EARLY PREDICTORS OF EARLY FRESHMAN YEAR ATTRITION IN FEMALE HISPANIC STUDENTS

Heather Faye Speed, B.B.A., M.A.

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APPROVED:
V. Barbara Bush, Major Professor
Kathleen Whitson, Minor Professor and Program Coordinator for Higher Education
Maureen McGuinness, Committee Member
Jan Holden, Chair of Department of Counseling and Higher Education
Jerry Thomas, Dean of the College of Education
James D. Meernik, Acting Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School

The Texas Hispanic population is projected to grow to 18.8 million, almost tripling its number within the state, in only 30 years. This rapid growth is a concern for Texas higher education because this group has traditionally been under-represented in colleges and universities. Also, according to national, state, and local data, Hispanic students are retained at a lower rate than are other ethnic groups. Because of lower retention rates for Hispanic students and because the majority of Hispanic college students are female, an increasing number of Hispanic women are heads of households. Studying the attrition rates of Hispanic females could provide a better understanding of how the state can improve both the participation and retention rates of this population.

This study utilized descriptive statistics and regression analysis to identify the correlations between and among the dependent variable of attrition and independent variables derived from (1) pre-college survey responses measuring college expectations and (2) early-first semester survey responses measuring actual college experience. Institutional data were used to confirm enrollment status at the beginning of the second semester. The sample of the study was all female, full-time, first-time-in college student survey respondents attending a public 4-year institution in Texas. This number included Hispanic females \( n = 176 \), Caucasian females \( n = 278 \), and African American females \( n = 209 \). Although not a focus of the study, Caucasian and African American females were included to enhance the understanding of Hispanic females’ responses. The dependent variable of attrition in college attendance for Hispanic females correlated negatively with each two independent variables: (1) joining one or more campus
organizations ($r = -0.252, p = 0.045$) and (2) campus social life providing many opportunities for participation ($r = -0.272, p = 0.030$). The dependent variable correlated positively with one independent variable, satisfaction with academic progress at the end of the freshman year ($r = 0.301, p = 0.016$). To have a positive impact on the attrition rates of Hispanic females, educators at Texas institutions of higher education must better understand Hispanic females’ college expectations.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Hispanic population is the largest and fastest growing minority group in the United States and this rapid growth trend is expected to continue. The U.S. Census Bureau (2008a, 2008b, 2008c) estimated that the projected U.S. Hispanic population in 2010 would be 49.7 million, a number expected to triple to 132.8 million by 2050. Similar to this national trend, the increase in the Texas Hispanic population is also projected to grow to 18.8 million, almost tripling its population within the state in only 30 years (Texas State Data Center, 2008). In the past 30 years, the proportion of Whites in Texas has decreased from 56% to 43%, while the proportion of Hispanics has increased from 28% to 40% (Frost, 2007). These trends demonstrate that the Hispanic population in Texas is growing and growing quickly.

The rapidly increasing Hispanic population in Texas is a concern for higher education, according to Venezia, Kirst, and Antonio (2003) because “student groups who have been traditionally under-represented in higher education will grow faster than traditionally well-represented student groups” (p. 20). Hispanics are struggling with successfully entering, persisting, and graduating from institutions of higher education, more than any other ethnic group in the American educational system (Bohon, Johnson, & Gorman, 2006). The fact that many Hispanic students are the first in their families to attend college, are learning English as a second language, and/or are not as academically prepared as other ethnic groups intensifies this situation (Sy & Romero, 2008). Improving the Hispanic population’s success rate in college enrollment and graduation benefits not only this particular portion of society, but also creates a better educated population that can make strong, positive contributions to the economy. If measures are not taken immediately to address the low participation of Hispanics in Texas higher
education, it is likely that economic difficulties in Texas will be aggravated (Combs. 2006).

Background

The proportion of the U.S. Hispanic population over 25 years of age and not earning a high school diploma has historically been nearly twice that of Blacks (43% vs. 21%), and almost four times the rate of the White population (Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003). Since both the number of Hispanic high school students in Texas and the proportion of the total Texas population that is Hispanic is projected to increase significantly in the coming years, the problem of low participation of Hispanics in both secondary and higher education will likely become more acute. In the academic year of 2013-2014, it is projected that there will be over 540,000 Hispanic students in U.S. high schools, a 73% increase from 2001-2002 (Noel Levitz, 2006). Though the number of high school participants is anticipated to increase, the high school dropout rate is a concern. Hispanic students are overrepresented in dropout rates and underrepresented in graduation rates in higher education as opposed to any other ethnicity (Fry, 2002). This has been the trend since 1972 as Blacks and Whites have consistently had a lower dropout rate than Hispanics (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007a, 2007b). To the extent that college attrition remains unaddressed for this population, there is a potential of producing race discourse, jeopardizing both social and race relationships in Texas.

