THE FRESHMEN ADJUSTMENT PROCESS: COMMUTER LIFE VERSUS RESIDENCE LIFE

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THE FRESHMEN ADJUSTMENT PROCESS: COMMUTER LIFE VERSUS RESIDENCE LIFE

A Thesis

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Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
Abstract

of

THE FRESHMEN ADJUSTMENT PROCESS: COMMUTER LIFE VERSUS RESIDENCE LIFE

by

Allison Kay Farris

Brief Review of Literature

The review of literature for this study explores the differences in the adjustment process of freshmen who commute to college in contrast to freshmen who live in on campus housing while attending college. The literature that was reviewed for this study consists of how living environments impact a college freshman’s adjustment process as well as other factors that impact a freshman’s adjustment process. In the review of the literature several key themes were addressed such as transition, involvement, sense of belonging, and social adjustment.

Statement of Problem

This thesis is a quantitative study exploring the differences in the adjustment process of freshmen college students who commute in contrast to the adjustment process of college freshmen who live in the residence halls at a small, private university. This study explores the effects of adjustment and living environments on retention. This study was completed at Jones University located in the Sacramento Valley of California. The study consisted of two surveys which were distributed at Jones University to freshmen.
Sources of Data

The literature which was reviewed for this study looks at major factors affecting the adjustment process for college freshmen. Those factors consist of transition, involvement, social adjustment, sense of belonging, and living environments. The literature review also explores how these factors mentioned above affect not only college freshmen as a whole, but also college freshmen who commute to campus and college freshmen who live in the residence halls.

Conclusions Reached

This study concluded that the factors that affect the freshman adjustment process which were researched in the literature such as transition, involvement, social adjustment, sense of belonging and living environments all play a large role in the adjustment of both commuter students and residential students. Differences were seen in their overall involvement in campus activities as well as how often commuter students and residential students interacted with faculty. The conclusion was also drawn that there was not a significant difference in the overall adjustment of the freshmen who commuted to campus at Jones University and the freshman who lived in on-campus housing.

________________________, Committee Chair
Virginia Dixon, Ed. D.

________________________
Date
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

In the United States, between 40 and 50% of students who are currently enrolled in college, drop out before completing their education and receiving their degree (Kelly, Kendrick, Newgent & Lucas, 2007). College student attrition has increasingly become a problem among colleges and universities. According to Vincent Tinto (1993), more students will drop out of college prior to graduating than those who will actually complete their degree. Why is this problem of increasing attrition becoming a major issue for colleges and universities? Astin’s (1975) research showed there are several reasons a student could potentially drop out of college. In the book *Preventing Students from Dropping Out*, Astin (1975), there could be a number of reasons students drop out. According to Astin’s study, some of the reasons could include: boredom with courses, financial difficulties, family responsibilities, dissatisfaction with requirements, change in career goals, inability to take desired courses or programs, good job offer, illness or accident, difficulty commuting to college, disciplinary troubles, or some other reason (Astin). Tinto described reasons for student departure in his book *Leaving College*. Tinto looked at reasons such as: finances, involvement, external communities, and individual’s roots.

One can see that there are many reasons why a student might drop out of college, but many of these reasons can be tied into one key element: the element of adjustment.
This key element is the topic of this study. There are many students who have difficulty with this adjustment process. Adjustment difficulty refers to the problems which students might face with getting involved, making friends, being away from home, as well as many others.

At the very outset, persistence in college requires individuals to adjust, both socially and intellectually, to the new and sometimes quite strange world of the college. Most persons, even the most able and socially mature, experience some difficulty in making that adjustment. For many, the period of adjustment is brief, the difficulties they encounter relatively minor, but some find it so difficult they quit. (Tinto, 1993, p. 45)

A significant aspect of the adjustment process is getting involved and making friends. These seem to be two of the most important aspects for a successful transition into college. Although these may be key aspects to adjustment for many college freshmen, it is difficult process.

Isolation can also be a significant issue that some college freshman must face. Isolation can be a part of the difficult transitional adjustment process. If a student does not make a connection to the university campus and make friends, they will most likely drop out of school due to lack of involvement and lack of friends. According to Astin (1993), college student’s peers are the one group that influences them the most during their adjustment.

Student involvement and making friends is a key factor in the adjustment process of a new student. Each student needs to feel as if s/he has a place on the campus and by
getting involved and finding a place. A student’s sense of belonging is a key aspect to their adjustment. According to Paul and Brier (2001), the more friends a student has the easier the adjustment to college. There are many ways a student can get involved on campus, but the university needs to make those opportunities available as well as the students taking the initiative to get involved in those opportunities.

Whether it is making friends or getting involved, the adjustment process is one that is difficult. The first year student’s residential living environment can make a significant impact on this adjustment process. A student’s living environment can play an important role in the student’s adjustment process if the right living environment is chosen. This study will begin by looking at the student’s living environment and the impact it has on their adjustment to the university.

This study will also look at whether or not living in the residence halls helps students to get more involved, as well as in the long run does it help in improving the retention rates of a college or university. The study will then examine the difference in the transitional adjustment process for college freshman who choose to live on campus in contrast to college freshman who choose to commute from home. One can see that if a student does not adjust well to the university, s/he is most likely not going to persist toward graduation. This study will help to determine if the student’s living environment can in any way help improve the student adjustment process. Additionally, can this help improve the retention rates of the college in this study?
Purpose of the Study

Every year there are many freshmen entering college for the first time who are faced with many difficult challenges. One of the most difficult challenges is adjusting to life in college. The purpose of this study is to shed light on the on-going debate of whether living in college residence halls or commuting to college during their first year helps freshmen adjust to life at college more efficiently. In the literature, authors have differing views on whether one living situation is better than the other. The purpose of this study is to continue to shed light on this ongoing debate related to living at home or residing on campus.

Once a conclusion is drawn from this study, the outcome will then help students and parents in making a decision as to where their student should live during their first year of college. The results of this study will also help student life personnel in their attempt to help college freshmen adjust to college life faster and more efficiently.

Specific purposes include the following:

1. Identify some of the major factors of adjustment that all college freshman face.
2. Determine if life in the Residence Hall helps with the adjustment issues that college freshman are facing.
3. Determine barriers and hardships that freshman commuter students face when it comes to adjustment.
4. Determine whether or not living on campus helps a college freshman adjust to college more quickly and more efficiently.
Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study.

Adjustment: The process a student undergoes as they enter college for the first time in order to fit in or belong to the institution.

Attrition: The number or rate of students that an institution loses from year to year.

Commuter Student: A student who lives in an off campus apartment or house with or without families.

Dropout: A student who does not persist to college graduation.

Engagement: The act of a student becoming involved in campus activities

Freshman: “A student in the first year of college who has taken less than 30 credit hours” (Jackson, 2008, p. 8).

Integration: The act of a student becoming and feeling a part of an institution.

Involvement: Participation in on campus activities such as clubs, organizations, student leadership, athletics, and intramurals (Jackson, 2008)

Living Environments: “The classification of a student’s type of housing arrangement; such as on-campus residential halls, off campus apartment/house, or off-campus with parents” (Jackson, 2008, p. 9).

On Campus Resident: A student who lives in campus housing or housing provided by an institution.

Persistence: The act of a student continuing at the institution for an allotted period of time.
**Resident Assistant**: A student leader hired by the institution to reside in the residence hall to help provide structure and programming for their floor.

**Residence Halls**: The building on a college campus where college students reside or live while school is in session.

**Retention**: The number or rate of students that a university keeps from year to year.

**Satisfaction**: A student’s perception of their contentment with college

**Social Adjustment**: “A subscale made up of 20 items that are relevant to the Interpersonal-Societal demands inherent to adjustment to college” (Baker & Siryk, as cited in Jackson, 2008, p. 10).

**Limitations**

This study has certain limitations. If one were to try and search for information regarding this topic of the effects a student’s living environment has on their transitional adjustment, they would encounter a significant amount of difficulty finding such information. There is limited research regarding the comparison of the adjustment process of freshmen who commute in contrast to freshmen who live in the residence halls.

There has been a significant amount of research done on the adjustment process of freshmen and what factors play into that adjustment, but the research is limited when the topic is broken down even further. One could find research in the area of on campus
housing and the effects it has on the adjustment process. However, one would also find the research limited when it comes to commuter students on residential campuses.

It is important for student affairs professionals to have information readily available to help them better serve their students. This is one of those areas of study that would make a significant impact on student affairs professionals if they had research regarding this topic. If student affairs professionals were aware of the differences in the adjustment process they would not only be able to help improve the retention of the students at their university, but also they would also be able to educate students on the impact that their living environment has on their adjustment. This study will also better equip students to make the proper decision about where they are going to live during their years as a college student. According to William Zeller, the first year students’ living environment will influence their overall college experience (as cited in Upcraft et al., 2005). The students living environments affect not only a student’s social adjustment but also their academic adjustment. This might help the student to have an easier transitional adjustment process because they are aware of the effects of their living environment.

This study was also limited in the data that has been collected. This study was limited to one institutions’ data. Therefore, it could not be compared to data from other institutions for a more comprehensive study. The time span of this study was also limited in the sense that the author used one year to follow the adjustment process of these freshmen students, rather than following through the students’ entire higher educational academic career. The author also had a limited amount of students for this study. Jones University is a small private institution of under 1000 students. Therefore, the population
for the study was small as well. The final limitation of this study was that not only was the sample for this study limited to a small number, but the return rate of the surveys was low as well.

Although there are some limitations in this study, the author believes that the outcome is still beneficial. First, this study will benefit students entering college for the first time who are deciding where to live. Second, it will benefit student affairs professionals who are helping both commuter students and residential students adjust to life at college.
Chapter 2
REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Retention has become a growing problem among colleges and universities today. Colleges and universities are losing more and more students each year for a number of different reasons. This is causing them to have high attrition rates and low retention rates. “The national rate of student departure from public colleges and universities has remained constant, amounting to about 45% over the course of the last one hundred years” (Kelly et al., 2007, p. 1021). The majority of this departure is taking place between a student’s freshman and sophomore year. Every year more and more pressure is put on university staff not only to admit top-notch students into their campuses but also to keep them there. A major factor in helping these university administrators keep these students there is the successful adjustment of each and every one of these students (Enochs & Roland, 2006). The main factor that needs to be looked at is what is causing the students to drop out of college. One might think that academic dismissals might be a major cause for these low retention rates, but Tinto (1993) believed that only 15 to 25% of students leaving is due to academic dismissals from college. This statistic leads one to believe that the remaining 75 to 85% of students who leave college do so voluntarily. There were many researchers who found the leading causes for students leaving college relates to the student adjustment process. Most of the 75-85% of students who dropped out did so because they did not fit in socially, academically, or economically (Kelly et al., 2007).
These are very broad categories that needed to be examined in a deeper manner to determine a narrower definition for these causes of departure.

There has been a significant amount of research done to help narrow the cause for student departure to these three categories of social, academic, and economic reasons for departure. Most of the research that has been done leads to two major factors for successful student adjustment. These two factors are the social and academic adjustment of college freshman. Tinto (1993) believed that being able to manage and balance both social and academic life will help with the student adjustment process. According to Toews and Yazedjian (2007) there are a significant number of students who have trouble succeeding in the adjustment process. They also found that 50% of college students drop out before obtaining a degree. This dropout usually takes place within the first two years of college (Toews & Yazedjian). For the purpose of this study, the research found focuses more on the social adjustment aspect than the academic. It has been found that the social adjustment process is just as important if not even more important as the academic adjustment. “Social adjustment may be just as important as academic adjustment, according to Geredes and Mallinckrodt (1994) who studied 155 freshman and found that ‘personal adjustment and integration into the social fabric of campus life play a role at least as important as academic factors in student retention’” (Enochs & Roland, 2006, p. 63). Even though the focus for this study is on the social adjustment of college freshmen, one can see a connection between both social adjustment and academic adjustment. Social integration and involvement of new college freshmen is one of the major determining factors of whether a student remains in school after their first year. Research
by Rong and Gable (1999) emphasized the importance that living environment, social support and making meaningful relationship connections have on students’ overall adjustment to the college environment. Institutions that provide opportunities for not only academic support, but also social and personal support increase their retention rates (as cited in Enochs & Roland, 2006, p. 63).

