the gender of the parent and the importance parents place on a university’s ability to teach their children. An independent t-test was used to establish the statistical significance of differences in findings for this hypothesis.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no statistically significant difference between first-time college parents and parents who have previously sent children to college on the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children. An independent t-test was used to establish the statistical significance of differences in findings for this hypothesis.

H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no statistically significant difference between the gender of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children. An independent t-test was used to establish the statistical significance of differences in findings for this hypothesis.

H<sub>0</sub>4: There is no statistically significant difference between first-time college parents and parents who have previously sent children to college on the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children. An independent t-test was used to establish the statistical significance of differences in findings for this hypothesis.

H<sub>0</sub>5: There is no statistically significant difference between the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children versus the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children. A correlation coefficient, specifically a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, was used to establish the statistical significance of differences in findings for this hypothesis.

H<sub>0</sub>6: There is no statistically significant difference between the college experience of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children. An independent t-test was used to establish the statistical significance of differences in findings for this hypothesis.

H<sub>0</sub>7: There is no statistically significant difference between the college experience of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children. An independent t-test was used to establish the statistical significance of differences in findings for this hypothesis.

Separate regression equations were calculated to confirm the relative influence of parental gender, first time college parent status, and parental college experience on parental perceptions of the quality of teaching and quality of care received by their child. Multiple regression analysis, one of the most commonly used multivariate correlational statistics, was appropriate in this study as it determines the magnitude of the relationship between a criterion variable and a combination of two or more predictor variables (Gall et al., 1999). In this case, collegiate teaching and caring served as the criterion variables and parental gender, first time college parent status, and parental college experience served as the predictor variables.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined parental expectations of collegiate teaching and care at a large, public research university in the South. While research is needed in this area, there were limitations to this study. First, the study was conducted in January, after the first semester ended. Young utilized the email addresses of all of the parents of accepted first-year students at Creighton in 2006. The email addresses were collected by the Creighton Admissions Office as part of the admissions process and he contacted all of the parents via email in May 2006 and asked them to complete the PECTAC survey. Because the institution being studied did not collect parent email addresses until the summer orientation sessions, it was impossible to contact the parents of accepted students and administer the survey before the beginning of the academic year. Additionally, the Office of Parent Services spent approximately two months compiling the

list of parent email addresses collected at the orientation sessions. Thus, Young's results were based on parents who may not have experienced sending children to college or sending children to Creighton specifically. The results of this survey reflect the views of parents who have already experienced one semester with their student attending the institution being studied. Their expectations may have been shaped by experiences they already had with their child or with faculty, staff, or administrators.

Second, because the parent email addresses were collected at the summer orientation sessions, no email addresses were collected from parents who did not or could not attend summer orientation. Additionally, it is understandable that parents who did attend the orientation sessions had already shown a commitment to involvement by their attendance and thus may have reported different expectations than parents who did not or could not attend.

If this study follows the results of Young's study, then parents will report a statistically significant difference in their expectations of collegiate teaching and care, with care being ranked as a higher expectation than teaching. This prediction will be confirmed or disconfirmed through statistical analysis and specifically the administration of t-tests. Also, the study will provide a point of comparison for the expectations of parents who attended a higher education institution and those who have first-generation college students.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS**

This chapter provides a summary of the survey administration and presents the results of the data analysis in five sections. The first three sections feature descriptive data, the fourth section focuses on each of the research hypotheses, and the fifth section focuses on the results of the multiple regression analysis. The first section focuses on the demographic information reported by respondents. The second section reports the frequencies of answers and items identified as most important for the teaching sections of the PECTAC. The third section reports the frequencies of answers and items identified as most important for the caring sections of the PECTAC. The fourth section reports the findings for each of the seven research hypotheses.

### **Summary of Survey Administration**

The Office of Parent Services collected 3,497 email addresses during the eight orientation sessions of summer 2009. When the email addresses were uploaded into Perseus, three were not recognized as valid email addresses, leaving 3,494. An invitation email with a link to the survey (see Appendix C) was sent to 3,494 parent email addresses on January 8, 2010. A reminder email with a link to the survey (see Appendix D) was sent on January 22, 2010. A final reminder email with a link to the survey (see Appendix E) was sent on February 1, 2010. After the three mailings, one address was returned as terminated, 87 were returned as undeliverable, and 16 parents responded and stated their students did not choose to attend the research site or no longer attended the research site. One parent responded and asked to be removed from the list without indicating whether his/her child is still a student at the research site. Therefore, the number of valid email addresses was reduced to 3,389. The survey closed at the end of the day on February 8, 2010, giving eligible parents one month to complete the survey. Of the 3,389 potential participants, 1,137 completed the survey for a response rate of 33.5%.

## Demographic Information

The majority of respondents identified as female and married. Female respondents made up 81.1% ( $n = 922$ ), and male respondents made up 18.9% ( $n = 215$ ). While two respondents did not indicate a marital status, 87.2% ( $n = 992$ ) identified as married, 9.1% ( $n = 104$ ) identified as divorced, 2.3% ( $n = 26$ ) identified as single parent, and 1.1% ( $n = 13$ ) identified as widowed. Over half of the respondents, 56.9% ( $n = 647$ ), identified the gender of their student as female with 43.1% ( $n = 490$ ) identifying their student as male. Regarding ethnicity, 91.2% ( $n = 1,037$ ) identified as Caucasian. Table 1 lists the responses of parent ethnicity. Nearly all participants, 98.4% ( $n = 1,119$ ), reported that English is their native language. Less than 2% ( $n = 14$ ) reported that English is not their native language and four did not answer that question. Four respondents also chose not to answer the question related to education level while 28.8% ( $n = 327$ ) of respondents reported they had completed high school, 48.7% ( $n = 554$ ) of respondents reported they had completed a Bachelor's degree, 19.1% ( $n = 217$ ) of respondents reported they had completed a Master's degree, and 3.1% ( $n = 35$ ) of respondents reported they had completed a PhD or terminal degree.

Approximately half of the respondents, 52.6% ( $n = 598$ ), reported having two children, 13.2% ( $n = 150$ ) reported having one child, and 24.1% ( $n = 274$ ) reported having three children. The majority of respondents, 56.8% ( $n = 646$ ), reported this was their first experience as the parent of a college student, and 43.2% ( $n = 491$ ) of respondents reported this was not their first experience as the parent of a college student. In regard to programs of study at the research site, almost one-fourth of respondents, 21.6% ( $n = 246$ ), reported being unsure of the school/college their student is entering. Fifteen percent ( $n = 170$ ) reported their student is entering the College of Business, 10.4% ( $n = 118$ ) reported their student is entering the College of Education,

Table 1

*Parent Ethnicity*

Ethnicity	<i>f</i>	Percent
African American/Black	68	6
American Indian/Alaskan Native	13	1.1
Caucasian	1037	91.2
Mexican American/Chicano	6	.5
Pacific Islander	5	.4
Puerto Rican	4	.4
Other Latino	9	.8
Other/Mixed Ethnicity	20	1.8

*Note.* Participants were allowed to select all ethnicities that apply to them.

10.2% ( $n = 116$ ) reported their student is entering the College of Fine Arts and Communication, and 10% ( $n = 114$ ) reported their student is entering the College of Nursing. Table 2 lists the colleges that students are entering. Most parents were very or somewhat involved in their student's college decision with 57.6% ( $n = 655$ ) reporting being very involved and 36.1% ( $n = 410$ ) reporting being somewhat involved.

In regards to technology in the home, 53.1% ( $n = 604$ ) reported having 3 or more computers in their home and 97.6% ( $n = 1,110$ ) reporting having DSL/cable Internet access at home. While 32.7% ( $n = 372$ ) reported having two computers at home and 13.8% ( $n = 157$ ) reported having one computer at home, .4% ( $n = 4$ ) reported not having any type of Internet access in the home.

### **Results of the Teaching Sections**

The PECTAC survey was divided into two main sections after the demographic information section; teaching functions and caring functions. Each section had three subsections. The teaching subsections were technology resources provided in support of learning, active and team learning, and out of class learning opportunities. Each subsection featured 10 to 14 items which asked respondents to indicate the importance placed on each item using a five-point Likert scale with the following options: Very Important, Important, Neutral, Somewhat Unimportant, and N/A Don't Know. Responses were required for each of these items. Each subsection also contained a final question asking respondents to select the two items that are most important to them as parents. This question was optional so respondents were allowed to choose zero, one, or two items.

Table 2

*Colleges Students Are Entering*

College	<i>f</i>	Percent
Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences	56	4.9
Brody School of Medicine	21	1.8
College of Allied Health Sciences	84	7.4
College of Business	170	15
College of Education	118	10.4
College of Fine Arts and Communication	116	10.2
College of Health and Human Performance	88	7.7
College of Human Ecology	58	5.1
College of Nursing	114	10
College of Technology and Computer Science	57	5
Unsure	246	21.6
Not Answered	9	.8

## **Results of Teaching Section A: Technology Resources Provided in Support of Learning**

This subsection focused on technology resources provided in support of learning. It contained 14 items for respondents to rank using the Likert scale and contained a final question asking respondents to select the two items that are most important to them as parents.

Of the 14 items, the five that were selected as Very Important with the highest frequency were “email access to his/her faculty instructors” ( $n = 997$ ,  $M = 4.28$ ,  $SD = .434$ ), “email access to his/her academic advisor” ( $n = 952$ ,  $M = 4.82$ ,  $SD = .456$ ), “high-speed Internet access in his/her residence hall room” ( $n = 944$ ,  $M = 4.72$ ,  $SD = .783$ ), “web access to view tuition and fees and financial aid information” ( $n = 919$ ,  $M = 4.79$ ,  $SD = .466$ ), and “web access to register/drop/add courses and view tuition and fees” ( $n = 901$ ,  $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = .461$ ). Table 3 illustrates all items in this subsection and the frequency that parents selected each item as Very Important or Important. “A University-provided portable computer” was ranked as Somewhat Unimportant by 171 respondents ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 1.042$ ). In contrast, the second highest item ranked as Somewhat Unimportant was “access to computer labs” ( $n = 19$ ,  $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = .865$ ).