Further evidence of this underrepresentation of Hispanics in the educational system directly impacting Texas can be found in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s (THECB, 2008) Closing the Gaps plan. This initiative sets a goal of 1,650,000 enrolled in college by 2015 with 676,100 being Hispanic students. Texas State Data Center reinforced the concern of higher education by stating that the Hispanic population, which is traditionally underrepresented in college, will rapidly increase and out-pace the traditionally represented
populations (Venezia et al., 2003). There will be a large, growing population in the state that has struggled in higher education, and their educational future is critical to increase individual well-being as well as the social and economic future of Texas. In the progress report (THECB, 2008) of the Closing the Gaps Plan, the Hispanic population fell “well below” the target set. The report stated:

Hispanic participation [in higher education] grew from 3.7 % of the population in fall 2000 to just 4.0 % in fall 2008. To reach the 2015 target of 5.7 %, Hispanics will need to enroll another 310,000 (84.3 %) students, a daunting task given their high drop out rates in high school and economic disadvantage. (p. ii)

Texas, in particular, should be concerned with the rapid growth of the Hispanic population for both educational and economic reasons. According to the Texas comptroller, by 2040, the non-White population will make up 75% of Texas employees, 80% of public school students and 70% of university students (Combs, 2006). Murdoch (2009) stated that the Hispanic population is the only ethnic group projected to increase in elementary and secondary schools. His study indicated the Hispanic population of this age group will grow from 40% in 2000 to 66% in 2040, a 26% increase. The White student population will decrease from 43.2% to 19.9% and Black students from 14.4% to 8.3% of the total elementary and secondary schools. The trend is similar when looking at college enrollment in Texas. Murdoch indicates an increase in Hispanic enrollment in college during this same time period, 2000-2040. According to his data, in 2000, the percentage of Hispanic college enrollment made up 26% and is predicted to double by 2040. At the same time, the White and Black college enrolled population is expected to decrease by 19% and 2% respectively. With such a large number of Hispanic students ideally enrolling in higher education, improvements in retention and graduation rates are critical for the state of Texas. For a strong workforce and economic base in Texas, the education of the ever increasing Hispanic population must be addressed.
Texans are not enrolling in higher education as they have in the past, and the projections for 2015 do not indicate this trend improving. The projections indicate the percentage of Texans enrolled in college will decrease from 5.3% to 4.6% between 1990 and 2015 (Austin Area Research Organization [AARO], 2005). This decrease is concomitant with the growing Hispanic population and lack of proportional participation of that group in higher education. Another indicator of the severity of the state’s problem, as indicated by the AARO, is that Texas currently falls below the national average in the proportion of the population enrolled in higher education and is likely to fall even further below the national average in the future. As the Hispanic population is growing substantially, this population is an obvious group on which Texas must focus if Texas is to increase the proportion of students successfully completing their college degree.

Another concern regarding the lack of Hispanic success in higher education is that the state’s annual income could be substantially influenced by the level of education attained by its population. Wage earners with a high school diploma will earn approximately $32,000 annually (Kelly, 2005). College graduates can expect to earn approximately $57,000 per year (Kelly, 2005), representing a difference that is critical to the economic stability of Texas and well-being of the individuals and their families.

The college participation rate of Hispanic students in higher education has improved over the years, but this population is neither participating nor completing degrees at the same rate as other ethnic groups, in percentage or proportion (THECB, 2009). Murdoch (2009) studied the educational attainment of Texans aged 25 years or older as of 2000. Of all ethnic groups, Hispanics had the smallest percentage of college graduates, 9%, while Blacks made up 15% of the state’s college graduates, Whites were 30%, and Asians were 48%. Examining high school
graduation as the highest level of educational attainment, Hispanics made up the largest group, 51%, with Blacks making up 24%, Asians 19% and Whites 13%. (See Figure 1.) These percentages demonstrate the lower levels of educational achievement of the Texas Hispanic population and the disproportionally low level of Hispanic college attendees. It is generally the case that Hispanic parents strongly encourage their children to attend college; however, the lack of personal experience in college limits the parents’ ability to give advice and help prepare their children for college (Immerwahr, 2003; Kimura-Walsh, Yamamura, Griffin, & Allen, 2009).