In order for students to feel like they belong to someone or something, they need to feel a sense of attachment or bond. This is a huge issue that college freshmen face when transitioning into college. These college freshmen are away from home, most of them for the first time, and are surrounded by new people, places, and things, and they need to feel a sense of belonging. College freshmen need to begin their educational experience by making new friends and establishing relationships that will be meaningful and lasting while in college. It has been found that if a student is not able to make friends and build relationships this can for some cause depression, anxiety, suicide, criminality, and college freshman attrition (Freeman, Anderman & Jensen, 2007). Though making friends and building relationships is not the only aspect of social adjustment, it does tend to be extremely important and is a great place to start.

According to Grayson (2003), research is somewhat slim when it comes to how long institutions have to help students adjust. Noel and Levitz think that institutions only have six weeks to help a student adjust to life at college, but they have no solid data to prove this concept (as cited in Grayson). According to Pritchard, Wilson and Yamnitz (2007), the adjustment window is within the first six weeks of classes for college freshmen. If within those six weeks the student does not feel they have a place at the
institution the student might choose to leave. Research also said that if a student feels as though they are making friends and are happy with their social adjustment within the first couple weeks they have a higher chance of persisting to graduation (Woosley, 2003).

“Upcraft and Gardner found that approximately one quarter of incoming freshman do not return to the same institution the following year, with half of these students making the decision to leave in the first 6 weeks” (Pritchard et al., 2007, p. 15).

If research is correct, these first six weeks are the most critical time of transition for these students. This is the time where the students need to be meeting new people, making new friends, and getting involved in campus life.

Factors Affecting College Freshman Adjustment

Each fall thousands of high school graduates launch into the next phase of their academic careers: college. They arrive on campuses across the United States full of hope and optimism, trepidation and anxiety. All intensely feel both the eagerness to excel and the fear of failure. Parents, family, and (quite often) friends left behind, they venture into the uncharted territory of college determined to chart their own courses, to shape their own destinies. Some enter college well-prepared for the academic and social challenges that await them; others survive ill-suited to meet the expectations of post-secondary education. Most will survive their first-year at college and go on to graduate, but all too many will drop out before the freshman year is over (Kidwell, 2005, p. 1).
As a freshman enters college this is a transformative time in their life where they will be figuring out who they are and how to take care of themselves. According to a study done by John Gardner the executive director of the Policy Center on the First Year of College, at Brevard College students are interested in developing a meaningful philosophy of life (as cited in Bartlett, 2002). Students will use this first year away at college in a new environment to try to figure this out. This is all part of the adjustment process they will face as they enter college. This adjustment process is extremely significant because according to research how a student adjusts during their first year of college lays the groundwork for other events during their college life (Baker & Siryk, 1984). There are many factors that affect a college freshmen’s adjustment process. This study will look at some of the major factors.

Transition to College

One of the major factors that affect the freshmen’s adjustment process is the transition that the student will face. A student’s transition includes anything from starting college for the first time to moving away from home for the first time. A student’s transition is one of the most important aspects of adjustment. If a student does not have a smooth transition to college they will quite possibly have a difficult time adjusting. A student who is starting college for the first time could be facing one of the largest life changes they have ever faced. “Early research on the impact of major life events suggested that any event that caused a person to make a substantial amount of adjustment in his or her life was likely to be stressful (Lafreniere, Ledgerwood & Docherty, 1997). During a student’s transition phase they can also face many setbacks such as
homesickness. “The transition to university life is often looked upon as a positive event. However, the changes that result can at times be stressful for the student, as he or she leaves existing sources of social support behind. Commonly, this stress creates feelings of homesickness and the intense desire to return home (Urani, Miller & Johnson, 2003).

Homesickness can often set a student back in their adjustment process due to the fact that their main focus is on missing home. Students who are homesick lose focus on what some of their main priorities should be such as making friends and starting new classes. When a student’s main focus is on missing home, they spend their days thinking about being home and being with friends and family rather than on the reality of their life at college. This focus on family and missing home can also lead to the isolation of the student. Students who isolate themselves spend the majority of their time in their rooms alone. They may go to classes and do homework, but they do not put out the effort to make friends or get involved. There are a few factors that help to predict homesickness in college freshmen. Students who are extremely dependent on their families as well as cohesive tend to be the students who have a larger tendency to struggle with homesickness (Urani et al., 2003).

Another setback in a student’s transition phase is friendsickness. A student who experiences friendsickness is a student who is struggling with leaving their friends behind as they begin their college carrier.

Thus, most college transition research focusing on interpersonal issues looks ahead to relational experiences in college that facilitate or hamper adjustment: individuation and the realignment of family relationships, continuation or family
support and attachment, and securing new college friendships. However, this forward-looking perspective neglects new college students’ frequent ‘glances back’ to precollege experiences (Paul & Brier, 2001, p. 77).

According to Fisher, a student who experiences homesickness as described above will most likely experience friendsickness as well (Paul & Brier, 2001). When a student leaves home, they are not only leaving their family but they are leaving their friends they have had for many years. Some students will stay in contact with these friends, but many will not. Those who do not stay in contact will need to go through a grieving process. If this grieving process is not gone through, students will face difficulty transitioning into college life. Though some students might hold on to those pre-college friends, these friendships will not be the same again (Paul & Brier). In order for students to transition well they need to realize that these friendships are going to look different and focus on making new friendships while at college. Students’ ties with their family are more likely to remain strong as where students’ ties with their friends are more likely to diminish when they move away to college (Paul & Brier). In order for students to transition smoothly, they need to come in ready to meet new people and make new friends. They also need to realize that missing home and friends is normal, but not to let that take over their thoughts and actions keeping them from making new friends and transitioning well.

Social Adjustment

One can see that college freshmen are facing a number of challenges as they enter college for the first time. Transitioning into college is very difficult for students due to the fact that many of them are leaving home as well as leaving friends behind. Students
will need support in this transition to college. Social support is key to a student’s transition. In the article regarding homesickness, it is noted that strong social support from the home environment is tied to strong social support at college (Urani et al., 2003). Lafreniere et al. (1997) noted, “…high levels of social support (from both friends and family) were related to greater satisfaction at school, less school-related anxiety, and fewer difficulties adjusting to new tasks” (p. 15). Students need support from their family as well as their friends at home in order to transition in to college successfully. Students will meet new people and find a different set of social support when they get to college, but during that transitional phase they are going to continue to need support from family. According to Enochs and Roland (2006), students who are able to connect with others in their new environment and find that social support adjust better than those who are not able to build a new support system.

**Involvement**

There are many ways for a student to begin to build that new social support system. One of the major ways is becoming involved in university activities. Involvement is another key factor that affects a freshmen’s adjustment process. One of the major reasons students need support is to help them get involved in campus life. A university offers many different activities for students to get involved in, but unless a student chooses to get involved they will find difficulty adjusting to college. Astin’s (1999) theory of involvement showed how concept of involvement affecting student adjustment is true. According to Astin’s (1999) theory of involvement,

A highly involved student is one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to
studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students. Conversely, a typical uninvolved student neglects studies, spends little time on campus, abstains from extracurricular activities, and has infrequent contact with faculty members or other students. (p. 518)

The struggle which many educators find with this theory is how to get the students involved. Astin (1999) focused on the fact that motivating students is probably more difficult than involving them. If educators can find ways to motivate students they will have an easier time getting them involved. Astin also focused on the ways and areas to get students involved. According to Astin, students who work at on campus jobs tend to be more involved in all areas of campus life. Also, students who participate in extracurricular activities such as fraternities and sororities, intramurals, sports, clubs, and organizations have an easier time getting involved and therefore an easier time adjusting to college life.

*Sense of Belonging to Campus*

Students not only need to be involved in campus life, but also need to feel a sense of belonging to the campus. Involvement is one way for a student to feel this sense of belonging but there are also many other ways. According to Pittman and Richmond’s (2008) research, one of the major of factors of feeling a sense of belonging to the campus is a student’s commitment to they are to the university they are attending as well as their commitment to working hard for their education. Thus, this sense of belonging goes beyond the relationships with individuals in the school to a more global sense of
connection to a larger group or community will likely experience increased stress and emotional distress (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). As seen above, students need to get involved in campus life to help with a smooth adjustment process. With that, students who feel a sense of belonging to the institution are more likely to get involved. Students who feel a sense of belonging also tend to perceive that professors care about them and their success. These students also have a lower level of depression and become more involved in campus life (Pittman & Richmond).

This sense of belonging comes not only from making friends and getting involved in the institution's campus, but it also comes from the student's interaction with faculty and staff. Students need to feel like the faculty members and staff members at their institution are available for them and that they want the students to succeed. According to Tinto (1993), “Even among those who persist, wide-ranging contact with faculty, especially outside the class, is associated with heightened intellectual and social development” (p. 69). Research done by Halawah (2006) also found that faculty and student interaction help not only with their sense of belonging, but also with their overall achievement. Research also shows that faculty who choose to use the technique of active learning in their classroom help students during their time of transition (Braxton, Milem & Sullivan, 2000). This active learning where students get to interact with one another as well as the faculty member allows students to meet people and make friends helping with their social integration.

There was a strategic retention initiative done by the dean of students at Vanderbilt University’s Peabody College that documented this concept: students feel
more of a sense of belonging to the institution’s campus when they have interaction with faculty and staff. In this initiative the dean of students calls over two-hundred freshman students who are at risk of dropping out of the university. In this phone conversation, the dean was checking in with the student to see how both their academic and social transition was going. The dean does make two phone calls total to the students, one in the fall and one in the spring. From just this small step in helping to increase the connection between students and staff the institutions first-to-second year retention rates jumped from 88% to between 95-98%. The students in this initiative who received phone calls said that the calls made them feel like they were cared for by the institution (Brier, Hirschy & Braxton, 2008). One can see that students desire to find that sense of belonging and the sense that someone cares for them.

*Living Environments*

The students’ living environment as being one of the major aspects of a student’s process of adjustment to college. “Students who lived in environments that were conducive to learning and provided ample study space and opportunities for growth and interaction tended to have had an easier time adjusting than students who lived in other environments” (Rong & Gamble, as cited in Enochs & Roland, 2006, p. 65). In a study done by David Cheng (2004), research was done to find the top eight factors that contribute to campus community. In those top eight were three things that closely correlate to the research on social adjustment. According to the students he surveyed, residential experience came in number three, socializing came in number seven, and friendship came in number eight (Cheng). The students themselves can see how
important these factors are, not only to campus community but also to student
adjustment.

There is a significant amount of research done on student’s living environments
and the role that it plays in a student’s adjustment process. There are two different living
environments that students can choose when entering college, either the residence halls or
off campus living. According to Chickering (1974), off campus living can include both
students who live at home with their parents and students who choose to live
independently in an off campus house or apartment. There are different points of view on
which one benefits college freshmen more. This study will provide some additional
insight for this question of whether one living situation is better than the other for college
freshman. According to Astin, Pascarella, and Terenzini where college freshmen live is
extremely important and makes a difference in their adjustment process:

Where first-year students live can significantly influence the overall quality of
their collegiate experience. It will affect the likelihood of their making an easy
transition into the campus environment, succeeding academically, matriculating
through to graduation, and having a fulfilling educational experience. Some first-
year students have no choice about where to live: the institutions they attend
require them to live on campus. Most, however, have a choice, and that choice
may well affect their success in the first year (as cited in Upcraft et al., 2005, p.
410).