After ranking each item’s importance individually, respondents were asked to select the two items that were the most important to them as parents. The item that was selected by most respondents as most important was “email access to his/her faculty instructor” ( $n = 389$ ,  $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = .475$ ). The next item selected by most respondents as most important was “web access to register/drop/add courses and view tuition and fees” ( $n = 324$ ,  $M = 4.28$ ,  $SD = .452$ ). The item selected by the least amount of participants as important was “a University-provided portable computer” ( $n = 23$ ,  $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = .141$ ).

Table 3

*Teaching Section A: Items Ranked as Very Important or Important*


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PECTAC Item	Very Important	Important
General academic advising information via a website	606	455
Web access to register/drop/add courses and view tuition and fees	901	220
Web access to view tuition and fees and financial aid information	919	198
Specific academic advising information via a website for my student	644	391
Access to a University-provided email account	743	294
Access to textbooks required and ordering via a website	665	680
Access to computer labs	587	359
High-speed Internet access in his/her residence hall room	944	137
Wireless Internet access throughout campus	845	253
Training on the University library's digital resources	498	491
A University-provided portable computer	177	229
Email access to his/her faculty instructors	977	146
Academic content delivered via a course website	526	435
Email access to his/her academic advisor	952	169

## Results of Teaching Section B: Active and Team Learning

This subsection focused on active and team learning. It contained 10 items for respondents to rank using the Likert scale and contained a final question asking respondents to select the two items that are most important to them as parents.

Of the 10 items, the five that were selected as Very Important with the highest frequency were “be given consistent feedback on written work” ( $n = 867$ ,  $M = 4.75$ ,  $SD = .460$ ), “leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise” ( $n = 811$ ,  $M = 4.69$ ,  $SD = .529$ ), “use the Internet to research an assignment” ( $n = 612$ ,  $M = 4.47$ ,  $SD = .623$ ), “present in front of peers and the instructor using technological means” ( $n = 328$ ,  $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = .823$ ), and “discuss and critique ideas from readings with other students and the instructor during courses” ( $n = 321$ ,  $M = 3.99$ ,  $SD = .866$ ). Table 4 illustrates all items in this subsection and the frequency that parents selected each item as Very Important or Important. “Participate in group projects outside of class using instant messaging” was ranked as Somewhat Unimportant by 183 respondents ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $SD = .890$ ). The second highest item ranked as Somewhat Unimportant was “learn via an online course” ( $n = 163$ ,  $M = 3.22$ ,  $SD = .886$ ).

After ranking each item’s importance individually, respondents were asked to select the two items that were the most important to them as parents. The item that was selected by most respondents as most important was “be given consistent feedback on written work” ( $n = 693$ ,  $M = .61$ ,  $SD = .488$ ). The next item selected by most respondents as most important was “leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise” ( $n = 670$ ,  $M = .59$ ,  $SD = .492$ ). The item selected by the least amount of participants as important was “participate in group projects outside of class using instant messaging” ( $n = 9$ ,  $M = .01$ ,  $SD = .089$ ).



Table 4

*Teaching Section B: Items Ranked as Very Important or Important*

PECTAC Item	Very Important	Important
Discuss and critique ideas from readings with other students and the instructor during courses	321	564
Present in front of peers and the instructor using technological Means	328	548
Outperform the faculty instructor's expectations	283	560
Participate in group projects outside of class using instant Messaging	77	243
Learn via an online course	84	311
Participate in community-based or service-based course projects	234	572
Use the Internet to research an assignment	612	456
Complete assignments via a course website	236	497
Leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise	811	303
Be given consistent feedback on written work	867	258

## Results of Teaching Section C: Out of Class Learning Opportunities

This subsection focused on out of class learning opportunities. It contained 13 items for respondents to rank using the Likert scale and contained a final question asking respondents to select the two items that are most important to them as parents.

Of the 13 items, the five that were selected as Very Important with the highest frequency were “receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested” ( $n = 937$ ,  $M = 4.81$ ,  $SD = .425$ ), “have access to career counseling and placement services” ( $n = 849$ ,  $M = 4.72$ ,  $SD = .507$ ), “access to student tutoring and academic support” ( $n = 816$ ,  $M = 4.69$ ,  $SD = .533$ ), “be provided with opportunities for internships” ( $n = 787$ ,  $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = .523$ ), and “be provided with training on how to be more responsible” ( $n = 585$ ,  $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = .779$ ). Table 5 illustrates all items in this subsection and the frequency that parents selected each item as Very Important or Important. “Have opportunities to learn about someone from a different race/culture” was selected as Somewhat Unimportant by 55 respondents ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = .841$ ). The second highest item ranked as Somewhat Unimportant was “Be provided with information on developing good morals” ( $n = 39$ ,  $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = .893$ ).

After ranking each item’s importance individually, respondents were asked to select the two items that were the most important to them as parents. The item that was selected by most respondents as most important was “have access to career counseling and placement services” ( $n = 490$ ,  $M = .43$ ,  $SD = .495$ ). The item selected by most respondents as most important was “receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested” ( $n = 454$ ,  $M = .40$ ,  $SD = .490$ ). The item selected by the least amount of participants as important was “have access to services and resources in the greater city area” ( $n = 10$ ,  $M = .01$ ,  $SD = .093$ ).

Table 5

*Teaching Section C: Items Ranked as Very Important or Important*

PECTAC Item	Very Important	Important
Be provided with training on how to be more responsible	585	404
Have opportunities to join a variety of clubs and organizations	407	583
Receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested	937	189
Be provided with opportunities for internships	787	329
Have opportunities to learn about someone from a different race/culture	238	513
Be provided with opportunities for service and volunteerism	359	582
Have access to services and resources in the greater city area	211	559
Be provided with remedial or disability services if needed	459	416
Access to student tutoring and academic support	816	297
Have opportunities to socialize in group activities	360	627
Complete a practicum or internship using technology	303	564
Have access to career counseling and placement services	849	263
Be provided with information on developing good morals	418	431

## Results of the Caring Sections

The second section of the PECTAC focused on the caring functions of the University and was divided into three subsections. The caring subsections were a caring faculty, a caring University community, and being in partnership with parents. Each subsection featured 9 to 11 items where respondents were asked to indicate the importance placed on each item using a five-point Likert scale with the following options: Very Important, Important, Neutral, Somewhat Unimportant, and N/A Don't Know. Respondents were required to respond to each of these items. Each subsection also contained a final question asking respondents to select the two items that are most important to them as parents. This question was optional so respondents were allowed to choose zero, one, or two items.

### Results of Caring Section A: A Caring Faculty

The first subsection focused on a caring faculty. This subsection contained nine items for respondents to rank using the Likert scale and contained a final question asking respondents to select the two items that are most important to them as parents.

Of the nine items, the five that were selected as Very Important with the highest frequency were “be treated fairly by the course instructor(s)” ( $n = 1017$ ,  $M = 4.89$ ,  $SD = .333$ ), “develop plans for a major with his/her academic advisor” ( $n = 843$ ,  $M = 4.72$ ,  $SD = .489$ ), “have regular contact with his/her academic advisor” ( $n = 802$ ,  $M = .469$ ,  $SD = .503$ ), “be known on a personal level by at least one faculty member” ( $n = 717$ ,  $M = .454$ ,  $SD = .667$ ), and “receive information on additional tutoring from his/her course instructor(s)” ( $n = 692$ ,  $M = 4.57$ ,  $SD = .588$ ). Table 6 illustrates all items in this subsection and the frequency that parents selected each item as Very Important or Important. “Have access to his/her course instructor(s) outside of class” was ranked as Somewhat Unimportant by 13 respondents ( $M = 4.46$ ,  $SD = .706$ ). The

Table 6

*Caring Section A: Items Ranked as Very Important or Important*


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PECTAC Item	Very Important	Important
Have regular contact with his/her academic advisor	802	318
Develop plans for a major with his/her academic advisor	843	274
Be known on a personal level by at least one faculty member	717	333
Be known by his/her course instructor(s)	554	499
Be treated fairly by the course instructor(s)	1017	115
Have access to his/her course instructor(s) outside of class	635	411
Be provided the opportunity to give feedback on his/her course instructor(s)	548	476
Receive information on additional tutoring from his/her course instructor(s)	692	409
Be instructed by a faculty member rather than a teaching assistant	464	441

second highest item ranked as Somewhat Unimportant was “Be instructed by a faculty member rather than a teaching assistant” ( $n = 12$ ,  $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = .832$ ).

After ranking each item’s importance individually, respondents were asked to select the two items that were the most important to them as parents. The item that was selected by most respondents as most important was “have regular contact with his/her academic advisor” ( $n = 499$ ,  $M = .44$ ,  $SD = .496$ ). The next item selected by most respondents as most important was “be treated fairly by the course instructor(s)” ( $n = 428$ ,  $M = .38$ ,  $SD = .485$ ). The item selected by the least amount of participants as important was “be provided the opportunity to give feedback on his/her course instructor(s)” ( $n = 63$ ,  $M = .06$ ,  $SD = .229$ ).

### **Results of Caring Section B: A Caring University Community**

This subsection focused on a caring University community. It contained 11 items for respondents to rank using the Likert scale and contained a final question asking respondents to select the two items that are most important to them as parents.