![Figure 1. Graph of educational attainment by ethnicity as of 2000.](image)

Even if Hispanic students enroll in college, many of these students are forced to make choices, for economic reasons, that put them at risk of not graduating from college (Fry, 2002). In the United States, only 10% of the Hispanic population has an earned a college degree, even though their enrollment in higher education has increased the past twenty years (Yazedijan & Toews, 2006). More than any other ethnic group, Hispanics experience factors placing them at higher risk of not completing a four year degree. These factors include attending college part-
time, working part-time, working full-time, delayed enrollment and attending a community college (Fry, 2003). A lack of social capital is another risk for Hispanic students of not graduating from college. As Admon (2004) stated, the Hispanic population, more than any other ethnic group, lacks social capital, the “features of social life-networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives” (p.11). Many Hispanics are the first in their families to attend college and they do not have the resources such as family members or members within their social circle that went to college who could help them prepare, anticipate and navigate through the college experience. Another risk factor for Hispanic students is the lack of academic preparation. (Zalaquett, 2006). All of these risks make the transition and integration into college life even more critical if more Hispanic students are to enter college and realize the economic advantages in today’s economy (Jackson, 2000).

First-Year Retention

After a student enrolls in higher education, retaining that student through graduation should be the goal of higher education. Enrollment in higher education is not equivocal to obtaining a degree, but presents only the opportunity to obtain a degree (Fry, 2002). Retaining students through graduation is a difficult task for colleges and universities, but it is important to approach that goal one step at a time. To increase the percentage of students graduating from college, institutions of higher education must improve first-year retention rates. Over one-third of all first-time-in-college students drop out of college within the first two years (Tinto, 1993; Pancer, Hunsberger, Pratt, & Alisat, 2000; Seidman, 2005; Yazedijan & Toews, 2006). Some researchers say most attrition happens during the first year (Tinto, 1993; Hicks, 2005; Rausch & Hamilton, 2006; Yazedijan & Toews, 2006), particularly among Hispanics students (Otero Rivas, & Rivera, 2007). Others say it is usually during the first semester. i.e., early first year
attrition, that most students make the decision to stay in college, drop out, or transfer to another institution (Astin, 1999; Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985; Kelly, 2006; Toews & Yazedijan, 2007). In any case, the early college career is critical and because of added barriers in the Hispanic experience, perhaps it is not surprising that this population struggles, more than any other, during the first year of college.

Students confront a number of new challenges as they enter the freshman year. In general, there are more academic demands and more opportunities to make independent decisions on subjects such as drugs, sex, alcohol, class attendance, and nutrition than there were in high school (Pancer et al., 2000). Freshmen begin their college careers with ideas and expectations, some realistic and some not, of what the experience is going to be. Having unrealistic expectations about unfamiliar territory, i.e., college, can lead to bad experiences, and can ultimately lead to the student to drop out (Bohon et al., 2006; Immerwahr & Foleno, 2000; Keup, 2002; Moore, 2007; Nicholas, 1990; Pancer et al., 2000; Reynolds & Pumberton, 2001; Seidman, 2005). The “freshman myth,” identified as early as 1966 by Stern, encompassed these often unrealistic, unduly optimistic and baseless expectations (Baker et al., 1985). These unrealistic expectations can lead to dissatisfaction and frustration (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Pancer et al., 2000). It is this discrepancy between expectation and reality where students may struggle with their decision to stay or leave the institution. The more consistent a student’s expectations are with the reality they experience, the more likely they are to stay (Nicholas, 1990).

Hispanic Female College Students

Not only is the Hispanic population as a whole not keeping up with other ethnic groups in college enrollment (i.e., the percentage of that ethnic group enrolling in college), but Hispanic
females, in particular, are lagging in participation. In 2006, the U.S. female college student population was made up of 64% White, 14% Black while only 11% of all female students were Hispanic (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2007). Sy and Romero (2008) stated that the disproportion of female Hispanics in college is due to most of these students being first-generation college students, who are more at risk for not completing their college education than other populations. According to Sy and Romero, not having parents with first-hand knowledge of the college experience limits the student’s ability to assist their children to navigate through the decisions and preparations needed to be well equipped for higher education.

Getting Hispanic females into college is a strong positive step, but there are many obstacles this population must still overcome to achieve the ultimate success of earning the four-year college degree. There are several social factors such as family expectations, societal expectations, academic preparations, financial concerns, and availability of mentors and role models that should be considered when attempting to better understand what hinders Hispanic females from completing their college degree. As mentioned earlier, these factors impeding the path to graduation, or predictors of attrition, seem to make their negative impact early in a student’s college experience. Retention of any particular population “is a complex and multidimensional issue and cannot be quickly and easily understood” (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004, p. 54).