Upcraft and team said it best when they say that where students live during their first year
matters and if they have the choice they need to choose wisely because it very well may
affect their success in their first year of college. The next section of the literature will look at what researchers say about both residence halls and off-campus living. The research will provide insight into whether one living environment is better than the other in helping college freshmen adjust to college life faster and more efficiently. One should keep in mind while looking at the two sides the factors, which affect first year adjustment that were addressed above. These factors tie into all aspects of living environments and will help to provide more insight on whether one living environment is better than the other.

Emerging Adulthood and Its Effects on a Student’s Transition to College

Every young adult embarks on the journey of emerging adulthood. Emerging adulthood usually takes place in 18-25 year olds (Berk, 2006). Emerging adulthood typically takes place during the time in life where they are graduating from high school and thinking about future plans. Part of the latent adolescent development includes identity development. Young adults who are transitioning from high school to college embark on the journey to figure out who they are as a person. Part of the a young adult’s identity development comes right after a student graduates from high school and is preparing to embark on the next journey of life. Oftentimes, students choose to transition from high school to college. This transition can be complicated. According to Hiester, Nordstrom, and Swenson (2009), “Successful adaptation to the college environment requires students to manage their own time, develop a workable academic and social schedule, accomplish academic tasks, negotiate a new social world, and respond to new stressors and challenges” (p. 521).
There are many factors that play into this transition as well as many people who play a role. According to Smith and Zhang (2009), “Parents, friends, high school teachers and guidance counselors, college professors and academic advisors, college orientation programs, and first-year seminars play a role in facilitating students’ transition from high school to college” (p. 643).

According to a study done on identity development and its relationship with student living arrangements a student is more likely to establish their adult identity when they choose to live apart from their parents after high school (Jordyn & Byrd, 2003). According to adult development theory when a student chooses to leave home in order to attend college this is just a normal step in their adult identity development (Jordyn & Byrd).

Another part of this identity development is students being able to make their own choices. When a student chooses to go away to college and live away from home for the first time they find a new sense of freedom. They are no longer living under the rules of their parents, but now they are only living under the rules of the institution in which they attend. In the study, *Behavioral Risks During the Transition from High School to College*, Fromme, Kruse, and Corbin (2008) said the supervision that students are under during their time at college is much more limited than during their time at home. This same study also concluded that during this time in an adolescent’s life, they are easily influenced by their peers. This influence can be good or bad, but often times because students are living together they can influence one another toward riskier behavior (Fromme et al.).
According to research another factor that plays into the transition is parental attachment. An important part of a student’s academic and social success is a healthy parental attachment (Heister et al., 2009). Students who do not have healthy relationships with their parents had a more difficult time adjusting to life in college. On the other hand, students who do have healthy relationships with their parents have an easier time adjusting because they feel a sense of support (Heister et al.). This study also concluded that women tended to need more support from parents than males did during their adjustment to college (Heister et al.).

Resident Hall Students’ Adjustment to College

According to experts, on campus living or residence hall living can provide the type of atmosphere that will help students adjust to college. Residence hall communities are comparable to a family. All of the members of a floor or wing make up one large family. This allows the members of this family to support one another allowing for students to receive the support they seek when entering college. Some residence halls are implementing what is known as living-learning communities. These living-learning communities allow the students not only to live with one another and form friendships and relationships but also to allow them to form study groups and academic support systems in their residence halls. “These environments are residence halls that have specialized programs that attempt to bring academics into the halls through programs such as faculty review sessions for exams and tutoring centers located in the halls”
The research has also found that students who live in the residence halls also tend to be more involved in other activities and programs on campus. According to Astin (1975), what prevents students from dropping out, students who leave home and live in on campus housing have a better chance of actually completing their education and obtaining a degree. Flowers (2004) came to the same conclusion in her study, *Effects of Living on Campus on African American Students’ Educational Gains in College*. In Flowers’ (2004) research, she concluded that there are four distinct benefits of students who live in campus housing. The first benefit is that students who live on campus have a higher likelihood of persistence. This means that students who live on campus have a better likelihood of finishing and obtaining a degree. The second benefit is that students who live on campus develop better social skills. Students who live on campus have more of an opportunity to be social with other students who are in the same place in life when they live on campus than those who live off campus. The third benefit was that students who lived in campus housing had a better chance of being involved and attending student activities that were hosted by the university. The fourth and final benefit of living in campus housing is that these students show higher academic achievement. These four benefits that Flowers found in her research will be looked at from other researcher’s points of view in the findings below.

*Transition to College*

Transition to college is one of the most demanding transitions that students will face during their college career. Students who choose to live in the residence halls face many different challenges than those who choose to commute to college and continue to
live at home. Students who choose to live in on campus housing face one of the biggest challenges of moving away from home for the first time. Students can come from all distances when they choose a college and this distance plays a large role in the transition process. A student who chooses to live on campus but is only a short distance from home is going to have a much easier transition than one who chooses to attend an out of state college. This decision can offer many challenges for a first time college freshman. Some of those many challenges include homesickness and friendsickness.

Students who have lived at home for eighteen years of their life with their parents have a bond and attachment that cannot be replaced by any other. When a student moves away from home for the first time this bond is tampered with and even broken, as they are no longer with their family and close friends. A student’s family will in most cases always be their support system, but during this transition that support will not be what it had been for the last eighteen years while the student was living at home. Students have to begin to find a new and different support system in the college environment rather than at home. This can be a very difficult challenge because often friends cannot support a student in the way that their family can. When a student chooses to live in the residence hall the students they live with can become like their family and this is where they will begin to look for that new support system. Zeller (2005) stated, “Furthermore, where first-year students live can significantly influence the overall quality of their collegiate experience. It will affect the likelihood of their making an easy transition into the campus environment, succeeding academically, matriculating through to graduation, and having a fulfilling educational experience” (p. 410).
According to Enochs and Roland (2006), students who make friends and establish connections in their new environments were able to adjust better to college life. Residence halls and on campus housing emerges as a prime location for meeting new people and making new friends. When a student chooses to live in the residence halls he or she must make it a priority to meet new people and make new friends during this time of transition. These new friends will become the students’ new support system and will make the transition from home to college a much easier and faster one.

\textit{Involvement}

In another study done on the strategies for student transition to college, 93\% of the students surveyed who lived on campus in the residence halls were involved in some other form of activity at the campus. Only 65\% of the students surveyed who lived in some form of off campus housing were said to be involved in some kind of activity or club on campus (Kelly et al., 2007). Pascarella’s (1992) research concluded that students who live on campus will be significantly more involved than commuter students. According to Kuh, Gonyea and Palmer (2001), commuter students are more likely not to take advantage of the extracurricular activities that take place on campus. This study set out to find if students who commute to campus are less likely to be engaged. Overall, the findings showed that commuter students were less likely to be engaged in campus activities depending on the distance of the commute. This seems to be an important factor when looking at the freshman adjustment process. The living environment does impact the overall adjustment process of a college freshman.
As mentioned in the introduction institutions of higher learning are only successfully retaining 45% of their students (Kelly et al., 2007). One major factor in these low retention rates is failure to successfully help students both academically and socially adjust to college. Both the academic and social adjustments are key to retaining a student, but for the purpose of this study the focus is significantly on social adjustment aspect of a college freshman. There are many contributing factors to the social adjustment process. A few of those contributing factors, as mentioned in Kelly et al. research, were ample living environment, social support, and making meaningful and lasting relationships. Students who lived in the residence halls were shown to have more involvement in other activities or clubs on campus than students who lived off campus and commuted. The residence halls were also proven to be a place where that social support can be found. Students who live in the residence halls had a built-in support system that supported them not only socially but also academically. Overall, the freshman adjustment process is proven to be a determining factor of retention. If the adjustment process is smooth and successful, then a student is more likely choose to finish their education endeavor that they had already begun.

Alexander Astin’s (1999) study on student involvement concluded, Living on campus substantially increases the student’s chances of persisting and of aspiring to a graduate or professional degree. Residents are more likely than commuters to achieve in such extracurricular areas as leadership and athletics and to express satisfaction with their undergraduate experience, particularly in the
Astin believed that living on campus can help with the overall adjustment of students. As seen above student involvement is a key factor in a freshman’s adjustment process and according to Kelly et al. (2007), a higher percentage of students who live in the Residence Halls tend to be involved in campus activities. According to Curley (2003), on campus residents tend to be more involved due to the convenience of these activities. Henry Humphreys, a director of residence life at Boston College, believed that activities are planned for on campus residents. The activities are planned around their schedules in order to make them easier to attend. According to Humphreys, activities tend to be planned in the late afternoons, evenings, or weekends (as cited in Curley). These are the times when on campus students are free and not in classes, but they are also the times when commuter students are either in classes, have gone home for the day, or are not on campus because there are no classes (Curley). Institutions are scheduling events around residential students, which are great for the involvement of residential students and is helping with the adjustment process, but what is happening to the commuter students? Commuter students are falling through the cracks and residential students are beginning to set the culture and tone of universities (Curley).

Social Adjustment

In their study on retaining students through social interaction, Wisely and Jorgensen (2000) alluded to the fact that living in the residence halls has a direct correlation with increased retention rates. In this study they focus on the concept of social
interaction and how that affects retention rates. Wisely and Jorgensen specifically look at Residence Halls in this study and whether they play a part in increased retention. This study looks at special assignment residence halls that have specific students who are placed in honors or enrichment halls. The conclusion of this study is that group dynamics are highly important in student retention. Students have a significant influence on one another and when the right students are placed together they can have a significant impact in their social interaction, academic success, and many other areas of their lives.

According to Chickering (1974), in Commuting Versus Resident Students community is not something that just exists when a student comes into college. He or she must create that community and provide the upkeep for this community. This provides for a challenge in the social adjustment aspect of transition. When a student enters college they have many different areas of adjustment on which they are focusing. It can be difficult if they have to focus the majority of their time on making friends and meeting new people in order to create community. Students who live in the residence halls have a community handed to them in that setting. When students live in the residence halls with other people, they are able to spend the time in the evening getting to other residence hall mates and are able to build community. In contrast, when a student commutes to campus for class, then leaves and returns home, they are unable to meet other people. In the article “Dorm Therapy” written for the Chronicle of Higher Education, the author addressed what they are trying to accomplish in on campus housing. Their answer to that question is “We are trying to create a situation in which students can form social connections—friendships, mentorships. We’re trying to achieve a good balance between
learning to be independent but also learning to live with other people” (Fogg, 2008, p. 1).

This concept of learning to live with others is very important. This is something that all college freshmen are going to have to learn at some time in their life for another.

Chickering (1974) also addressed the concept that students who live in residential housing on campus do not always have the benefit of choosing who they live with as where students who live independently do. For residential students this can be beneficial or it can be a challenge. When a student is placed with someone that they do not know when they enter college this can be a scary thing. According to Lipka (2008) in her article, “Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Find Me a Roommate”, “a roommate mismatch can spoil a semester. Nasty habits. Bitter grudges. Epic stand-offs over square inches” (p. 1). Although the thought of not knowing your roommate might be scary it is a good way for freshman to begin to meet people and make friends.

*Sense of Belonging to Campus*

When a freshman enters college for the first time they are looking for something significant. Students are beginning to look for self-identity. They are beginning to establish their own morals and beliefs and no longer have their parents there to make these decisions. Part of what they are seeking when they enter college is a sense of belonging. As they begin to seek this sense of belonging, they begin to look into activities to become involved in on the college campus. The most significant way that a student can find that sense of belonging is by becoming involved in a club, organization, or some form of extra-curricular activity on the university’s campus. This will allow students to not only make new friends and build new relationships, but it will help students to feel a
sense of belonging to the university campus. As mentioned earlier when talking about involvement students who live in the residence halls tend to have more opportunity for involvement than those who commute due to the times and places where activities and events are held. According to Chickering, and Kuper, Nelson and Welty,

The research on the relationship of residential status to social activity and interpersonal experiences (with whom a student socializes) in college support the notion that resident students are consistently more involved in the college social systems. There is much evidence, for example, that resident students participate in college extracurricular cultural and social activities more frequently than their commuter counterparts. In addition, residents tend to develop more college friends early in their college years than commuters (as cited in Inman & Pascarella, 1997, p. 6).