Of the 11 items, the five that were selected as Very Important with the highest frequency were “health care at the student health center” ( $n = 774$ ,  $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = .562$ ), “programs orienting him/her to collegiate life” ( $n = 610$ ,  $M = 4.48$ ,  $SD = .615$ ), “programming welcoming your student to campus life” ( $n = 591$ ,  $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = .667$ ), “a University that appreciates the uniqueness of each student” ( $n = 519$ ,  $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = .725$ ), and “care at the student counseling center” ( $n = 462$ ,  $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = .751$ ). Table 7 illustrates all items in this subsection and the frequency that parents selected each item as Very Important or Important. “Opportunities to grow in his/her faith life” was ranked as Somewhat Unimportant by 43 respondents ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = .917$ ). The second highest item ranked as Somewhat Unimportant was “A friend in his/her floor RA (Resident Assistant) if living on campus” ( $n = 31$ ,  $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.063$ ).

Table 7

*Caring Section B: Items Ranked as Very Important or Important*


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PECTAC Item	Very Important	Important
Programming welcoming your student to campus life	591	464
Opportunities to explore his/her leadership potential	454	584
A University community that appreciates the uniqueness of each Student	519	493
Programs orienting him/her to collegiate life	610	479
Support and challenge like a parent might give	394	522
Health care at the student health center	774	329
Opportunities to learn how to be in community with others	378	576
A friend in his/her floor RA, if living on campus	285	445
Opportunities to grow in his/her faith life	380	405
Care at the student counseling center	462	539
Opportunities to participate in community service	303	578

After ranking each item's importance individually, respondents were asked to select the two items that were the most important to them as parents. The item that was selected by most respondents as most important was "health care at the student health center" ( $n = 449$ ,  $M = .39$ ,  $SD = .489$ ). The next item selected by most respondents as most important was "programs orienting him/her to collegiate life" ( $n = 380$ ,  $M = .33$ ,  $SD = .472$ ). The item selected by the least amount of participants as important was "opportunities to learn how to be in community with others" ( $n = 75$ ,  $M = .07$ ,  $SD = .248$ ).

### **Results of Caring Section C: Being in Partnership with Parents**

This subsection focused on a caring University community. It contained 11 items for respondents to rank using the Likert scale and contained a final question asking respondents to select the two items that are most important to them as parents.

Of the 11 items, the five that were selected as Very Important with the highest frequency were "provide a safe and secure campus" ( $n = 1,111$ ,  $M = 4.98$ ,  $SD = .158$ ), "provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested" ( $n = 960$ ,  $M = 4.84$ ,  $SD = .372$ ), "notify me if my student is using illegal substances" ( $n = 848$ ,  $M = 4.68$ ,  $SD = .626$ ), "contact me if my student is caught cheating or plagiarizing" ( $n = 775$ ,  $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = .711$ ), and "provide my student unlimited visits at the student counseling center, if needed" ( $n = 661$ ,  $M = 4.49$ ,  $SD = .688$ ). The items "provide a safe and secure campus" and "provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested" were not marked as Somewhat Unimportant by any respondents. Table 8 illustrates all items in this subsection and the frequency that parents selected each item as Very Important or Important. "Notify me if my student is drinking illegally" was ranked as Somewhat Unimportant by 33 respondents ( $M =$



Table 8

*Caring Section C: Items Ranked as Very Important or Important*

PECTAC Item	Very Important	Important
Notify me of my student's academic success on a regular basis	642	331
Contact me if my student is caught cheating or plagiarizing	775	265
Have my calls returned by members of the faculty or administration within 24 hours	611	402
Provide a safe and secure campus	1111	25
Provide me with my student's major and degree progress information via a website	599	404
Discipline my student fairly if he/she breaks University policies and procedures	659	443
Provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested	960	174
Notify me if my student is using illegal substances	848	226
Orient me as to how I will be involved in my student's education	464	478
Provide my student unlimited visits at the student counseling center, if needed	661	380
Notify me if my student is drinking illegally	560	353

4.25,  $SD = .895$ ). The second highest item ranked as Somewhat Unimportant was “Orient me as to how I will be involved in my student’s education” ( $n = 26$ ,  $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = .811$ ).

After ranking each item’s importance individually, respondents were asked to select the two items that were the most important to them as parents. The item that was selected by most respondents as most important was “provide a safe and secure campus” ( $n = 825$ ,  $M = .73$ ,  $SD = .446$ ). The next item selected by most respondents as most important was “notify me of my student’s academic success on a regular basis” ( $n = 421$ ,  $M = .37$ ,  $SD = .483$ ). The item selected by the least amount of participants as important was “contact me if my student is caught cheating or plagiarizing” ( $n = 29$ ,  $M = .03$ ,  $SD = .158$ ).

### **Findings for Research Hypotheses**

The research hypotheses were tested using independent sample t-tests and a Pearson product-moment correlation. To utilize these statistical tests, the results of the three teaching sections were combined into one vector, known as Teaching Total, and the results of the three caring sections were combined into one vector, known as Caring Total. These vectors were computed as new variables. For the variable Teaching Total, the mean was 4.24, and the standard deviation was .316. For the variable Caring Total, the mean was 4.42, and the standard deviation was .329.

### **Hypothesis One**

$H_01$ : There is no statistically significant difference between the gender of the parent and the importance parents place on a university’s ability to teach their children.

This hypothesis aimed to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the independent variable, parent gender, and the mean of the dependent variable, Teaching Total. The means of these variables were tested using an independent t test

with an alpha of .05. There is a statistically significant difference between the expectations of female parents ( $n = 922$ ,  $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = .313$ ) and male parents ( $n = 215$ ,  $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = .318$ ) regarding the teaching functions of the university;  $t(1135) = 4.5$ ,  $p \leq .000$ . Equal variances were assumed. The null hypothesis should be rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the gender of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

### **Hypothesis Two**

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no statistically significant difference between first-time college parents and parents who have previously sent children to college on the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

This hypothesis aimed to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the independent variable, college parent experience, and the mean of the dependent variable, Teaching Total. The means of these variables were tested using an independent t test with an alpha of .05. There is not a statistically significant difference between the expectations of first-time college parents ( $n = 646$ ,  $M = 4.24$ ,  $SD = .317$ ) and parents who have previously sent children to college ( $n = 491$ ,  $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = .316$ ) regarding the teaching functions of the university;  $t(1135) = .418$ ,  $p \leq .676$ . Equal variances were assumed. The null hypothesis should be accepted. There is not a statistically significant difference between first-time college parents and parents who have previously sent children to college and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

### **Hypothesis Three**

H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no statistically significant difference between the gender of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

This hypothesis aims to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the independent variable, parent gender, and the mean of the dependent variable, Caring Total. The means of these variables were tested using an independent t test with an alpha of .05. There is a statistically significant difference between the expectations of female parents ( $n = 922, M = 4.44, SD = .323$ ) and male parents ( $n = 215, M = 4.33, SD = .340$ ) regarding the caring functions of the university;  $t(1135) = 4.73, p \leq .000$ . Equal variances were assumed. The null hypothesis should be rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the gender of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

#### **Hypothesis Four**

H<sub>0</sub>4: There is no statistically significant difference between first-time college parents and parents who have previously sent children to college on the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

This hypothesis aims to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the independent variable, college parent experience, and the mean of the dependent variable, Caring Total. The means of these variables were tested using an independent t test with an alpha of .05. There is not a statistically significant difference between the expectations of first-time college parents ( $n = 646, M = 4.42, SD = .329$ ) and parents who have previously sent children to college ( $n = 491, M = 4.42, SD = .329$ ) regarding the caring functions of the university;  $t(1135) = .317, p \leq .752$ . Equal variances were assumed. The null hypothesis should be accepted. There is not a statistically significant difference between first-time college parents and parents who have previously sent children to college and the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

### **Hypothesis Five**

H<sub>0</sub>5: There is no statistically significant difference between the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children versus the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

This hypothesis aims to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the variable, Caring Total, and the variable, Teaching Total. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children. There was a correlation between the two variables;  $r(1137) = .696, p \leq .000$ . Thus there is a strong positive correlation association between the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children. Parents who care about the university's ability to care for their child are likely to also care about the ability of the university to teach their child. The converse is also true. Thus, the null hypothesis should be accepted.

### **Hypothesis Six**

H<sub>0</sub>6: There is no statistically significant difference between the college experience of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

To test this hypothesis, the results of PECTAC question 6, education level, had to be re-coded in SPSS. The question asked parents to mark the highest education level completed, and the choices were High School, Bachelors, Masters, and PhD or Terminal Degree. The responses for high school represent parents without college experience. The responses for Bachelors, Masters, and PhD or Terminal Degree were re-coded into one response, which represents parental college experience.

This hypothesis aims to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the independent variable, parent college experience, and the mean of the dependent variable, Teaching Total. The means of these variables were tested using an independent t test with an alpha of .05. There is a statistically significant difference between the expectations of parents who did not attend higher education ( $n = 327$ ,  $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = .346$ ) and parents who did attend higher education ( $n = 806$ ,  $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = .302$ ) regarding the teaching functions of the university;  $t(537.93) = 2.31$ ,  $p = .021$ . Equal variances were not assumed. The null hypothesis should be rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the college experience of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children.

### **Hypothesis Seven**

$H_07$ : There is no statistically significant difference between the college experience of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

To test this hypothesis, the results of PECTAC question 6, education level, had to be re-coded in SPSS. The question asked parents to mark the highest education level completed, and the choices were High School, Bachelors, Masters, and PhD or Terminal Degree. The responses for Bachelors, Masters, and PhD or Terminal Degree were re-coded into one response, which represents parent college experience.