Retention rates are generally not broken out by race and by ethnicity together, but they are provided in more general terms. The first-year retention rate of Hispanic students in fall 2007 was 78.1% nationally (CIDEA, 2009), 85.3% in Texas (THECB, 2009), while the institution in this study Texas Woman’s University (TWU) had a retention rate of 68.1% (TWU Fact Book, 2009). The first year retention rate of White students in fall 2007 was 80.6%
nationally (CIDEA, 2009), 90% in Texas (THECB, 2009) and 68.9% at TWU (TWU Fact Book, 2009). In all cases, Hispanic students were retained at a low rate whether looking at national, state or local trends, clearly indicating that Hispanic participation is lower than other ethnicities. Though these statistics do not provide specific information on Hispanic females, what we do know is that the majority of Hispanic students are female and that the retention levels of female Hispanic students lags behind other female ethnicities (USDE, 2007).

The THECB is focused on the Hispanic population and is asking for aggressive planning from all Texas colleges and universities for increasing Hispanic enrollment and graduation rates. This population is the “key” in reaching the enrollment goals of the state (THECB, 2009). Because there is a strong possibility of more Hispanics entering college, and because the majority of Hispanic college students are female, an increasing number of whom are heads of households (McWhirter, 1997), this population needs to be studied. A focus on Hispanic females could provide a better understanding of how the state can improve both participation and retention rates of this population.

**Problem Statement**

The problem this research explored was early first year attrition of first-time-in-college Hispanic females attending Texas Woman’s University by examining their pre-college expectations and first semester experiences as a way of determining factors that impacted the attrition rate. Examining early first year attrition of female Hispanic students showed potential for a greater positive effect, since the female Hispanic student population in higher education is greater (by 8%) than the male component (USDE, 2007). The focus in this study on the attrition of female Hispanics was to reduce the complexities of analysis, making for a clearer understanding of the underlying issues and provide a more direct path to corrective measures.
For example, the significant differences in the roles and expectations for females and males found in Hispanic culture made it highly likely that the reasons for attrition in higher education would be different between the male and female populations (Kimura-Walsh et al., 2009; Sy & Romero, 2008).

Study Significance

The first step toward reducing attrition among Hispanic female students during their first year in college is identifying the factors contributing to attrition for this group. By examining first-year female Hispanic students specifically, at an institution (Texas Woman’s University) that provides an appropriate and convenience sample and where early first year attrition is a concern, predictors of attrition may emerge allowing for generalizations to be made about this population and corrective steps to be determined to lessen that attrition probability in the future (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Nicholas, 1990; Otero et al., 2007).

Hispanic female students have unrealistic expectations, more than any other ethnic group (Lalla, 2007; Moore, 2007; Zalaquett, 2006) and more barriers than any other female ethnicity (Kimura-Walsh et al., 2009). People are better able to deal with a given situation when having “realistic” expectations up front. According to Widdows and Hilton (1990), “customer satisfaction is directly related to the ‘gap’ between what a consumer expects of the product or service and what the consumer actually experiences after purchasing the product or service” (p. 86). Reducing the gap between unrealistic expectations and the reality of the first semester in college should lead to improved retention rates and ultimately impacting society by establishing a more educated population that is better able to contribute to their families and communities.

This study, focusing on predictors of early freshman year attrition of Hispanic females, provided critical data for having a positive impact on Hispanic female participation in college. It
attempted to identify the principal predictors of attrition for Hispanic females in their first semester of their freshman year in college. These predictors were thought to provide the basis for well-directed corrective action and identification of the specific areas leading to both higher participation and a higher success rate of the Hispanic female population in higher education.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the attrition of early first year Hispanic female students. This was accomplished by examining survey responses of this population concerning their expectations of and experiences during their first semester of college and identifying factors that produce increased risk of early first year attrition of Latinas. The results were expected to provide a basis for predicting attrition related issues. Identifying potential predictors was thought to provide colleges and universities the opportunity to reduce barriers and positively assist in the persistence decisions faced by this population of freshmen students.

Research Question

This study addressed the following question: What factors of Hispanic female students’ pre-college expectations of early college experiences and these students’ first semester experiences impact early first year attrition? To answer this question, the research focused on full-time, first-time-in-college Hispanic females attending Texas Woman’s University. More specifically, this study compared the expectations of these women prior to their university experience with their actual first semester college experiences. In order to obtain a more quantitative understanding of the role any observed disparities might play in early attrition, nine questions related to these issues were examined:

Expectations

1. Does the expectation of being satisfied with academic progress have a positive
correlation with early freshman year attrition?