According to research a student’s sense of belonging also comes side by side with a student’s commitment level to the institution in which they attend (Hausmann, Schofield & Woods, 2007).

Commuter Students’ Adjustment to College

When one thinks of a commuter student one might think of a student who does not live in campus housing at the college or university that they attend. “According to the NCCP’s definition, more than 80 percent of students today are commuters, while more than 84 percent of all students do not live in university-owned housing” (“Commuter Students: Myths”, 2006, p. 5). According to Chickering (1974), there are two types of
commuter students who attend colleges and universities across the United States. The first type of commuter student is a student who lives at home with family. This family can either be the student’s parents and siblings, or it can be a husband or wife and children. It has been a trend over the last couple years that students with families of their own are starting to go back to college to obtain their degrees. The second type of commuter student is a student who lives off campus in an apartment either by themselves or with others (Chickering, 1974. These students typically live close to campus and with friends that may or may not attend the same college or university. Both of these types of commuters are very different from one another. These two types of commuters could almost be classified in two different categories, but for this study the author will classify them as one category of commuters.

Transition

A commuter student’s transition to college looks significantly different than a resident student’s transition to college. When a commuter student thinks about transitioning into college they are not thinking about moving away from home for the first time and living with people they may or may not know. Instead they are thinking about balancing both school and home life. There are different reasons a student might choose to commute rather than become a resident of the college or university. One major reason a student might choose to live at home would be for economic reasons (Chickering, 1974. For some it provides to be a better financial move to live off campus either at home with parents or in an apartment close to campus rather than living in on campus residence. For others they do not have a choice on whether they will live at home
or on campus because they have family or work responsibility that must be met (Upcraft et al., 2005). Some students who attend college and become part of the commuter population have responsibility of taking care of families at home. These families can include children, siblings, elderly parents and other members of one’s family. These students may also have jobs that they must attend to in order to support themselves and or family.

Change is a large part of a student’s transition to college. Students are facing many changes in their lives as they begin the new journey of starting college. According to Chickering (1974), a student who lives at home with their parents while beginning college does not face as much change as a student who moves into on campus housing. Chickering also addressed how students who live in apartments fall somewhere in between students who live at home with parents and students who live in the residence halls when it comes to change. Students who live at home with their parents do not face much change because their life is very similar to what it was in high school before beginning college. They are still living in the comfort of their home and attending school at the same time. Students who live in apartments close to the university’s campus face more change because they are now out on their own and have more responsibilities than they did when they lived at home with their parents.

Commuters not only have responsibilities outside of attending school, but most of them also pay for their education out of pocket (Chickering, 1974). Students who commute often have the responsibility of work in order to help finance the cost of attending school. Most commuters do not take out loans in order to pay for school. One
will often find that resident students take out loans because the cost for their education is more due to paying for their housing. For commuter students this causes extra stress because they are not only going to school and trying to take care of outside responsibilities, but also they are trying to work enough to pay for their education. In the article “Commuter Students: Myths, Realities, Helpful Theoretical Frameworks”, “Commuter students have multiple life roles. Recent studies show that commuter students are not necessarily less engaged than other students, but that they must, because of time and energy constraints, make their engagement more strategic (“Commuter Students: Myths”, 2006, p. 5). Commuter students tend to have so much going on in their life while attending school that they have to be very strategic about the way they spend their time and energy. According to Donovan (2006), commuter students also tend to struggle with school because rather than being able to leave their home life at home and attend school like on campus residents are able to do they have to bring their home life to school with them.

Involvement

As seen above in the research on the factors, which affect the adjustment process of college freshman, involvement was a key factor. Involvement is a key factor in the freshman adjustment process and is also one of the major obstacles that commuter students face. In Chickering’s (1974) comparison of residential students and commuter students he stated,

Residents engage more fully with the academic program and associated intellectual activities. They have more frequent and wider ranging contact with
faculty members and fellow students. They more frequently participate in extracurricular activities and assume positions of leadership. They more frequently attend cultural events and discuss political, religious and social issues. (p. 53)

Chickering (1974) stated that involvement is a much easier task for residents than it is for commuters. Resident students more frequently get involved. As seen above, involvement for residents comes easier than it does for commuters because most events and activities are scheduled in the evening when the residents are still on campus and the commuters have gone home for the day. Kuh et al. (2001) concluded in their study on the Disengaged Commuter Student that the further away a student lives from the institution’s campus the less likely they are to become involved or utilize the resources that are offered. There is a significant need for programming that is focused on commuters. Chickering (1974) stated, “They leave no question that there is need for creative programs that will broaden the college experience for the commuting student” (p. 53).

A test program at Wilkes University piloted a program for commuter students that would help to get commuter students more involved. This program was made up of two groups. The first group was residents that lived in the same resident hall and the second group was made up of commuter students. This learning community was a class that freshman enrolled in and had the choice to participate in. According to the instructor of the class, the learning community gave commuter students the opportunity to establish friendships and to build a support network (“Learning Communities for Commuter Students”, 2004, p. 1). This is just one program that can help commuter students.
According to research, institutions need to focus more on programming for commuter students (“Commuter Students: Myths”, 2006). This programming will allow commuters more opportunity for involvement.

**Social Adjustment**

Social adjustment is another major factor of the college freshman’s adjustment process, and one that not only residential students face but also commuter students. Social adjustment is an important part of adjustment process. Students who enter college for the first time are usually nervous about starting a new phase in life. They are not only looking not for that involvement as mentioned above, but they are also looking for friendship and support. Many college freshmen do not enter college with a lot of previously established friendships, because at this phase in life, many friendships that might have existed before college no longer do because of changes in life. Friendships may end or look differently at this phase in life because friends may choose to go to different colleges, move to different places, or start new jobs (Paul & Brier, 2001).

College freshman are looking for new friendships and new support systems. As looked at above students who live in the residents’ halls have more opportunity for networking in this area. According to Chickering (1974), “Students who live with their parents differ substantially from dormitory residents in their relationships with other students. Although all three groups reported similar numbers of close friends, commuters reported few close friends at their college and more close friends either at another college or not in college at all” (p. 62). Although it is healthy that commuter students do have friends it is not healthy for adjustment that they do not have many friends on the college campus they
are attending. According to Chickering, commuters tend to attend college for different reasons than most residential students. Residential students tend to go to college for the entire experience including the academics and the co-curricular, but commuters tend to go to college solely for vocational preparation.

*Sense of Belonging*

A student’s sense of belonging does not only come from attending activities and events that the institutions host, but also comes from the connection with faculty and staff. “Faculty and staff-student interaction and connection was found to be the most important characteristic distinguishing the retained from the dropout students” (Johnson, 1997, p. 1). This was concluded from a study done at a university in the northeastern region of the United States. Students need to make an effort to connect with the faculty and staff at the institutions they attend. Students do not bear all of the responsibility for connecting with faculty and staff, but faculty and staff need to make themselves available to students as well. Oftentimes, it is difficult for students to make time to get into see faculty due to their busy schedules. Faculty and staff need to make time for students because this is one of the main distinguishing characteristics between a student who is retained and one who drops out.

In the article “*Commuter Students: Myths, Realities, Helpful Theoretical Frameworks,*” Garland says, “Individuals rarely feel connected to a place where they have no significant relationships. Students who do not have a sense of belonging complain that their college experience is like ‘stopping at the mall’ to get what they need on their way to somewhere else” (“Commuter Students: Myths”, 2006, p. 3). Many
commuter students struggle with this feeling of finding a sense of belonging at the institution in which they attend.

Rationale of the Thesis

One can see from the review of literature that there were many factors that affected the adjustment process of the typical college freshmen. From the review of the factors which affect the college freshmen’s adjustment process, there was a significant difference in the adjustment process of an on campus resident versus a commuter student. In the research, one will find a significant amount of research regarding the adjustment of on campus residents from a number of different authors. However, the research is very limited for the adjustment of commuter students. There is also a very limited amount of literature that compared the adjustment process of both commuter students and on campus residents. There was only one study found that compared the adjustment process of both commuters and on campus residents. Chickering (1974) completed the comparison of commuter students versus residential students. Additional study is needed to help extend the literature base for research on this topic.

This study will also help to strengthen the programs offered to freshmen in order to help them adjust properly so they will persist to graduation. Student Development professionals will be able to use this study to help them determine what additional programs are needed in order to help freshmen with their adjustment and transition process to college. Institutions today are impacting the lives of many students around the world. The responsibility of these institutions is to help a student succeed while they are
there and persist in order to get a degree. These institutions are developing the future leaders of the world. Institutions must help their students adjust to college so they will become involved and continue their education.

Summary

As reviewed above, there are many factors that impact the adjustment of college freshmen. Some of those factors include the transition to college, homesickness and friendsickness, social adjustment including social support and making friends, involvement, sense of belonging, and living environments. In this review of literature, students’ living environment was the major factor of focus. The author specifically looked at the adjustment of residential students and the adjustment of commuter students. Each one of the factors mentioned above was reviewed for both residents and commuters.

The literature concluded that residential students tend to have an easier time adjusting than commuter students due to many different factors. Residential students tend to have more resources at their fingertips since they are on the institution’s campus full-time, compared to commuters not having as many resources available as they are only there for classes. According to the research, residents have an easier time making friends and adjusting socially because they have networking opportunities such as the community in their residence halls and events or activities offered by the institution. Commuters tend to struggle in this area because they do not have the residence hall community and tend not to attend events because they are offered in the evening while they are working or at home taking care of their families. According to the literature,
there needs to be more opportunities for commuters in order to help them adjust adequately to life in college.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine whether living in the residence halls helps freshmen adjust to life at college faster and more efficiently than commuter students. The author completed a series of two surveys that would allow for comparison of the freshmen students’ perception of their own adjustment process.

The following questions were examined during this study at Jones University.

1. What were the major adjustment issues that all college freshmen face?
2. How does life in the Residence Hall affect overall adjustment of college freshmen?
3. How does life as a commuter affect the overall adjustment of college freshmen?

Population and Sample

This study took place at Jones University, a private four-year university located in the Sacramento Valley of California. Jones University is a residential campus, which requires all freshman, sophomores, and juniors to live on campus unless they are living with a parent or close relative. Essentially, a student must be twenty-two years of age or a senior status with at least ninety cumulative units in order to live off campus. Jones University’s policy is that all students who intend to commute to campus must fill out a
commuter application, which then must be approved by the associate dean of students. Jones University’s total undergraduate population in the Fall 2009 was 406 students. According to the university’s research department two-hundred and fifty-one of the four-hundred and six students live in on campus housing. This leaves the commuter population at one hundred and fifty-five students. This calculates to be sixty-two percent of the campus as residential students and thirty-eight percent are commuter students.

The sample for this study was first time freshman eighteen years or older who attend Jones University. Jones University’s first time freshman population consists of ninety-one students. Of the ninety-one students seventeen students or nineteen percent are commuter students and seventy-three or eighty-one percent are residential students. For this study all ninety-one freshman students were sent the survey.

Design of the Study

Data Collection

For this study, the author used a quantitative method to collect the data. The quantitative method of study focused on the participant’s individual’s perceptions of their personal experiences while attending Jones University. These personal experiences will focus on each individual’s adjustment process in college. In order to accomplish this study, the author completed a series of two questionnaires in which all ninety-one freshmen at Jones University were asked to participate.
An informed consent was sent out with each email questionnaire, and informed the students that by participating in the study, they were allowing the author to use the information they provided on the survey.

The author distributed the first survey on October 7, 2009. The date in which the survey was distributed was during the first semester of the students’ freshmen year. The author obtained email addresses for all first time freshmen from the Department of Institutional Research at Jones University in order to complete this study. The author then used the email addresses to send out the first survey to all first time freshmen. After the first survey was distributed, there were sixteen of the ninety-one students who responded after the first couple weeks. The author then sent a follow up email reminding them that they still had the opportunity to participate in the study. After the second email was sent out there were a few more responses to the questionnaires. There was a total of 24 responses out of the ninety-one that were sent; a 26% response rate.