This hypothesis aims to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the independent variable, parent college experience, and the mean of the dependent variable, Caring Total. The means of these variables were tested using an independent t test with an alpha of .05. There is a statistically significant difference between the expectations of parents who did not attend higher education ( $n = 327$ ,  $M = 4.48$ ,  $SD = .335$ ) and parents who did attend

higher education ( $n = 806$ ,  $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = .324$ ) regarding the caring functions of the university;  $t(1131) = 4.01$ ,  $p \leq .000$ . Equal variances were assumed. The null hypothesis should be rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the college experience of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children.

### **Results of Multiple Regression Analysis**

Multiple regression analysis determines the magnitude of the relationship between a criterion variable and a combination of two or more predictor variables (Gall et al., 1999). In this case, Teaching Total and Caring Total served as the criterion variables and parental gender, first time college parent status, and parent college experience served as the predictor variables. In regards to Teaching Total, parent gender, first time college parent status, and college experience are weakly associated with parental expectations of collegiate teaching ( $R = .14$ ). The regression was a very poor fit ( $R^2_{adj} = 1\%$ ), which means that knowing a parent's gender, first time college parent status, and college experience is not enough to be able to predict the importance the parent places on the teaching functions of the university. The factors of parent gender, first time college parent status, and college experience jointly explain approximately one percent of variation in parental expectations of collegiate teaching. The overall relationship was significant ( $F_{(3, 1129)} = 8.18$ ,  $p \leq .000$ ), but only the effect of gender was significant;  $t(1129) = -4.285$ ,  $p \leq .000$ . The effect of gender was also negative. Thus, a change in gender negatively impacts expectations of teaching. As such, mothers were more likely to have higher expectations than fathers. Table 9 presents a summary of the results of the multiple regression analyses for the criterion variables Teaching Total and Caring Total.

Table 9

*Summary of Multiple Regression Results for Teaching Total and Caring Total*

Variable	Teaching Total			Caring Total		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	4.46	.05	.000	4.68	.052	.000
Gender	-.102	.024	.000*	-.108	.025	.000*
First time college parent status	-.006	.019	.766	.000	.02	.993
College experience	-.042	.021	.041	-.078	.021	.000*

*Note.* \*  $p < .01$ .



In regards to Caring Total, parent gender, first time college parent status, and college experience are weakly associated with parental expectations of collegiate teaching ( $R = .17$ ). The regression was a very poor fit ( $R^2_{\text{adj}} = 2.8\%$ ), which means that knowing a parent's gender, first time college parent status, and college experience is not enough to be able to predict the importance the parent places on the caring functions of the university. The factors of parent gender, first time college parent status, and college experience jointly explain approximately three percent of variation in parental expectations of collegiate teaching. The overall relationship was significant ( $F_{(3,1129)} = 11.83, p \leq .000$ ). The effect of gender was significant and negative;  $t(1129) = -4.37, p \leq .000$ . The effect of college experience was also significant and negative;  $t(1129) = -3.61, p \leq .000$ . Thus, a change in gender negatively impacts expectations of caring. As such, mothers were more likely to have higher expectations than fathers. Also, a change in college experience negatively impacts expectations of caring. As such, parents without college experience were more likely to have higher expectations than parents with college experience.

### **Summary**

Parents of first-year students were surveyed regarding their expectations of collegiate teaching and caring. Of the 3,389 potential participants, 1,137 completed the survey for a response rate of 33.5%. The majority of respondents identified as female and married. Almost all participants identified as Caucasian and identified English as their native language. Approximately one fourth of participants completed high school as their highest level of education and one half of participants earned Bachelor's degrees as their highest level of education. About half of the respondents reported having two children and reported this was their first experience as the parent of a college student. Approximately half of the respondents

identified having three computers in their homes and almost all participants reported having DSL/cable Internet access at their homes.

The teaching section of the survey was divided into three subsections. The first subsection focused on technology resources. The five items selected as Very Important at the highest frequency were “email access to his/her faculty instructors”, “email access to his/her academic advisor”, “high-speed Internet access in his/her residence hall room”, “web access to view tuition and fees and financial aid information”, and “web access to register/drop/add courses and view tuition and fees”

The second teaching subsection focused on active and team learning. The five items selected as Very Important at the highest frequency were “be given consistent feedback on written work”, “leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise”, “use the Internet to research an assignment”, “present in front of peers and the instructor using technological means”, and “discuss and critique ideas from readings with other students and the instructor during courses”.

The third teaching subsection focused on out of class learning experiences. The five items selected as Very Important at the highest frequency were “receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested”, “have access to career counseling and placement services”, “access to student tutoring and academic support”, “be provided with opportunities for internships”, and “be provided with training on how to be more responsible”.

The caring section of the survey was divided into three subsections. The first subsection focused on a caring faculty. The five items selected as Very Important at the highest frequency were “be treated fairly by the course instructor(s)”, “develop plans for a major with his/her academic advisor”, “have regular contact with his/her academic advisor”, “be known on a

personal level by at least one faculty member”, and “receive information on additional tutoring from his/her course instructor(s)”.

The second caring subsection focused on a caring University community. The five items selected as Very Important at the highest frequency were “health care at the student health center”, “programs orienting him/her to collegiate life”, “programming welcoming your student to campus life”, “a University that appreciates the uniqueness of each student”, and “care at the student counseling center”.

The third caring subsection focused on partnerships with parents. The five items selected as Very Important at the highest frequency were “provide a safe and secure campus”, “provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested”, “notify me if my student is using illegal substances”, “contact me if my student is caught cheating or plagiarizing”, and “provide my student unlimited visits at the student counseling center, if needed”.

In regards to the research hypotheses, there is a statistically significant difference between the gender of the parent and the importance parents place on a university’s ability to teach their children and care for their children. Also, the factor of gender has a significant effect on parent expectations of teaching and caring, based on the multiple regression analyses. However, knowing the gender of the parent is not enough to predict the importance parents place on the teaching and caring functions of the university.

There is not a statistically significant difference between first-time college parents and parents who have previously sent children to college and the importance parents place on a university’s ability to teach their children and care for their children. First-time college parent status does not have a significant effect on parent expectations of teaching and caring.

There is a statistically significant difference between the college experience of the parent and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children and care for their children. The factor of college experience has a significant effect on the parent expectations of caring, based on the multiple regression analyses. However, knowing the college experience of the parent is not enough to predict the importance parents place on the teaching and caring functions of the university.

There is a strong positive correlation association between the importance parents place on a university's ability to care for their children and the importance parents place on a university's ability to teach their children. Parents who care about the teaching functions of the university are also likely to care about the caring functions of the university, and parents who care about the caring functions of the university are also likely to care about the teaching functions of the university.

The significance of these findings were analyzed within the context of the current literature and Young's study in the next chapter. Chapter five offers an exploration of the implications of these results and discussion regarding how these results can impact practice.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION**

This study, predicated on Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Theory of Psychosocial Development and specifically focused on vector three, sought to address one overarching research question and seven null hypotheses related to the topic of parental expectations of collegiate teaching and caring. This chapter features a review of the participant demographics, the major findings of the study, a comparison of the findings of this study to the findings of Young's (2006) study, information about the theoretical framework, implications for practitioners, recommendations for future research, and limitations of the study.

### **Participant Demographics**

The participants in the study consisted of parents of first-year students at a large, public university in the South. Participants were surveyed during the beginning of the 2010 spring semester. Of the possible 3,389 parents who submitted email addresses to the Office of Parent Services, approximately one third completed the survey. Demographically, the vast majority of respondents were female, married, and Caucasian.

### **Major Findings of the Study**

There are nine major findings. Each one is discussed in detail in the following paragraphs, with a discussion of factors potentially impacting or contributing to the finding and how it relates to the literature. The findings highlight different areas of importance for mothers and fathers, parents with and without college experience, and topics that are important to all parents.

*Teaching and caring are more important to mothers than fathers.* Clearly, gender has an impact on how parents view teaching and caring, which may be due to the different types of relationships that mothers and fathers form with their children. This is supported in the literature

as men and women develop family relationships differently, and fathers play an important role in balancing attachment and separation from the family (Kenny, 1987, 1990; Kenny & Donaldson, 1992; Schwartz & Buboltz, 2004; Straub & Rogers, 1986).

*Teaching and caring are more important to parents who do not have college experience than parents who have college experience.* Parents' educational backgrounds have an impact on how they view teaching and caring. This may be influenced by the notion that parents who attended college have first-hand knowledge about college experiences and may have a greater comfort level with various college processes, procedures, and jargon. Parents without college experience may have less knowledge about the intricacies of college life and thus may have higher expectations arising from care and concern due to encountering new circumstances. The literature reflects this finding, as many studies have noted that parents without college experience often have a lack of knowledge about college life (Auerbach, 2004; McDonough, 1997; Wartman & Savage, 2008).

*Parents who view teaching as important generally view caring as important and vice versa.* How parents view teaching and caring are interrelated, which may be due to programs like summer orientation that present academic and personal growth resources and development in an integrated format. The interrelationship between teaching and caring may also be due to the large amount of information about higher education that parents can access on the Internet, and the accessibility of information regarding both academic resources and student support services provided by colleges and universities. This finding is supported in the literature, which suggests that parents are often very interested in and want to be connected to their children's educational experiences, which includes academic pursuits related to teaching and personal

growth and development related to caring (Conneely et al., 2001; Howe & Strauss, 2003; Young, 2006).

*A safe and secure campus is important to all parents.* While perhaps obvious, this finding is particularly timely as many campuses have recently instituted new safety notifications and protocols due to campus shootings. Campus safety has been a concern in years past, as evidenced by past lawsuits and the passing of the Clery Act. However, safety concerns have gained greater publicity due to recent fatal shootings occurring on college campuses. The importance of safety and security is consistent with the literature, which reveals that many of today's students grew up during a sweeping child safety movement, and many of the parents of today's college students are more concerned with campus safety since the tragedy at Virginia Tech (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Rawe, 2007).