The second survey was then distributed to all students who participated in the first survey on January 29, 2010. This was approximately two weeks after the students returned to campus after the holiday break. The second survey was distributed during this time in hopes that the students would reflect on their experience thus far in college in order to obtain accurate data. The second survey was also distributed with a small incentive attached. The author offered a pizza party for all students who had participated in this study to thank them for taking the time to participate by filling out the surveys. After the second survey was distributed, there were eleven responses to the survey after ten days. The author wanted to make sure that there was significant data in order for the
study to be valid so a reminder was sent out approximately ten days after the first. This reminder generated a few more responses bringing the total up to thirteen, which was a fourteen percent response rate.

On January 29, 2010, the author not only sent emails to those who responded to the first survey asking them to participate in the second, but also sent another email to all freshmen as well. This email had links to both surveys asking them to participate one more time. This email also offered a time for the students to come and enjoy some pizza and if they had not yet filled out the surveys. This would allow them the opportunity to fill out both of the surveys. The first pizza party was scheduled for commuter students during lunchtime. From this first pizza party the author received two additional completed surveys of both survey one and survey two from commuter students.

The second pizza party was held for residential students in the evening during a dinnertime. This pizza party was time to not only thank those who had filled out the surveys, but also to allow those who had not had an opportunity to do so. The turnout for this event was not very successful. No students showed up for the pizza party to fill out surveys so the author tried another approach. The author took the pizza and walked around the residence halls asking students if they were freshmen and if they would be willing to fill out the surveys. From this attempt, the author received eleven more completed surveys. The difference in these surveys from the first surveys filled out is that the students filled out both Surveys I and II (Appendix B) at the same time. This caused the student to have to reflect on their first semester in order to fill it out and then to look
at where they were currently in the adjustment process in order to fill out the second survey.

This attempt to get more surveys completed was successful but the results of the data collected will look different due to the fact that both surveys were taken at the same time. The author will take this difference into account when analyzing the data. The author will also take into account that the results of these thirteen surveys that students took all at one time might look a little different from the surveys that were actually taken at the point in time when they were supposed to be. The data will be analyzed together as well as compared to see if there is a difference in those students who filled out the first survey in the first semester of their freshmen year and those who filled it out in the second semester of their freshmen year.

**Instrumentation**

All freshmen at Jones University were given the first freshman adjustment survey in October 2009 through email. The survey was found through a link that led the students to SurveyMonkey in order to take the survey. The participation in this survey was optional for all freshmen and provided no risk to the participant. As mentioned above, the first survey was distributed in October 2009, which was about a month into the first semester of participants’ freshmen year. The first survey consisted of six informational questions and thirteen questions to try to obtain the overall expectations of what these incoming freshmen thought their freshmen year would be like. These surveys also tried to determine some of the apprehensions that these students might have regarding attending
college as well as what some of the expectations that the students had regarding their living environments.

The first survey began by asking basic information from the student such as gender, graduation year, residence status, and distance the student either commutes or distance they live from home. The survey then further asked questions regarding the student, and how nervous they are about adjusting to college life, making friends in college, and adjusting to academic challenges. It goes on to ask the student how involved they plan to get in student life activities, campus wide activities, residence hall activities, and in off campus activities. The survey also seeks to find out how much time the student who commutes will spend on campus other than while they are in classes, as well as how likely they are to make friends outside of the classroom. Since contact with faculty and staff support was found to be a very important part of a freshmen’s adjustment process, the survey also asked the students how likely they were to contact faculty outside of the classroom. The survey’s main goal was to get the students’ perception and feelings of anticipation for their college experience.

A follow-up survey was distributed to the freshmen who had participated in the first portion of this study. This follow-up survey was distributed half-way through their freshman year, right after the winter break at Jones University. The surveys consisted of six informational questions and fourteen questions that helped the author determine where the freshmen were in the adjustment process. The second survey, as with the first, asked for basic information such as age, gender, residence status, and the distance they either commute or live from home. The survey continues to try to get the students’
perceptions of how well they are adjusting to college life, how well they are making friends, how well they are adjusting to the academic challenges, how involved they are in campus life, how often they attend campus-wide activities, and how often they attend building activities. The survey also tries to determine how often students interact with other students outside of the classroom or living environment, as well as how often they interact with faculty and staff outside of the classroom. The final question on the survey asks the student overall, how well they are adjusting to college life. By asking some of these questions the author is trying to determine the student’s level of involvement and where they are in the friend making process. This will be the point in the semester that will help the author to determine if the student will return the following year. The questions that were asked in the survey focused solely on the perception of where the student feels they are in the adjustment process.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data for this study was collected through the data collection system of SurveyMonkey. This data collection system allowed the author to ask the questions to the students, collect the responses, as well as analyze the data that was collected. SurveyMonkey also allowed the author to create charts and graphs in order to compare the results from both surveys. The results, through charts and graphs, will then be compared to one another in order to show the final results of the study to the reader.
Chapter 4

THE DATA

Data Analysis

The first part of data that was collected from the students who participated in the survey was data regarding their demographics such as gender, age, graduation year, and living status. The first group of charts presented represents the data that was collected regarding the demographics of the students. The second part of the data that was collected from the students was data regarding the students’ perspective of their life in college. The first survey examines where they were before entering college and during the first couple of weeks of classes. The second survey examines how well the student perceives their adjustment process as going during their second semester of their freshman year.

Table 1

Response of First-Time Freshmen Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Total Number of First-Time Freshmen</th>
<th>Total Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the purpose of this study there are a total of 91 first-time freshmen who attend Jones University. Of those 91 freshmen 17 (19%) are commuter students and 73 (81%) are residential students. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the possible respondents and the
actual number of respondents. Of the 91 possible respondents 37 (41%) responded to the Survey 1 and 26 (29%) responded to Survey 2.

Table 2

Gender of First Time Freshmen Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 (41.2%)</td>
<td>20 (58%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 (40%)</td>
<td>15 (60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 2 one will see the breakdown of gender for the students who participated in both surveys. In Survey 1 there were 14 (41.2%) male participants and 20 (58%) female participants. In Survey 2 there were ten (40%) male participants and 15 (60%) of female participants. There is a trend between the two surveys in that in both surveys there were more women than men who filled out the surveys. This is an interesting observation for the purpose of student involvement.

Table 3

Living Status Breakdown of Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Living Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 (13.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 3, one will find a breakdown of the living status of the study participants. Of the 37 (41%) total respondents to Survey 1, five (13.2%) were commuter students, and
33 (96.8%) were residential students on Jones University’s campus. Of the 26 (29%) students who responded to survey 2, three (11.1%) were commuter students and 22 (84.6%) were residential students.

Table 4

Commute Distance for Commuter Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 1</th>
<th>Survey 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30.5 miles</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 minutes-60 minutes</td>
<td>45-60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-60 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can see in Table 4 the distance in which the commuter students commute to campus. The author left this question open-ended rather than giving the students options of times from which to choose. This open-ended question gives the author a more accurate picture of the exact time that the students commute. From the results above, one can see that no student commutes under 30 minutes to campus and no student commutes over 60 minutes to campus. This information will be important to consider as one examines the level in which the commuter students perceive they are adjusting to life in college, as well as their involvement in campus life.

The first Likert scale question regarding the students’ perception of life at college on Survey 1 asked the students how nervous they were about adjusting to life at college. The first Likert scale question on Survey 2 asked students how well they feel they are
adjusting to college life. By comparing these two questions, one will see how well a student perceives they have adjusted between first beginning life at college and entering their second semester of their freshman year. In the tables below, the author breaks down the percentage of students who answered each question. Under each total percentage one will find the percentage of both the Commuter (C) students as well as the Resident (R) students underneath each total. This will give the reader an idea of how both the commuter students and the resident students perceive themselves to be adjusting to college.

Table 5

Adjustment to College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Not Nervous/Not Well at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Very Nervous/Well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survey 1:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How nervous did you feel about adjusting to college life?</td>
<td>9 (26.5%)</td>
<td>13 (38.2%)</td>
<td>6 (17.6%)</td>
<td>5 (14.7%)</td>
<td>1 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (33.3%) C</td>
<td>2 (15.38%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 (66.6%) R</td>
<td>11 (84.6%) R</td>
<td>6 (100%) R</td>
<td>5 (100%) R</td>
<td>1 (100%) R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survey 2:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well are you adjusting to college life?</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>2 (8.0%)</td>
<td>7 (28%)</td>
<td>16 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td>1 (3.5%) C</td>
<td>2 (12.5%) C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 (0.00%) R</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) R</td>
<td>2 (100%) R</td>
<td>6 (85.7%) R</td>
<td>14 (87.5%) R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 5 one will find the results to the question that asked the student how nervous they were about adjusting to college life. The Likert scale was broken down from 1 being not nervous at all to 5 being very nervous. The results showed that nine (26.5%)
students, three (33.3%) commuters and six (66.6%) being residents were not nervous at all about adjusting to life in college. The results also showed that 13 (38.2%) students, two (15.3%) being commuter students and eleven (84.6%) residential students rated themselves a 2 on the scale of nervousness. Six (17.6%) of the students all being residents, rated themselves a 3 on the scale of nervousness. Five (14.7%) of the students again all whom were residents rated themselves a 4 on the scale of nervousness. Only one (2.9%) student rated themselves a 5 saying they were very nervous about adjusting to life at college. From the results, one can see that the majority of the students were fairly confident about adjusting to life at college.

The question on the second survey was a follow up question to this first one asking the students how well they felt like they were adjusting to life in college at that point in their second semester of college. For this question, if they rated themselves a 1, they felt as though they were not adjusting well at all and if they rated themselves a 5, they felt as though they were adjusting really well. None of the students rated themselves a 1 or 2 on the scale. Two (eight percent) of the students rated themselves a 3 on the scale of adjustment, both of these students were residents. Seven (28%) of the students rated themselves a 4 on the scale of adjustment saying that they felt as though they were adjusting fairly well to college life. The majority of the students 16 (64%) rated themselves a 5 on the scale saying that they felt as though they were adjusting very well to college. Two (12.5%) of these students were commuters and 14 (87.5%) of these students were residents who felt as though they were adjusting well to college life.
Table 6

Making Friends at William Jessup University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 1: How nervous were you about making friends at William Jessup University?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Nervous at all/Not well at all</td>
<td>6 (18.2%)</td>
<td>15 (45.5%)</td>
<td>7 (21.2%)</td>
<td>4 (12.1%)</td>
<td>1 (3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (16.6%) C</td>
<td>2 (13.33%) C</td>
<td>2 (28.57%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (83.3%) R</td>
<td>13 (86.6%) R</td>
<td>5 (71.4%) R</td>
<td>4 (100%) R</td>
<td>1 (100%) R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 2: How well are you making friends here at William Jessup University?</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>2 (8.0%)</td>
<td>3 (12.0%)</td>
<td>6 (24.0%)</td>
<td>14 (56.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td>1 (50.0%) C</td>
<td>1 (33.3%) C</td>
<td>1 (16.66%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 (0.00%) R</td>
<td>1 (50.0%) R</td>
<td>2 (66.6%) R</td>
<td>5 (83.33) R</td>
<td>14 (100%) R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows the results to the question asking the students how nervous they were about making friends at Jones University. The results show that six (18.2%) of the students who responded said they were a 1 on the scale and were not nervous at all. One (16.6%) commuter student gave this response and five (83.3%) were residential students. Fifteen students (45.5%), two (13.33%) commuters and 13 (86.6%) residential, rated themselves a 2 on the scale of nervousness about making friends at their university. Seven (21.2%) of the students, two (28.57%) commuters and five (71.4%) residential students rated themselves a 3 on the scale saying they thought they were half way in between not nervous at all and very nervous. Four of the residential students (12.1%) said they were a 4 on the scale and were fairly nervous about making friends. Only one
residential student (three percent) said they were very nervous about making friends at Jones University.