*Additional support for academic success is also important to parents.* Whether this involves academic advising, mentoring, or tutoring, parents expect additional support to be available for their children's academic pursuits. This is most likely due to the proliferation of tutoring and support programs that are provided and available in the K-12 education system. Many students and parents may be accustomed to the accessibility of such resources in the K-12 system and expect the same level of academic support in college. Additionally, this finding is reflected in the literature, which notes that parents are contacting faculty at higher rates than before, and involved parents, especially those of higher socioeconomic status, often seek additional resources and programs to support the academic success of their children, including tutoring, SAT preparatory courses, and independent educational consultants (Avery et al., 2003; Giegerich, 2002; Karabel, 2005; Lareau, 1987; Wartman & Savage, 2008).

*Student access to campus resources is important to parents.* Campus resources include but are not limited to care at the student health center and access to the counseling center. Access to these resources is perhaps linked to the expectation of safety and security, focusing on health and safety, which includes physical and mental health. The literature, which details the focus on safety and identifies parents as involved co-purchasers who expect a high level of service for their children, supports this finding (Howe & Strauss, 2000, 2003; Lange & Stone, 2001; Levine & Cureton, 1998; Sells, 2002).

*The availability and integration of technology is also important to parents.* Technology includes email access to university personnel and web access to complete routine university business. This finding is most likely impacted by the prevalence of technology in the lives of today's students and the comfort level that most of them have with technology and specifically electronic communication and the Internet, which is well documented in the literature (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Tapscott, 1997; Young, 2006).

*Communication and contact with administrators is important to parents.* Contact is often focused on potentially negative situations, such as when students are caught using illegal substances or accused of cheating or plagiarizing. Parents also want to be contacted about their student's academic success, although FERPA may limit the content of what administrators can share with parents. The experiences of many parents with the K-12 system, in which contact with parents is not only encouraged but mandated, may have impacted this finding. Parents may often assume that this level of communication will continue in postsecondary education. This finding is supported by the literature, which reflects the frequent communication with teachers and administrators that parents are accustomed to during their child's K-12 education (Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Wartman & Savage, 2008).



*Parents view individual attention for their children as important.* Even though the research site is a large, public university, it is important to parents that their children will be known by at least one faculty member and that the university will appreciate the uniqueness of each student. This finding may stem from the view that many of today's college students are special, which is one of the seven shared traits of the millennial generation identified by Howe and Strauss (2000). Many of today's students have been affirmed as special, not only by their parents, but by teachers, coaches, and administrators. Parents may expect individual attention for their children because their children have always been viewed as special by others and therefore they expect that treatment to continue. The importance of individual attention for many of today's students is supported by the literature, which states that students often share a close relationship with their parents and have been affirmed as special and important (Hoover, 2009; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Twenge, 2006).

### **Comparison to Young's Findings**

The present study was patterned on Young's 2006 study of parental expectations of collegiate teaching and caring. Young utilized the PECTAC survey to measure parental expectations at a private, Jesuit institution in the Midwest. Although Young's study took place before students entered college and focused on a different type of institution in regards to location, affiliation, and size, his findings and those of this study are similar. Both studies found that gender has a significant impact on parental expectations of teaching and caring and that mothers had higher expectations than fathers. Both studies also found that parental expectations of teaching and caring are not significantly impacted by their experience as parents of college students, whether sending a student to college for the first time or the fifth time. Young also explored the difference, if any, in expectations of teaching and caring, and found that there was a

significant difference between teaching and caring, with caring expectations ranking higher than teaching expectations. The present study explored teaching and caring expectations in a slightly different manner, and found that due to the strong, positive correlation, parents with high expectations for one area generally have high expectations for the other area.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is predicated on Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Theory of Psychosocial Development, and focused specifically on vector three, moving through autonomy toward interdependence. Chickering and Reisser's Theory of Psychosocial Development focuses on the interpersonal and relational development of college students. Chickering and Reisser outlined seven vectors of psychosocial development that students travel through during their time at college: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Vector three, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, focuses on increased emotional independence and stresses the importance of connectedness. Developing autonomy and eventually interdependence requires some level of separation from parents, although males and females navigate this process differently.

This study supports vector three of Chickering and Reisser's theory as parents express the importance of various aspects of autonomy development and interdependence. Parents have high expectations that students will be able to contact faculty and advisors via email and complete routine academic functions via the internet. All of these tasks provide students the opportunity to utilize instrumental competence and manage their own college experiences, both of which are functions of autonomy development. Conversely, parents express a desire to be contacted regarding student issues, which reinforces that interdependence, not independence, is

an aspiration of student development. Parents do want to remain involved in some way, and student behavior at college can impact the family relationship and dynamic.

### **Implications for Practitioners**

The findings of this study provide practical implications for educational leaders and student affairs professionals. These implications are intended to help practitioners partner with parents and engage parents in appropriate actions that benefit their children. At times the most appropriate action for parents may be to resist becoming involved and allow their children to resolve problems on their own. For example, if a student is dealing with a roommate conflict, an appropriate action for the parent would be to encourage their child to speak with the floor Resident Advisor instead of the parent calling the Director of Residence Life. These implications are not intended to provide a road map for administrators to constantly accommodate parents. Instead, the implications are intended to help practitioners funnel the increasing involvement of parents into appropriate and helpful avenues and equip parents to serve as referral agents for their children.

First, administrators may wish to recognize and accept parents as constituents of higher education. While parents are not the primary constituents, many parents are highly involved co-purchasers with high expectations for instruction and campus life. Practitioners can accept the new reality of increased parental involvement and seek to engage parents proactively and appropriately. The literature and findings support that practitioners should accept parents as constituents. Specifically, student development professionals often have the most frequent opportunities to work with parents and thus have many opportunities to recognize and engage parents as constituents of higher education. Conversely, practitioners can also refuse to acknowledge the influence and involvement of many of the parents of today's college students

and risk losing allies in the development of students while still dealing with the onslaught of parental involvement.

Second, chief student affairs officers along with campus leaders from across the institution may wish to identify a campus-wide philosophy for working with parents. If there is not a formal institutional philosophy or approach, there may be an informal understanding that is a function of the campus culture and values. If no formal or informal approach to working with parents can be identified, educational leaders in the upper administration have the opportunity to define and articulate the campus philosophy for working with parents, which is a practice at more than one institution. This would allow employees on campus to have some guidance when contacted by parents.

Third, and related to the second implication, as part of the campus-wide philosophy of how to interact with parents, institutions may want to appoint and dedicate specific resources for working with parents, such as offices of parent services or parents programs, a step that many institutions have taken in the last 10 years. Administrators at smaller institutions may have to designate various people in several existing offices or provide training on working with parents for staff at all levels, since many practitioners at smaller institutions serve as generalists.

Fourth, parents are concerned with campus safety and may be allies in helping communicate messages that promote safety to their children. Many students erroneously view college campuses as islands of safety secluded from real world concerns, such as theft, physical harassment, sexual assault, and even active shooter scenarios. Parents who are equipped with information may be able to reinforce to their children the safety messages often shared by campus police, security guards, residence hall staff, and desk attendants. If students choose to ignore the safety information shared by various campus employees, perhaps students will listen

to messages shared by their parents regarding campus safety, since many parents and students are in constant contact.

Fifth, administrators have the opportunity to engage parents to financially support programs and initiatives that benefit their children. Many parents are showing signs that they want to be engaged and involved in their children's educational journey. Administrators may wish to form a parents' council, under the auspices of student affairs, to provide parents with opportunities to participate in fundraising to support programs and initiatives. While some institutions reach out to parents for general development purposes, a parents' council could also focus their fundraising efforts on specific areas of importance to parents, including programs to improve campus safety, academic support, and technology. A parents' council could allow parents to financially support issues that are important to them and implement programs to benefit their children's educational experiences.

Sixth, administrators may wish to resist focusing on a "one size fits all approach" to working with parents. Mothers and fathers have different expectations, just as parents who attended college have different expectations than those who did not attend college. Some parents may be involved in every aspect of their student's educational experience, and others may prefer a more hands-off approach. Additionally, grandparents, other family members, or caregivers may be serving in the roles of parents. Administrators who deal with parents on a regular basis may have a tendency to forget that parents often have different educational backgrounds, varying relationships with their children, diverging degrees of comfort with technology, and varying socioeconomic resources. Although philosophies and plans for working with parents are needed, no plan is going to meet the needs of every parent. Also, the needs of some parents may be more easily overlooked due to their lack of knowledge about higher education or factors impacting

their ability to communicate with administrators. Parents, like students, may share similar characteristics and behaviors, but are ultimately individuals and should be treated as such.

Finally, administrators may wish to recognize the paradox of engaging parents as partners and the inherent challenges of working with parents to promote student development. The paradox is that while administrators and parents both have the same goal, student success, parents may want to do everything for their children while administrators want students to learn to do things for themselves. Some highly involved parents by their very nature may be impeding the development of their children due to their frequent intervening. While administrators can attempt to equip parents as referral agents and provide information about appropriate involvement, parents may choose not to follow the guidelines and to circumvent student growth by continuing to complete various tasks for their children and trying to solve their children's problems. Ideally, administrators would be able to take advantage of the seemingly constant contact that many of today's college students and their parents share and provide parents with information focused on resources students can utilize on campus to help them with various issues and processes. Ultimately, parents and administrators may not always agree on what course of action is best for students.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

While this study addresses parental expectations of teaching and caring, there are many other perspectives that can be addressed in further research. These recommendations focus on expanding the research regarding parental expectations and involvement from a variety of viewpoints.