The second survey followed up by asking how well the student thought they were making friends at Jones. According to the results no students felt as though they were not making friends well at all. Two students (eight percent), one (50%) who was resident and one (50%) commuter felt as though they were a 2 on the scale of how well they were making friends. Three of the students (twelve percent); one (33.3%) commuter and two (66.6%) felt as though they were a 3 on the scale; making friends somewhere between not well and all and very nervous. Six (24%) of the students; one (16.66%) commuter and five (83.33%) residential students, thought they were a 4 on the scale and were making friends fairly well. Fourteen (56%) of the students all of whom were residents rated themselves a 5, stated that they felt as though they were making friends very well at Jones University.

Table 7

Adjusting to Academic Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 1: How nervous were you about adjusting to academic challenges of college?</th>
<th>1 Not Nervous at all/Not well at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Very Nervous/Very Well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (0.00%) C 6 (100%) R</td>
<td>3 (27.27%) C 8 (72.72%) R</td>
<td>1 (10.00%) C 9 (90.00%) R</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C 5 (100%) R</td>
<td>1 (100%) C 0 (0.00%) R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Survey 2: How well are you adjusting to the academic challenges at William Jessup University | 0 (0.00%) C 0 (0.00%) R | 1 (4.0%) C 1 (100%) R | 0 (0.00%) C 13 (92.85%) R | 14 (56.0%) 10 (40.0%) |

1 2 3 4 5
Table 7 refers to how nervous the students were about adjusting to academic challenges as well as how well they felt as though they were adjusting to academic challenges at Jones University. The first survey addressed how nervous the students were about adjusting to academic challenges at Jones University. Six (18.2%) of the students, all of whom were residential students, rated themselves a 1 on the scale stating they were very nervous about adjusting to the academic challenges of college. Eleven (33.3%) of the students rated themselves a 2 on the scale of nervousness. Three (27.27%) of these students were commuters and eight (72.72%) were residential students who felt as though they were somewhat nervous about adjusting to the academics at college. Ten (30.3%) of the students, one (ten percent) of whom was a commuter and nine (90%) of whom were residential students, felt as though they were a 3 on the scale showing they were somewhere in the middle between very nervous and not nervous at all. Five (15.2%) of the students, all of whom were residential students, rated themselves a 4 on the scale of nervousness. These students felt as though they were hardly nervous at all. One (3.0%) student who was a commuter rated themselves a 5 showing that they were very nervous about adjusting to the academic challenges at Jones University.

The second survey followed up asking the students how well they feel as though they are adjusting to the academic challenges of college. No students felt as though they were adjusting at a 1 or not very well at all. Only one (four percent) student who was a residential student thought they were adjusting at a 2 on the scale. No students felt as though they were adjusting at a 3 on the scale as well. Fourteen (56%) of the students, one (7.14%) of whom was a commuter student and 13 (92.85%) of whom were
residential students, rated themselves a 4 on the scale showing that they felt as though they were adjusting fairly well to the academic challenges of college. Ten (40%) of the students, two (20%) of whom were commuters and eight (80%) of whom were residential students rated themselves 5 on the scale stating they felt as though they are adjusting very well to the academic challenges of college.

Table 8

Involvement in Campus/Student Life activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 1: How involved in Student Life activities do you plan to get while attending WJU?</th>
<th>1 Not Involved at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Very Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 (5.9%)</td>
<td>5 (14.7%)</td>
<td>14 (41.2%)</td>
<td>10 (29.4%)</td>
<td>3 (8.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td>1 (20.0%) C</td>
<td>1 (7.14%) C</td>
<td>3 (30.0%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (100%) R</td>
<td>4 (80.0%) R</td>
<td>13 (92.85%) R</td>
<td>7 (70.0%) R</td>
<td>3 (100%) R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 2: How involved in campus life have you become at WJU?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 (8.0%)</td>
<td>3 (12.0%)</td>
<td>12 (48.0%)</td>
<td>6 (24.0%)</td>
<td>2 (8.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (50.0%) C</td>
<td>2 (66.66%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (50.0%) R</td>
<td>1 (33.33%) R</td>
<td>12 (100%) R</td>
<td>6 (100) R</td>
<td>2 (100%) R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 looks at the student’s involvement on campus at Jones University. The first survey asked the student how involved the student planned on getting in student activities while attending Jones University and the second survey followed up asking how involved the student felt they were in campus life at Jones University. Two (2.9%) of the students, both residential rated themselves a 1 on the scale saying they did not plan on getting involved at all in student life activities. Five (14.7%) of the students; one (20%) of whom was a commuter student and four (80%) of whom were residents rated themselves as a 2 on the scale of involvement showing that they did not plan to get to
involved in student life activities. Fourteen (41.2%) of the students; one (7.14%) of whom was a commuter student and 13 (92.85%) of whom were residential students rated themselves a 3 on the scale of involvement moderately planning to get involved. Ten (29.4%) of the students, three (30%) of whom were commuters and seven (70%) of whom were residential students, rated themselves a 4 on the scale showing they were planning to get fairly involved in student life activities. Eight (8.8%) of the students all of whom were residents planned to get very involved in student life activities.

In Survey two the author followed up with the students to see how involved in the campus life at Jones University they were actually getting. Two (eight percent) of the students one of whom was a commuter and one of whom was a resident rated themselves a 1 on the involvement scale saying they were not involved at all in campus life. Two (twelve percent) of the students, two (66.66%) of whom were commuters and one (33.33%) of whom was a resident, rated themselves as a 2 on the involvement scale. These students felt as though they were hardly involved in campus life at Jones University. Twelve (48%) of the students all of whom were residential students felt as though they were a 3 on the scale and were moderately involved in campus life. Six (24%) of the students, all of whom were residential students felt as though they were a 4 on the scale and were fairly involved in campus activities. Two (eight percent) of the students, both of whom were residential felt as though they were a 5 on the scale and were very involved in campus life. One can see that the majority of the students who rated themselves a 3, 4, or 5 on the scale were residential students.
Table 9

Attendance at Campus Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 1: How likely are you to attend campus wide activities?</th>
<th>1 Not Likely At All</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (2.9%)</td>
<td>(8.8%)</td>
<td>10 (29.4%)</td>
<td>11 (32.4%)</td>
<td>9 (26.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (100%) R</td>
<td>C (33.33%)</td>
<td>C (100%) R</td>
<td>C (18.18%)</td>
<td>C (11.11%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (66.66%) R</td>
<td>R (90.00%)</td>
<td>R (81.81%)</td>
<td>R (88.88%)</td>
<td>R (8.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey 2: How often do you attend campus wide activities?

| 1 (4.0%)                                                      | 5 (20.0%)           | 8 (32.0%) | 10 (40.0%) | 1 (4.0%) |
| 1 (100%) R                                                   | C (60.00%)          | R (100%)  | C (100%)   | R (100%) |
| 2 (40.00%) R                                                | R (100%)            | R (100%)  | R (100%)   | R (100%) |

Table 9 explores the results of the data collected from the students on attending campus wide activities. The first survey asked the students how likely they were to attend campus wide activities and the second survey followed up by asking how often the students actually attended campus wide activities. One (2.9%) student who was a residential student rated themselves as a 1 on the involvement scale saying that they did not plan to get involved at all in campus activities. Three (8.8%) students one (33.33%) of whom was a commuter and two (66.66%) whom were residential students rated themselves a 2 on the scale of involvement. These three students planned to get slightly involved in campus activities. Ten (29.4%) of the students, one (ten percent) of whom was a commuter and nine (90%) of whom were residential students rated themselves a 3 on the scale of involvement showing that they planned to get moderately involved in campus activities. Ten (29.4%) of the students rated themselves a 3 on the involvement
scale. One (ten percent) of these students was a commuter and nine (90%) of whom were commuters were moderately involved in campus activities. Eleven (32.4%) of the students, two (18.18%) of whom were commuters and nine (81.81%) of whom were residential students, rated themselves a 4 on the scale of involvement. These eleven students planned to get fairly involved in campus activities. Nine (26.5%) of the students, one (11.11%) of who was a commuter and eight (88.88%) of who were residential students, rated themselves a 5 on the scale of involvement. These students planned to get very involved in campus activities while at Jones University.

The second survey followed up to see how involved the students actually got in campus activities while at Jones University. From the results above, one can see that according to the surveys students did not get quite as involved in campus activities as they had planned. One (four percent), student who was a residential student rated themselves a one on the scale of involvement saying that they did not get involved at all in campus activities. Five (20%) of the students who participated, three (60%) of whom were commuters and two (40%) of whom were residential students, rated themselves a 2 on the scale of involvement. By rating themselves a 2 on the scale these students were saying that they were only slightly involved in campus activities. Eight (32%) of the students, all of whom were residential, rated themselves a 3 on the involvement scale. Ten (40%) of the students again all of whom were residential rated themselves a 4 on the scale of involvement stating that they were fairly involved in campus activities. One (four percent) of the students rated themself a 5 on the scale saying that they felt as though they were very involved in campus activities at Jones University.
Table 10

Residence Hall Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Not Likely At All</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey 1: If you live in the Residence Halls how likely are you to attend floor/building wide events?</td>
<td>1 (3.4%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>5 (17.2%)</td>
<td>13 (44.8%)</td>
<td>10 (34.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey 2: If you live in the Residence Halls how often do you attend floor/building wide events?</td>
<td>2 (9.1%)</td>
<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
<td>3 (13.6%)</td>
<td>13 (59.1%)</td>
<td>3 (13.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 displays the results of two of questions that were geared just for students who live in the residence halls. Survey 1 explored how likely the students were to attend floor and building wide activities. One (3.4%) student who responded to the survey rated him/herself a 1 on the scale of likely attendance saying that they were not likely at all to get involved. Five (17.2%) students responded with a 3 saying they were somewhat likely to attend activities in their building. Thirteen (44.8%) students responded with a 4 for this question saying that they were most likely to get involved in activities. Ten (34.5%) students responded with a 5 stating that they were very likely to get involved in floor or building wide events while living in the residence halls at Jones University.

Table 10 also displays the results of the second survey in which the author asked the students how often they attended floor or building wide events. Two (9.1%) students responded with a 1 saying that they never attend floor or building events. One (4.5%) student responded with a 2 saying that they very rarely attend events. Three (13.6%)
responded with a 3 showing that they sometimes attend events on campus. Thirteen (59.1%) of the students who responded to the survey rated themselves a 4 on the scale of attendance. Three (13.6%) students responded with a 5 on the scale showing that they often attend activities in their building. One can see from these results that the students did not attend quite as many events as they thought they would when they took the first survey.

Table 11

Off Campus Involvement

| Survey 1: How likely are you to be involved in off campus activities (Work, Church, etc.) this year? |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Not Likely At All/ Not involved at all        | 2                                               | 3                                               | 4                                               | 5                                               | 7                                               |
| 1 (2.9%) C                                     | 5 (14.7%) C                                    | 13 (38.2%) C                                   | 8 (23.5%) C                                    | 7 (20.6%) C                                    |
| 0 (0.00%) C                                    | 0 (0.00%) C                                    | 2 (15.38%) C                                   | 1 (12.5%) C                                    | 2 (28.57%) C                                   |
| 1 (100%) R                                     | 5 (100%) R                                     | 11 (84.61%) R                                  | 7 (87.5%) R                                    | 5 (71.42%) R                                   |

| Survey 2: How involved in off campus activities (work, church, etc.) are you this year? |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 0                                               | 3                                               | 11                                              | 4                                               | 7                                               |
| 0 (0.00%) C                                    | 3 (12.0%) C                                    | 44 (44.0%) C                                   | 16 (16.0%) C                                   | 28 (28.0%) C                                   |
| 0 (0.00%) R                                    | 1 (33.33%) C                                   | 11 (100%) R                                    | 4 (100) R                                       | 5 (71.42%) R                                   |
| 0 (0.00%) R                                    | 2 (66.66%) R                                   | 11 (100%) R                                    | 4 (100) R                                       | 5 (71.42%) R                                   |

Table 11 looks at the involvement in off campus activities of both residential students and commuter students. This off campus involvement could quite possibly impact their adjustment process if they are very involved in off campus activities. Survey 1 asked the students how likely they were to get involved in off campus activities this
year. One (2.9%) student who was a resident responded with a 1 showing that they were not likely at all to get involved off campus. Five (14.7%) students all of whom were all residents rated themselves a 2 in how likely they were to get involved. Thirteen (38.2%) students, two (15.38%) of whom were commuters and eleven (84.61%) of whom were residents, rated themselves a 3 on the scale of how likely they were to be involved off campus. These students believed they would be moderately involved off campus during their freshman year. Eight (32.5%) students, one (12.5%) of whom was a commuter student and seven (87.5) of whom were residential students, rated themselves a 4 on the scale of 5 of off campus involvement. Seven (20.6%) of the students, two (28.57%) of whom were commuters and five (71.425) rated themselves a 5 residential on the scale of involvement showing that they were very likely to get involved in off campus events.

The second survey followed up with the students to see how involved they actually were in off campus events. The results were very similar to the first survey when the students were asked how likely they were to be involved in off campus activities. Three students (twelve percent), one (33.33%) of whom was a commuter and two (66.66%) of whom were residential students, rated themselves a 2 on the scale of off campus involvement. Eleven (44%) students, all of whom were residential, rated themselves a 3 on the scale of involvement. This rating shows that they are moderately involved in off campus activities. Four (16%) students, all of whom were residential students rated themselves a 4 on the scale of involvement showing they were involved in activities. Seven (28%) of the students; two (28.57%) of whom were commuters and five
(71.42%) of whom were residential students, rated themselves a 5 showing that they were very involved in off campus activities.

Table 12

Residence Hall Students’ Home Visits

| Survey 1: If you live in the Residence Halls how often do you think you will go home each month? | Once a Month | Twice a Month | Three Times a Month | More than Four Times a month |
|---------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
|         | 14 (51.9%)      | 3 (11.1%)    | 4 (14.8%)       | 6 (22.2%)            |

| Survey 2: If you live in the Residence Halls how often do you attend floor/building wide events? | Once a Month | Twice a Month | Three Times a Month | More than Four Times a month |
|---------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
|         | 10 (50.0%)      | 4 (20.0%)    | 1 (5.0%)        | 5 (25.0%)            |

Table 12 shows the breakdown of how often students in residence halls thought they were going to visit home and how often they actually visit home. Survey 1 explored how often they thought they were going to visit home. Fourteen (51.9%) of the students said they would visit home once a month during their freshman year. Three (11.1%) of the students responded that they would visit home twice a month. Four (14.8%) of the students responded that they would visit home three times a month during their time in college. Six (22.2%) of the students said that they would visit home more than four times a month. These results can be taken into consideration when looking at the overall adjustment of college freshmen.

Survey 2 explored how often the students actually visit home while at college. The results were very close to how often the students thought they would visit home. Ten (50%) of the students visit home once a month. Four (20%) of the students visit home
twice a month. One (five percent) students said that they visit home three times a month, and five (25%) of the students said they visit home more than four times a month.

Table 13

Commuter Students’ Time on Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 1: If you are a commuter student how much time will you spend outside of class on campus?</th>
<th>Several hours most days</th>
<th>Few hours during the work week</th>
<th>Some study hours only</th>
<th>Very little extra time</th>
<th>No more time than necessary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 (60.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>2 (40.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 2: If you are a commuter student how much time do you spend on campus outside of class?</th>
<th>Several hours most days</th>
<th>Few hours during the work week</th>
<th>Some study hours only</th>
<th>Very little extra time</th>
<th>No more time than necessary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (50.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>1 (50.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 explores commuter student’s time on campus other than while they are in classes. Survey 1 asked the commuter students how much time they plan to spend on campus outside of classes. Three (60%) of the students planned to spend several hours most days and two (40%) of the students planned to only spend some study hours during the week on campus.

Survey 2 explored how much time the commuter students were actually spending on campus outside of class. One (50%) student said they were spending several hours on most days outside of class on campus. While the other student said they spend some study hours on campus outside of class. These results were very much in line with what how much time the students thought they were going to spend on campus.
Table 14

Time Outside of Class with Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Not Likely At All/Not often</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Very Likely/Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey 1: How likely are you to contact faculty outside of class?</td>
<td>0 (0.00%) C</td>
<td>15 (44.1%) C</td>
<td>13 (38.2%) C</td>
<td>3 (8.8%) C</td>
<td>3 (8.8%) C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 (0.00%) R</td>
<td>13 (86.66%) R</td>
<td>10 (76.92%) R</td>
<td>3 (100%) R</td>
<td>3 (100%) R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey 2: How often do you contact faculty outside of the classroom/office?</td>
<td>1 (4.0%) C</td>
<td>12 (48.0%) C</td>
<td>9 (36.0%) C</td>
<td>2 (8.0%) C</td>
<td>1 (4.0%) C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (100%) R</td>
<td>9 (75.00%) R</td>
<td>9 (100%) R</td>
<td>2 (100%) R</td>
<td>1 (100%) R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 explores how likely both commuter and residential students are to contact faculty outside of class. As was seen in the research, faculty plays a very important role in a freshman’s adjustment process. Out of fifteen (44.1%) of the students, two (13.33%) were commuter students and 13 (86.66%) were residential students. They rated themselves a 2 in likeliness to contact faculty outside of class. Out of 13 (38.2%) of the students, three (23.07%) were commuters and ten (76.92%) were residential. They rated themselves a 3 on likeliness to contact faculty outside of the classroom. Three (8.8%) students, all of whom were residential, rated themselves a 4 on the scale, and a 5 on the scale saying they were very likely to contact faculty outside of class.

The second survey explored how often the students actually did contact faculty outside of the class according to them. One (four percent) student who was a residential
student rated him/herself a 1 on the scale saying that they never contact faculty outside of the classroom. Twelve (48%) of the students, three (25%) of whom were commuters and nine (75%) of whom were residential, rated themselves a 2 on the scale of how often they contact faculty. Nine (36%) of the students all of whom were residential responded with a 3 on the scale. This showed that these students sometimes contacted faculty outside of the classroom. Two, or eight percent of the students again all of whom were residential, responded rating themselves a 4 on the scale of contact. These students contact faculty often outside of the classroom. One (four percent) student rated themselves as a 5 on the scale saying that they contact faculty very often outside of the classroom.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Not likely at all/Never</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Very likely/Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey 1: If you live in the Residence Halls how likely are you to build relationships with others outside your wing?</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>5 (17.2%)</td>
<td>9 (31.0%)</td>
<td>15 (51.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey 2: If you live in the Residence Halls how often do you interact socially with other students outside your wing?</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
<td>5 (22.7%)</td>
<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
<td>15 (68.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 explores how likely students were to build relationships with other students outside of the residence hall in which they live as well as exploring the follow up of often they find themselves interacting with students outside of where they live. Five (17.2%) students rated themselves a 5 on the scale saying that they were somewhat likely
to build relationships with students outside of their residence hall. Nine (31%) of the students rated a 4 showing that they were likely to get build relationships outside of their building. Fifteen (51.7%) of students rated themselves a 5 showing that they were very likely to build relationships.

Survey 2 followed up with the student to see how often they do interact with students outside of their building. One (4.5%) student rated themselves a 2 on the scale of interaction. This student did not feel as though they interacted very often with students outside of their wing. Five (22.7%) of the students rated themselves a 3 on the scale showing that they sometimes interacted with students outside of their wing. One (4.5%) student rated themselves a 4 on the scale showing that they often interact with other students outside their wing. Fifteen (68.2%) students rated themselves a 5 on the scale showing that they interacted very often with students outside their wing. Again, one can see that the students had a good self-perception about how often they were going to interact or build relationships with students outside their wing.
Table 16

Commuter Students Friendships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 1: If you are a commuter how likely are you to interact socially with other students outside your classes?</th>
<th>1 (20.00%)</th>
<th>2 (20.00%)</th>
<th>3 (20.00%)</th>
<th>4 (40.00%)</th>
<th>5 (0.00%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey 2: If you are a commuter student how often do you interact socially with other students outside your wing?</td>
<td>1 (25.00%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>2 (50.00%)</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
<td>1 (25.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 explores commuter student’s friendships outside of their classes. One (20%) student said that they were not likely at all to make friends outside of their classes. One (20%) student rated themselves a 2 saying that there was a slight chance they might make friends. One (20%) student rated him/herself a 3 saying that they were somewhat likely to make friends outside of class. Two (40%) students rated themselves a 4, showing that they were likely to make friends outside of class.

Survey 2 explored how often commuter students actually interact with other students outside of their classes. One (25%) student said that they never interact with other students outside of class. Two (50%) students rated themselves a 3, showing that they sometimes interact with other students outside of class. One (25%) student rated themselves a 5 showing that they very often interact with students outside their classes.
The results show that some students had more interaction with other students outside of class than they thought they would.

Table 17

Student Perception of their overall adjustment to college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey 2: Overall how well do you feel you have adjusted to college life at this point?</th>
<th>1 Not well at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Very Well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.00%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(4.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (100%)C</td>
<td>1 (10.0%)C</td>
<td>2 (14.28%)C</td>
<td>1 (100%)R</td>
<td>9 (90.0%)R</td>
<td>12 (85.71%)R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 shows the results of the question to the students about their overall adjustment to life at college. One can see that students feel as though they are adjusting well to college overall. Only one (four percent) student rated themselves at a 3 on the adjustment scale. Ten (40%) students rated themselves a 4, and 14 (56%) of students rated themselves as a 5 saying that they were adjusting very well to college. Overall, the commuter students that responded to these surveys rated themselves as adjusting well or very well to life at college.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to shed light on the ongoing debate of whether living in college residence halls or commuting to college during a freshmen’s first year helps them adjust to life at college faster and more efficiently. Come August and then January, there are many college freshmen who gear up to begin college for the first time. The study specifically looked at the first time freshmen at Jones University in August 2009. This experience entails so many different things, but one of the major parts of this experience is the student’s adjustment to college. This study entailed four specific purposes. The first purpose was to identify many of the major factors of adjustment that all college freshmen face. The second purpose was to determine if life in the Residence Hall helps with the adjustment issues that college freshmen face each year. The third purpose was to determine barriers and hardships that freshmen commuter students face when it comes to adjustment. The fourth and final purpose was to determine whether or not living on campus helps a college freshmen adjust to college faster and more efficiently.

In order to draw some conclusions on this topic, the author used a quantitative method of study. The author distributed a series of two surveys to first time freshmen at Jones University. These surveys focused on determining the students’ living environment as well as the students’ perceptions of their own adjustment. The first survey was to
determine how the students felt prior to entering college about their adjustment and the second survey followed up with where they perceived themselves to be in the adjustment process half way through the year. These questions that were asked to the first time freshmen were asked in two different formats. A few of the questions were open-ended questions while the majority of the surveys were questions on the Likert scale. The students rated themselves on a five-point scale in order for the author to determine how well the students are adjusting to college.

Conclusions

The overall purpose of this study was to look at the difference in the adjustment process of college freshmen that commute versus those who live in the residence halls. As was discussed in the Chapter 2 review of the literature, there were many factors that affected the overall adjustment of college freshmen. The author surveyed 91 first time freshmen from Jones University in order to try to see if there really was a difference in the adjustment between those who commute verses those who live in the residence halls. As seen in Table 1, out of those 91 freshmen, 35 or 38.46% responded to the first survey and 26 or 28.57% responded to the second survey. In Table 2, one can see that 13.2% of the students who responded to the first survey were commuter students and 85.3% of the students who responded to the second survey were residential students. Twelve percent of the students who responded to the second survey were commuters and 88% were residential students.
Overall, the data from Table 5 concluded that both the commuter students and the residential students were not very nervous about adjusting to life in college. The majority of the students (38.2%), rated themselves a 2 on the scale of nervousness. Showing that the majority of the students were not nervous about adjusting to college. When the author followed up asking the students how well they felt they were adjusting to college, the majority (64%) felt as though they were adjusting well to college.