The study should be replicated on multiple campuses, specifically those of different sizes, locations, and affiliations to determine if the results are consistent across institutions. This study

was conducted at a large, public university in the South. It should be conducted at mid-size institutions, private institutions with no religious affiliations, various institutions in other parts of the country, and other large public institutions to provide points of comparison and contrast and identify themes and trends across campuses.

A longitudinal study should be conducted to explore whether parental expectations change during the course of their children's college experience. This study dealt with parental expectations at one point in time. Year-to-year comparisons should be made as well as comparisons of the changes, if any, in parental expectations for first-year and senior students.

Qualitative exploration of parental expectations should be conducted to provide richer data and allow parents to identify and describe their expectations. Due to the quantitative nature of this study, parents were not asked to share their expectations in detail or provide information about why various topics were important to them, which should be achieved through qualitative research.

Research should be conducted to examine the differences and similarities of parental involvement and expectations for parents of students of various populations, including intercollegiate athletes, members of Greek organizations, and honors students. This research should provide insight into whether parental involvement or expectations vary depending on student demographics.

Research focused on student perceptions and expectations of parental involvement should provide information about how students feel about parental involvement. This research should address whether college students actually desire the high level of connectivity that many of them share with their parents. Similar to the above recommendation to conduct a longitudinal study of

parent expectations, a longitudinal study of student perceptions should explore whether student predilection for parental involvement wanes or increases over time.

An exploration of faculty interactions with parents should be conducted to further categorize and define the types and frequency of contact that faculty have with parents and the involvement that parents have with academic issues. The literature reinforced that many faculty members are seeing an increase in parent contact. Further research is needed to explore this increasing contact in greater depth and explore why and how parents contact faculty, as well as how faculty members respond to parental involvement.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This research study does have limitations. The study was conducted at one institution, therefore the results may not be generalizable to other institutions. Because parent email addresses are not collected in admission or housing information, the study could not be conducted before the students entered the research site. The study was conducted at the beginning of the spring semester, after students had completed one semester at the research site. Parent expectations may have been impacted by their experiences or interactions with faculty, staff, and administrators. Because the parent email addresses were collected at parent orientation, parents who did not or could not attend orientation did not have the opportunity to submit email addresses and thus did not have the opportunity to complete the survey. Some parents may not have been able to attend orientation due to inflexible work schedules or financial concerns, which potentially excluded parents of lower socioeconomic status from providing information about their expectations. Finally, the survey asked parents to mark the highest level of education they completed and did not provide the option of “Associates or Two Year Degree.” Results of parents who may have attended but not completed college or completed a two year



degree were included in the results of parents with no college experience. The number of parents with college experience may have been greater if college experience was not defined as obtaining a four-year degree.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the expectations parents have for a public university's teaching and caring functions while also examining the differences, if any, of parents of first-generation college students and parents with college experience. The outcomes of this study can be utilized by educational leaders who work with the parents of college students, both indirectly and directly.

The outcomes suggested that teaching and caring are more important to mothers than fathers, teaching and caring are more important to parents who do not have college experience than parents who have college experience, parents who view teaching as important generally view caring as important and vice versa, a safe and secure campus is important to parents, additional support for academic success is important to parents, access to campus resources is important to parents, the availability and integration of technology is important to parents, communication with administrators is important to parents, and parents view individual attention for their children as important.

As Young (2006) noted,

...colleges and universities failing to adapt their staffing, services, and programs to the needs of college parents will not be seen as partners to parents. This failure will be easily recognizable. True 'parent partner institutions' will be characterized as understanding the need for a direct University contact for concerns, recognizing the developmental need of

parents to reflect on their own journey, and realizing that communication with parents must not end as their student's collegiate journey begins. (p. 133)

This study provides information that can be used by educational leaders to begin partnerships with parents and to understand effective ways to adapt services for parents, an increasingly vocal and present constituent of higher education. This study also provides insight that can be used to develop proactive programs and opportunities and help institutions shape the parent offices and programs that have been created in droves in the last 30 years. More research is still needed to better understand parent expectations and provide information to help educational leaders work effectively with the parents of today's college students.

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## APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO USE PECTAC SURVEY

Christina,

I would be glad to give you permission to use it for free and welcome the additional study using the PETCAC. Please let me know how I can help in any way. My contact information is below.

Wayne

**W. Wayne Young, Jr., Ph.D.**

Assistant Vice President for Student Learning and  
Adjunct Faculty, Department of Education  
Division of Student Services, Creighton University  
2500 California Plaza | Omaha, NE 68178  
402.280.2775 voice | 402.280.4706 fax

**From:** Spearman, Christina Jenkinson [mailto:SPEARMANC@ecu.edu]

**Sent:** Monday, November 02, 2009 1:22 PM

**To:** Young Jr., William W.

**Subject:** permission to utilize PECTAC survey

Dr. Young,

I am a doctoral student at East Carolina University, and I am currently working on my dissertation proposal. My area of interest is working with parents, and I hope to study parental expectations of parents at ECU, a large, public university in the South. I am writing to ask your permission to use and modify the PETCAC survey that you developed and utilized in your study of parental expectations at Creighton. I would certainly cite your work and give you credit for the development of the survey instrument.

I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have or provide you with any additional information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christina

## APPENDIX B: PECTAC SURVEY (MODIFIED FOR RESEARCH SITE)

PECTAC Survey (Copyright Young 2005)

Demographic Information:

Please answer the following demographic questions.

1. Your Gender  
Female, Male
2. Marital Status  
Married, Divorced, Single Parent, Widowed
3. Gender of your incoming student  
Female, Male
4. Are you (mark all that apply)  
African American/Black, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Caucasian, Mexican  
American/Chicano, Pacific Islander, Puerto Rican, Other Latino, Other/Mixed Ethnicity
5. Is English your native language?  
Yes, No
6. Education Level (mark highest level completed)  
High School, Bachelors, Masters, PhD or Terminal Degree
7. How many children do you have?  
1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more
8. Is this your first experience as a parent of a college student?  
Yes, No
9. Which school/college is your student entering?  
Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, Brody School of Medicine, College of  
Allied Health Sciences, College of Business, College of Education, College of Fine Arts  
and Communication, College of Health and Human Performance, College of Human  
Ecology, College of Nursing, College of Technology and Computer Science
10. How involved were you in your student's college decision?  
Very, Somewhat, A Little Involved, Not Involved at All
11. How many computers do you have at home?  
1, 2, 3 or more
12. What type of Internet access do you have at home?  
None, Dial Up, DSL/cable

For the next sections, answers are

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

Teaching

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

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

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

#### B. Collegiate Teaching: Active and Team Learning

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

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

#### C. Collegiate Teaching: Out of Class Learning Opportunities

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

39. Be provided with training on how to be more responsible
40. Have opportunities to join a variety of clubs and organizations
41. Receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested
42. Be provided with opportunities for internships
43. Have opportunities to learn about someone from a different race/culture
44. Be provided with opportunities for service and volunteerism
45. Have access to services and resources in the greater city area

- 46. Be provided with remedial or disability services if needed
  - 47. Access to student tutoring and academic support
  - 48. Have opportunities to socialize in group activities
  - 49. Complete a practicum or internship using technology
  - 50. Have access to career counseling and placement services
  - 51. Be provided with information on developing good morals
52. Out of these items, which two are the most important to you as a parent?

### Caring

#### A. Collegiate Caring: A Caring Faculty

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

- 53. Have regular contact with his/her academic advisor
- 54. Develop plans for a major with his/her academic advisor
- 55. Be known on a personal level by at least one faculty member
- 56. Be known by his/her course instructor(s)
- 57. Be treated fairly by the course instructor(s)
- 58. Have access to his/her course instructor(s) outside of class
- 59. Be provided the opportunity to give feedback on his/her course instructor(s)
- 60. Receive information on additional tutoring from his/her course instructor(s)
- 61. Be instructed be a faculty member rather than a teaching assistant

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

#### B. Collegiate Caring: A Caring University Community

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

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

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



### C. Collegiate Caring: Being in Partnership with Parents

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

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

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

Thank you for your participation!

## APPENDIX C: INITIAL INVITATION EMAIL

Dear Pirate Parent,

I am a doctoral student at East Carolina University, and I am writing to request your help!

I am writing to ask you to complete a survey studying the expectations parents have about teaching and caring at East Carolina University. Your completion of this survey will help me fulfill the requirements for completing my dissertation and help the Office of Parent Services continue to design and implement programs to support parents.

I am asking you to participate in my research study and to complete the Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC) survey. If you agree to participate, I would ask that you spend approximately 8-10 minutes to complete the survey before **January 22, 2010**.

Please know that all answers will be kept confidential and used for the purposes of my dissertation and/or for publication in professional journals. Specific names will not be used as a result of the data obtained through this questionnaire. There are no known risks involved in participating in this research. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the Office of Parent Services or East Carolina University.

I would kindly ask that you take a few minutes to fill out the survey on-line using the web address listed below before **January 22, 2010**.

<https://survey.ecu.edu/perseus/se.ashx?s=0B87A656237AE70108CC5AECDA4EADF070>

As a participant, you have the right to ask questions. Please feel free to direct any inquiries to Christina J. Spearman, Principal Investigator, at [spearmanc@ecu.edu](mailto:spearmanc@ecu.edu). If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the UMCIRB Office at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm).

Thank you in advance for assisting me with this study.

Sincerely,

Christina J. Spearman  
Doctoral student, East Carolina University  
UMCIRB #09-0892

## APPENDIX D: FIRST REMINDER EMAIL

Dear Pirate Parent,

I am a doctoral student at East Carolina University, and I am writing to request your help!

I am writing to ask you to complete a survey studying the expectations parents have about teaching and caring at East Carolina University. Your completion of this survey will help me fulfill the requirements for completing my dissertation and help the Office of Parent Services continue to design and implement programs to support parents.

I am asking you to participate in my research study and to complete the Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC) survey. If you agree to participate, I would ask that you spend approximately 8-10 minutes to complete the survey before **February 8, 2010**.

Please know that all answers will be kept confidential and used for the purposes of my dissertation and/or for publication in professional journals. Specific names will not be used as a result of the data obtained through this questionnaire. There are no known risks involved in participating in this research. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the Office of Parent Services or East Carolina University.

I would kindly ask that you take a few minutes to fill out the survey on-line using the web address listed below before **February 8, 2010**.

<https://survey.ecu.edu/perseus/se.ashx?s=0B87A656237AE70108CC5AECDA4EADF070>

As a participant, you have the right to ask questions. Please feel free to direct any inquiries to Christina J. Spearman, Principal Investigator, at [spearmanc@ecu.edu](mailto:spearmanc@ecu.edu). If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the UMCIRB Office at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm).

Thank you in advance for assisting me with this study.

Sincerely,

Christina J. Spearman  
Doctoral student, East Carolina University  
UMCIRB #09-0892

## APPENDIX E: SECOND REMINDER EMAIL

Dear Pirate Parent,

I am a doctoral student at East Carolina University, and I am writing to request your help!

I am writing to ask you to complete a survey studying the expectations parents have about teaching and caring at East Carolina University. Your completion of this survey will help me fulfill the requirements for completing my dissertation and help the Office of Parent Services continue to design and implement programs to support parents.

I am asking you to participate in my research study and to complete the Parent Expectations of Collegiate Teaching and Caring (PECTAC) survey. If you agree to participate, I would ask that you spend approximately 8-10 minutes to complete the survey before **February 8, 2010**.

This is my last chance to collect data to complete my dissertation, and I would appreciate your help and participation.

Please know that all answers will be kept confidential and used for the purposes of my dissertation and/or for publication in professional journals. Specific names will not be used as a result of the data obtained through this questionnaire. There are no known risks involved in participating in this research. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the Office of Parent Services or East Carolina University.

I would kindly ask that you take a few minutes to fill out the survey on-line using the web address listed below before **February 8, 2010**.

<https://survey.ecu.edu/perseus/se.ashx?s=0B87A656237AE70108CC5AECDA4EADF070>

As a participant, you have the right to ask questions. Please feel free to direct any inquiries to Christina J. Spearman, Principal Investigator, at [spearmanc@ecu.edu](mailto:spearmanc@ecu.edu). If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the UMCIRB Office at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm).

Thank you in advance for assisting me with this study.

Sincerely,

Christina J. Spearman  
Doctoral student, East Carolina University  
UMCIRB #09-0892

## APPENDIX F: RESULTS OF PECTAC SURVEY

### Demographic Information:

Please answer the following demographic questions.

1. Your Gender

Female-922

Male-215

2. Marital Status

Married-922

Divorced-104

Single Parent-26

Widowed-13

Not Answered-2

3. Gender of your incoming student

Female-647

Male-490

4. Are you (mark all that apply)

African American/Black-68

American Indian/Alaskan Native-13

Caucasian-1037

Mexican American/Chicano-6

Pacific Islander-5

Puerto Rican-4

Other Latino-9

Other/Mixed Ethnicity-20

5. Is English your native language?

Yes-1119

No-14

Not Answered-4

6. Education Level (mark highest level completed)

High School-327

Bachelors-554

Masters-217

PhD or Terminal Degree-35

Not Answered-4

7. How many children do you have?  
1-150  
2-598  
3-274  
4-81  
5 or more-29  
Not Answered-5
8. Is this your first experience as a parent of a college student?  
Yes-646  
No-491
9. Which school/college is your student entering?  
Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences-56  
Brody School of Medicine-21  
College of Allied Health Sciences-84  
College of Business-170  
College of Education-118  
College of Fine Arts and Communication-116  
College of Health and Human Performance-88  
College of Human Ecology-58  
College of Nursing-114  
College of Technology and Computer Science-57  
Unsure-246  
Not Answered-9
10. How involved were you in your student's college decision?  
Very-655  
Somewhat-410  
A Little Involved-65  
Not Involved at All-7
11. How many computers do you have at home?  
1-157  
2-372  
3 or more-604  
Not Answered-4
12. What type of Internet access do you have at home?  
None-4  
Dial Up-21  
DSL/cable-1110  
Not Answered-2

For the next sections, answers are

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

Teaching

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

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

13. General academic advising information via a website

Very Important-606

Important-455

Neutral-57

Somewhat Unimportant-17

N/A Don't Know-2

14. Web access to register/drop/add courses and view tuition and fees

Very Important-901

Important-220

Neutral-13

Somewhat Unimportant-3

N/A Don't Know-0

15. Web access to view tuition and fees and financial aid information

Very Important-919

Important-198

Neutral-16

Somewhat Unimportant-4

N/A Don't Know-0

16. Specific academic advising information via a website for my student

Very Important-644

Important-391

Neutral-85

Somewhat Unimportant-11

N/A Don't Know-6

17. Access to a University-provided email account

Very Important-743

Important-294

Neutral-84

Somewhat Unimportant-14

N/A Don't Know-2

18. Access to textbooks required and ordering via a website

Very Important-665

Important-380

Neutral-85  
Somewhat Unimportant-5  
N/A Don't Know-2

19. Access to computer labs  
Very Important-587  
Important-359  
Neutral-157  
Somewhat Unimportant-19  
N/A Don't Know-15

20. High-speed Internet access in his/her residence hall room  
Very Important-944  
Important-137  
Neutral-20  
Somewhat Unimportant-1  
N/A Don't Know-35

21. Wireless Internet access throughout campus  
Very Important-845  
Important-253  
Neutral-36  
Somewhat Unimportant-1  
N/A Don't Know-2

22. Training on the University library's digital resources  
Very Important-498  
Important-491  
Neutral-114  
Somewhat Unimportant-4  
N/A Don't Know-30

23. A University-provided portable computer  
Very Important-177  
Important-229  
Neutral-508  
Somewhat Unimportant-171  
N/A Don't Know-52

24. Email access to his/her faculty instructor  
Very Important-977  
Important-146  
Neutral-10  
Somewhat Unimportant-1  
N/A Don't Know-3



25. Academic content delivered via a course website

Very Important-526

Important-435

Neutral-153

Somewhat Unimportant-10

N/A Don't Know-13

26. Email access to his/her academic advisor

Very Important-952

Important-169

Neutral-12

Somewhat Unimportant-1

N/A Don't Know-3

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

General academic advising information via a website-91

Web access to register/drop/add courses and view tuition and fees-324

Web access to view tuition and fees and financial aid information-239

Specific academic advising information via a website for my student-154

Access to a University-provided email account-70

Access to textbooks required and ordering via a website-58

Access to computer labs-33

High-speed Internet access in his/her residence hall room-299

Wireless Internet access throughout campus-185

Training on the University library's digital resources-25

A University-provided portable computer-23

Email access to his/her faculty instructor-389

Academic content delivered via a course website-81

Email access to his/her academic advisor-292

## B. Collegiate Teaching: Active and Team Learning

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

28. Discuss and critique ideas from readings with other students and the instructor during courses

Very Important-321

Important-564

Neutral-204

Somewhat Unimportant-21

N/A Don't Know-27

29. Present in front of peers and the instructor using technological means

Very Important-328

Important-548

Neutral-221

Somewhat Unimportant-28  
N/A Don't Know-12

30. Outperform the faculty instructor's expectations

Very Important-283

Important-560

Neutral-253

Somewhat Unimportant-19

N/A Don't Know-22

31. Participate in group projects outside of class using instant messaging

Very Important-77

Important-243

Neutral-589

Somewhat Unimportant-183

N/A Don't Know-45

32. Learn via an online course

Very Important-84

Important-311

Neutral-545

Somewhat Unimportant-163

N/A Don't Know-34

33. Participate in community-based or service-based course projects

Very Important-264

Important-572

Neutral-246

Somewhat Unimportant-43

N/A Don't Know-12

34. Use the Internet to research an assignment

Very Important-612

Important-456

Neutral-64

Somewhat Unimportant-5

N/A Don't Know-0

35. Complete assignments via a course website

Very Important-236

Important-497

Neutral-352

Somewhat Unimportant-35

N/A Don't Know-17

36. Leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise  
Very Important-811  
Important-303  
Neutral-19  
Somewhat Unimportant-2  
N/A Don't Know-2

37. Be given consistent feedback on written work (research papers, journals, etc.)  
Very Important-867  
Important-258  
Neutral-11  
Somewhat Unimportant-1  
N/A Don't Know-0

38. Out of these items, which two are the most important to you as a parent?  
Discuss and critique ideas from readings with other students and the instructor during courses-173  
Present in front of peers and the instructor using technological means-129  
Outperform the faculty instructor's expectations-184  
Participate in group projects outside of class using instant messaging-9  
Learn via an online course-24  
Participate in community-based or service-based course projects-204  
Use the Internet to research an assignment-140  
Complete assignments via a course website-34  
Leave college with more information technology skills in their field of expertise-670  
Be given consistent feedback on written work (research papers, journals, etc.)-693

### C. Collegiate Teaching: Out of Class Learning Opportunities

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

39. Be provided with training on how to be more responsible  
Very Important-585  
Important-404  
Neutral-121  
Somewhat Unimportant-23  
N/A Don't Know-4