Social adjustment or whether or not the students are making friends was another major factor discussed in Chapter 2, which affects the adjustment process of all freshmen. When students begin college, they are facing changes in their established friendships. The author felt as though it was important to explore how well the students felt about making friends since this is a major factor in adjustment. Table 6 shows that according to the students, 56% of them felt as though they were making friends very well. This shows that in the area of making friends and social adjustment the students who participated in this study seem to be adjusting well.

Another factor that was briefly addressed in Chapter 2 was the academic adjustment that needs to take place during the freshmen year. For most, the academic challenges are greater in college than in high school. Students have many more things to balance in life when they enter college rather than in high school where school is their major priority. When asked how nervous they were about adjusting to the academic challenges of college, the responses seemed to vary tremendously. Table 7 shows the majority of the students responded with a 2 (33.3%) or 3 (30.3%) on the scale of adjustment. When the author followed up, the majority of the students a total of 96%
rated themselves a 4 or 5 on the scale, showing they felt they were adjusting well and very well to the challenges. Both commuter students and residents rated themselves similar on the scale. This indicates that for academic adjustment there is not difference between commuter students and residential students. According to Alexander Astin (1999), involvement is one of the most important factors in a student’s adjustment process.

…A highly involved student is one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students” Conversely, a typical uninvolved student neglects studies, spends little time on campus, abstains from extracurricular activities, and has infrequent contact with faculty members or other students. (Astin, 1999, p. 518)

According to Table 8, the majority of the students (48%) felt as though they were moderately involved rating themselves a 3 on the scale of involvement and 24% feel as though they are involved rating themselves a 4 on the scale of involvement. All of those students were residential students. In contrast, all of the commuter students rated themselves a 1 or 2 on the scale of involvement showing that they were either not involved at all or just slightly involved. As seen in Chapter 2, involvement is difficult for commuter students due to the fact that most events and activities are scheduled around residential students. Along with involvement the author also asked the students about attending campus activities as well as wing and building activities for the residential students. The results from Table 9 were consistent with the results of the involvement
questions showing that the residential students attend events somewhat and often, while the commuter students rarely attend activities on campus.

The author also looked at the off campus involvement of both the residential students as well as the commuter students to see if their time off campus plays a part in their adjustment. In Table 11 one can see that 44% of the students are moderately involved off campus. While 28% are very involved off campus, 28.57% of those are commuter students. The majority of the commuter students are involved off campus because the majority of their life is off campus while the majority of residential students’ life takes place on campus.

Again, Chapter 2 in the Review of Literature also found that a student’s sense of belonging was a key factor to adjustment. Part of this sense of belonging was to do with how much time the commuter students typically spend on campus, as well as how often all students (both residential and commuters) contact faculty. According to Table 13, 50% of the commuter students spent several hours most days while the other 50% spent some study time only on campus. Due to the fact that the data is split right down the middle, it was hard to draw conclusions from the table. According to Table 14, the majority of the students 48% both residential and commuter rated themselves a 2 showing that they rarely contact faculty outside of class. This showed that students feel that they are adjusting well overall but yet they are not spending much time with faculty outside of the classroom. This concluded that according to the student contacting faculty is not as important in the adjustment process as the literature shows it to be.
According to the results in Table 17, 56% of the students felt as though they were adjusting very well overall to life at college. While 40% felt as though they were adjusting fairly well to life at college rating themselves a 4 on the scale of the adjustment.

Overall, according to the students themselves the commuters have adjusted just as well as the residential students. These results are based solely on the student’s perceptions of themselves and where they feel they are at thus far.

Recommendations

Using the data that was received from the surveys that were distributed to the students the author has drawn a few recommendations not only for the administration at Jones University, but also for someone who might be reading this study.

1. Offer more programs and activities for commuter students.

In the literature it was evident that involvement is a key factor to student adjustment and according to the students themselves the commuters were not very involved in the campus activities and programs on Jones University campuses. According to the literature as well the majority of programs are offered in the evenings when commuter students have already left campus. The author recommends that the administration at Jones University offer daytime programs between classes that commuter students might be able to attend. This will also offer opportunities for commuter students to interact socially with other students outside the classroom helping with the social adjustment aspect as well.

2. Provide more opportunities for faculty interaction for all students.
Faculty interaction was one of the major factors in students feeling a sense of belonging to the campus. When students feel as though they can approach faculty and faculty are willing to help them succeed in college, they are more likely to adjust well to college. According to the students, they do not interact too much with faculty outside of the classroom. Although this is something that students need to initiate themselves, if the administration at Jones University offered more set times during their orientation program for this interaction this would help initiate the contact between faculty and students. This initial interaction might help the students to feel more comfortable approaching faculty outside the classroom.

3. Encourage commuter students to spend more time on the university campus outside the classroom.

Going back to the involvement theme, the more students are on the campus the more likely they are to get involved in the campus community. The author recommends that the administration at Jones University offer not just social activities, but academic activities, as well so as to keep the commuter students on campus. One possibility is to offer activities such as set study groups during the day and other activities that would keep commuter students on campus, rather than just during their classes.

4. Further research at a larger university on the adjustment of commuter students and residential students.

The final recommendation the author has is for further research at a larger university. This study was very helpful in providing more research regarding to this topic of freshmen adjustment, but if more research were done, more light would be shed on the
topic. The author believes that if more research were done at a larger university the data would be deeper and provide for more information and recommendations. The author recommends not only conducting further research at a larger university, but also researching other ways in which to involve commuter students in campus activities both social and academic. The author also recommends further research in the area of faculty and student interaction. This interaction is so important in the adjustment process that others would benefit from further research related to this topic.

The author also recommends that further research be done at other universities related to living environments. Further research can be done looking at the difference in living environments and how those living environments affect the overall college experience of all students.

The author provides these recommendations to Jones University with the hope that they will use this information to help provide a better college experience for all students, as well as a better overall adjustment process for college freshmen. It is also the interest of the author that future researchers will use these recommendations for further research opportunities to increase the available literature in regards to the topic of freshmen adjustment.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Consent Letter
Dear Jones University Freshman,

My name is Allison Greene, I am a student at Sacramento State University in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies as well as an Assistant Resident Director and Assistant to Student Development at Jones University. You are invited to participate in a research study, which I am conducting as part of the requirement for a Master of Arts degree in Educational Administration at Sacramento State University. In addition, the research will assist Jones University to better meet the needs of our freshman students. This study will consist of two surveys that assess the perceptions that you as a student have about adjustment to college life and involvement in college. The surveys will assist me in gathering data regarding freshman adjustment to college. You have been randomly selected for the participation in this study because you are a freshman at Jones University.

If you decide to participate, I will ask you to respond to a series of two survey questionnaires, which will take you approximately 5 minutes each. One survey is attached to this email and the other one will be distributed later on in the semester to students who complete the first survey. After you complete the survey, I will be glad to respond to any questions you may have regarding this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. However, your contribution in this study will assist me in my research on the differences in the adjustment processes of college freshman who commute and those who live in on campus housing. There is no
risk to you or any participant for participating in this study. The survey results will be maintained and analyzed anonymously. No identification other than your e-mail will be asked for nor will any identifying information, including your e-mail address be used in this study. I will be using your email only to communicate with you.

If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time. You may choose not to answer any question in the questionnaire that you do not wish to answer. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via email at agreene@jessup.edu.

I realize how busy you are as a freshman in college and I appreciate you taking the time to participate in my study. Please note that by returning this survey you are consenting to have your responses used in this study. Please keep this letter for your records. I look forward to working with you.

Thank you,

Allison Greene
agreen@jessup.edu
APPENDIX B

Student Surveys
Student Adjustment Surveys

Student Adjustment Survey I

Email: _____________________

Gender: Male or Female

Age or DOB: _______________

Classification: _______________

Intended Graduation Year: _______________________

On Campus Resident or Commuter: _______________________

If you are a commuter student what is your commute distance? _______________

If you are an on campus resident how far from home do you live? _______________

Please answer the following questions about this upcoming school year on a scale of one to five, one being the lowest or least and five being the highest or most. Please keep in mind these questions are regarding your feelings prior to entering college.

1. How nervous did you feel about adjusting to college life?
   Not nervous at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very nervous

2. How nervous were you about making friends at Jones University?
   Not nervous at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very nervous

3. How nervous were you about adjusting to the academic challenges of college?
   Not nervous at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very nervous
4. How involved in Student Life activities do you plan to get while attending Jones University?
   Not involved at all   1   2   3   4   5 Very Involved

5. How likely are you to attend campus wide activities?
   Not likely at all   1   2   3   4   5 Very likely

6. If you live in the Residence Halls how likely are you to attend floor/building wide events?
   Not likely at all   1   2   3   4   5 Very likely

7. How likely are you to be involved in off campus activities (Work, Church, Etc.) this year?
   Not likely at all   1   2   3   4   5 Very likely

8. If you live in the residence halls how often do you think you will go home each month?
   Once   Twice   Three times   More than four times a month

9. If you are a commuter student how much time will you spend outside of class on campus?
   Several hours most days   Few hours during the work week
   Some study hours only   Very little extra time
   No more time than necessary
10. How likely are you to contact faculty outside of class?
Not likely at all    1    2    3    4    5 Very likely

11. If you live in the Residence Halls how likely are you to build relationships with others outside of your wing?
Not likely at all    1    2    3    4    5 Very likely

12. If you are a commuter how likely are you to make friends with others outside of your classes?
Not likely at all    1    2    3    4    5 Very likely
Student Adjustment Survey II

Email: _____________________

Age or DOB: _____________________

Gender:   Male   or   Female

Classification: ___________________

On Campus Resident or Commuter: ________________________

If you are a commuter student what is your commute distance? __________________

If you are an on campus resident how far from home do you live? __________________

Please answer the following questions about this upcoming school year on a scale of one to five, one being the lowest or least and five being the highest or most. Please answer these questions based on your perspective at this point in the year. Please note that on some of the questions 1 is never, 2 is rarely, 3 is occasionally, 4 is often, and 5 is very often.

1. How well are you adjusting to college life?
   Not well at all    1  2  3  4  5 Very Well

2. How well are you making friends here at Jones University?
   Not well at all    1  2  3  4  5 Very Well

3. How well are you adjusting to the academic challenges at Jones University?
   Not well at all    1  2  3  4  5 Very Well
4. How involved in campus life have you become at Jones University?
Not involved at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very involved

5. How often do you attend campus wide activities?
Never 1 2 3 4 5 Very Often

6. If you live in the Residence Halls how often are you to attending floor/building wide events?
Never 1 2 3 4 5 Very Often

7. How involved in off campus activities are you this year?
Not involved at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very involved

8. If you live in the Residence Halls how often do you go home each month?
Never 1 2 3 4 5 Very often

9. If you are a commuter how much time do you spend on campus outside of class?
Very little time 1 2 3 4 5 A great deal of time

10. How often do you as a student contact faculty/staff outside of the classroom/office?
Never 1 2 3 4 5 Very often
11. If you live in the Residence Halls how often do you interact socially with other students outside your wing?

Never  1  2  3  4  5 Very often

12. If you are a commuter how often do you interact socially with other students outside your classes?

Never  1  2  3  4  5 Very often

13. Overall how well do you feel you have adjusted to college life at this point in the year?

Not well at all  1  2  3  4  5 Very well

14. How much of a role do you feel that your living situation has played in your adjustment to college?

No role at all  1  2  3  4  5 A very significant role
REFERENCES