40. Have opportunities to join a variety of clubs and organizations  
Very Important-407  
Important-583  
Neutral-132  
Somewhat Unimportant-13  
N/A Don't Know-2

41. Receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested

Very Important-937

Important-189

Neutral-10

Somewhat Unimportant-0

N/A Don't Know-1

42. Be provided with opportunities for internships

Very Important-787

Important-329

Neutral-18

Somewhat Unimportant-2

N/A Don't Know-1

43. Have opportunities to learn about someone from a different race/culture

Very Important-238

Important-513

Neutral-324

Somewhat Unimportant-55

N/A Don't Know-7

44. Be provided with opportunities for service and volunteerism

Very Important-359

Important-582

Neutral-167

Somewhat Unimportant-27

N/A Don't Know-2

45. Have access to services and resources in the greater city area

Very Important-211

Important-559

Neutral-329

Somewhat Unimportant-26

N/A Don't Know-12

46. Be provided with remedial or disability services if needed

Very Important-459

Important-416

Neutral-166

Somewhat Unimportant-22

N/A Don't Know-74

47. Access to student tutoring and academic support

Very Important-816

Important-297

Neutral-19

Somewhat Unimportant-3

N/A Don't Know-2

48. Have opportunities to socialize in group activities

Very Important-360

Important-627

Neutral-138

Somewhat Unimportant-10

N/A Don't Know-2

49. Complete a practicum or internship using technology

Very Important-303

Important-564

Neutral-239

Somewhat Unimportant-18

N/A Don't Know-13

50. Have access to career counseling and placement services

Very Important-849

Important-263

Neutral-23

Somewhat Unimportant-1

N/A Don't Know-1

51. Be provided with information on developing good morals

Very Important-418

Important-431

Neutral-238

Somewhat Unimportant-39

N/A Don't Know-11

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

Be provided with training on how to be more responsible-143

Have opportunities to join a variety of clubs and organizations-36

Receive additional academic advising or mentoring if requested-454

Be provided with opportunities for internships-356

Have opportunities to learn about someone from a different race/culture-14

Be provided with opportunities for service and volunteerism-90

Have access to services and resources in the greater city area-10

Be provided with remedial or disability services if needed-50

Access to student tutoring and academic support-418

Have opportunities to socialize in group activities-22

Complete a practicum or internship using technology-87

Have access to career counseling and placement services-490

Be provided with information on developing good morals-95

Caring

A. Collegiate Caring: A Caring Faculty

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

53. Have regular contact with his/her academic advisor

Very Important-802

Important-318

Neutral-16

Somewhat Unimportant-0

N/A Don't Know-1

54. Develop plans for a major with his/her academic advisor

Very Important-843

Important-274

Neutral-19

Somewhat Unimportant-1

N/A Don't Know-0

55. Be known on a personal level by at least one faculty member

Very Important-717

Important-333

Neutral-76

Somewhat Unimportant-10

N/A Don't Know-1

56. Be known by his/her course instructor(s)

Very Important-554

Important-499

Neutral-79

Somewhat Unimportant-5

N/A Don't Know-0

57. Be treated fairly by the course instructor(s)

Very Important-1017

Important-115

Neutral-4

Somewhat Unimportant-1

N/A Don't Know-0

58. Have access to his/her course instructor(s) outside of class

Very Important-635

Important-411

Neutral-73

Somewhat Unimportant-13

N/A Don't Know-5

59. Be provided the opportunity to give feedback on his/her course instructor(s)  
Very Important-548  
Important-476  
Neutral-97  
Somewhat Unimportant-11  
N/A Don't Know-5

60. Receive information on additional tutoring from his/her course instructor(s)  
Very Important-692  
Important-409  
Neutral-30  
Somewhat Unimportant-3  
N/A Don't Know-3

61. Be instructed be a faculty member rather than a teaching assistant  
Very Important-464  
Important-441  
Neutral-209  
Somewhat Unimportant-12  
N/A Don't Know-11

62. Out of these items, which two are the most important to you as a parent?  
Have regular contact with his/her academic advisor-499  
Develop plans for a major with his/her academic advisor-386  
Be known on a personal level by at least one faculty member-113  
Be known by his/her course instructor(s)-140  
Be treated fairly by the course instructor(s)-428  
Have access to his/her course instructor(s) outside of class-203  
Be provided the opportunity to give feedback on his/her course instructor(s)-63  
Receive information on additional tutoring from his/her course instructor(s)-201  
Be instructed be a faculty member rather than a teaching assistant-231

## B. Collegiate Caring: A Caring University Community

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

63. Programs welcoming your student to campus life  
Very Important-591  
Important-464  
Neutral-71  
Somewhat Unimportant-8  
N/A Don't Know-3

64. Opportunities to explore his/her leadership potential  
Very Important-454

Important-584

Neutral-93

Somewhat Unimportant-4

N/A Don't Know-2

65. A university community that appreciated the uniqueness of each student

Very Important-519

Important-493

Neutral-107

Somewhat Unimportant-14

N/A Don't Know-4

66. Programs orienting him/her to collegiate life

Very Important-610

Important-479

Neutral-40

Somewhat Unimportant-5

N/A Don't Know-3

67. Support and challenge like a parent might give

Very Important-394

Important-522

Neutral-194

Somewhat Unimportant-18

N/A Don't Know-9

68. Health care at the student health center

Very Important-774

Important-329

Neutral-28

Somewhat Unimportant-5

N/A Don't Know-1

69. Opportunities to learn how to be in community with others

Very Important-378

Important-576

Neutral-162

Somewhat Unimportant-18

N/A Don't Know-3

70. A friend in his/her floor RA (Resident Assistant), if living on campus

Very Important-285

Important-445

Neutral-304

Somewhat Unimportant-31

N/A Don't Know-72



71. Opportunities to grow in his/her faith life

Very Important-380

Important-405

Neutral-297

Somewhat Unimportant-43

N/A Don't Know-12

72. Care at the student counseling center

Very Important-462

Important-539

Neutral-113

Somewhat Unimportant-13

N/A Don't Know-10

73. Opportunities to participate in community service

Very Important-303

Important-578

Neutral-226

Somewhat Unimportant-27

N/A Don't Know-3

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

Programs welcoming your student to campus life-259

Opportunities to explore his/her leadership potential-263

A university community that appreciated the uniqueness of each student-153

Programs orienting him/her to collegiate life-380

Support and challenge like a parent might give-200

Health care at the student health center-449

Opportunities to learn how to be in community with others-75

A friend in his/her floor RA (Resident Assistant), if living on campus-78

Opportunities to grow in his/her faith life-175

Care at the student counseling center-116

Opportunities to participate in community service-113

### C. Collegiate Caring: Being in Partnership with Parents

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

75. Notify me of my student's academic success on a regular basis

Very Important-342

Important-331

Neutral-146

Somewhat Unimportant-15

N/A Don't Know-3

76. Contact me if my student is caught cheating or plagiarizing

Very Important-775

Important-265

Neutral-82

Somewhat Unimportant-8

N/A Don't Know-7

77. Have my calls returned by members of the faculty or administration within 24 hours

Very Important-611

Important-402

Neutral-101

Somewhat Unimportant-16

N/A Don't Know-7

78. Provide a safe and secure campus

Very Important-1111

Important-25

Neutral-1

Somewhat Unimportant-0

N/A Don't Know-0

79. Provide me with my student's major and degree progress information via a website

Very Important-599

Important-404

Neutral-118

Somewhat Unimportant-15

N/A Don't Know-1

80. Discipline my student fairly if he/she breaks University policies and procedures

Very Important-659

Important-443

Neutral-27

Somewhat Unimportant-3

N/A Don't Know-5

81. Provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested

Very Important-960

Important-174

Neutral-3

Somewhat Unimportant-0

N/A Don't Know-0

82. Notify me if my student is using illegal substances

Very Important-848

Important-226

Neutral-53

Somewhat Unimportant-5

N/A Don't Know-5

83. Orient me as to how I will be involved in my student's education

Very Important-464

Important-478

Neutral-162

Somewhat Unimportant-26

N/A Don't Know-7

84. Provide my student unlimited visits at the student counseling center, if needed

Very Important-661

Important-380

Neutral-88

Somewhat Unimportant-3

N/A Don't Know-5

85. Notify me if my student is drinking illegally

Very Important-560

Important-353

Neutral-179

Somewhat Unimportant-33

N/A Don't Know-12

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

Notify me of my student's academic success on a regular basis-421

Contact me if my student is caught cheating or plagiarizing-29

Have my calls returned by members of the faculty or administration within 24 hours-116

Provide a safe and secure campus-825

Provide me with my student's major and degree progress information via a website-125

Discipline my student fairly if he/she breaks University policies and procedures-89

Provide my student additional academic advising, tutoring, or mentoring if requested-395

Notify me if my student is using illegal substances-100

Orient me as to how I will be involved in my student's education-36

Provide my student unlimited visits at the student counseling center, if needed-98

Notify me if my student is drinking illegally-31

## APPENDIX G: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

East Carolina University



December 18, 2009

Christine Spearman  
305 Winston Avenue  
Baltimore, MD

RE: **Exempt Certification** for UMCIRB #: 09-0092 *2/2/2*  
Funding Source: **unfunded**

Title of Research: **Expectations of Parents of First-Year Students Regarding Collegiate Teaching and Caring at a Public University**

Dear Christine Spearman:

On 12/15/09, the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) determined that your research meets ECU requirements and federal exemption criterion #3 which includes it is research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects and any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your Internal Processing Form and Protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The UMCIRB Office will hold your exemption application for a period of five years from the date of this letter. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit an Exemption Certification Request at least 30 days before the end of the five year period.

Sincerely,

Chairperson, University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board

CC: Michael Poole