2. Does the expectation of being involved on campus have a positive correlation with early freshman year attrition?

3. Does the expectation of having relationships with others have a positive correlation with early freshman year attrition?

Experiences

4. Does being satisfied with academic progress have a positive correlation with early freshman year attrition?

5. Does being involved on campus have a positive correlation with early freshman year attrition?

6. Does having relationships with others have a positive correlation with early freshman year attrition?

Gap

7. Does early congruence, i.e., degree of fit, with the expectation of being satisfied with academic progress have a positive correlation with early freshman year attrition?

8. Does early congruence, i.e., degree of fit, with the expectation of being involved on campus have a positive correlation with early freshman year attrition?

9. Does early congruence, i.e., degree of fit, with the expectation of having relationships with others have a positive correlation with early freshman year attrition?

Population

The population for this study includes all full-time, first-time-in-college Hispanic female students enrolled for the fall semester, 2008 at Texas Woman’s University (TWU). In 2008, the undergraduate population of TWU was 7,420 with 1,333 (18%) being Hispanic. The first-time-
in-college population at TWU was 778 with 24% (188) being Hispanic (TWU Fact Book, 2008). There has been an increase in the Hispanic population at TWU over the past five years with the expectation of this population continuing to grow. TWU has plans to become a designated Hispanic-Serving Institute requiring the institution to have at least 25% of its total enrollment consist of Hispanic students. TWU estimates that an 85% retention rate of Hispanic students from the first year to the second year of college is needed to achieve this designation (R. Nicholas, personal communication, October 29, 2009). The retention rate from 2008 to 2009 was 76.6% for the TWU Hispanic population (TWU Fact Book, 2009). This study allowed the data to be separated by gender for focusing specifically on Hispanic females, an area lacking in existing research. The researcher narrowed the time period of study from one year to decisions made during one semester.

Limitations

This research was limited to the population group of Hispanic females at a single institution (Texas Woman’s University). As such, it was necessarily restricted to those first semester students who participated in the surveys (i.e., the pre-college survey assessing expectations and the first semester). With respect to utility of the results of this study, the results were applicable to the female Hispanic students’ early college experiences. The results of this study might not be clearly or immediately and wholly applicable to other groups, since it is well known that attrition rates differ significantly among the major ethnic groups. While this limitation was certainly present, it was very likely that some of the facets at work for the study population would provide insight into the causes of attrition for other groups.

As surveys were administered in the summer prior to the fall semester 2008, some of the original population surveyed were not enrolled in the fall and therefore were not present to
complete the follow up survey. Eight students completed the first survey at orientation but did not register for fall classes. Twenty-seven students withdrew from the institution prior to the distribution of the follow up survey. In addition to these individuals who were not available for the follow up survey, some current students who did complete the surveys during orientation might have chosen not to participate in the follow up survey.

Delimitations

The focus of this study on Hispanic females offered several advantages. Hispanics make up the largest ethnic minority group in Texas. Hispanic females make up a larger percentage of the entire Hispanic enrollment. The Texas Hispanic population is growing every year, and the percentage of student population of this group is expected to grow in Texas in next several years. The focus on this single group for this investigation reduced the number of potential factors contributing to early attrition and allowed for a higher level of confidence in the conclusions and implications.

Definitions

Definitions for terms used throughout this research report are as follows:

*Black*. A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (IPEDS, 2009).

*Hispanic*. A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race (IPEDS, 2009).

*White*. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa (IPEDS, 2009).

*Early attrition*. Attrition during the first semester of the first year of college.

*Participation*. Being engaged in the academic experience and involved in student
organizations such as intramural sports, honor societies, learning communities, and interacting with faculty and staff outside of the classroom (Astin, 1999).

*Relationships.* Becoming a valued member of the community through frequency and quality contact with students and faculty (Tinto, 1993).

*Retention.* Persistence in higher education through obtaining a bachelor’s degree.

*First generation.* A person whose parent or parents did not complete a four-year college degree (USDE, 2008).
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews research directed to understanding factors impacting the first-year college experiences of Hispanic students in general and of female Hispanic students, in particular. The topics explored in these research studies include expectation that Hispanic students have of participation in college, the barriers faced by Hispanics and particularly female Hispanics in completing college, engaging in the college experience and establishing a sense of belonging to the college community and early attrition. The last portion of this chapter reviews the theories that provide the framework for this study.

Student Expectations

Like all pre-college students, Hispanic students have preconceived ideas of what their college experience will entail. Unfortunately, a large portion of Hispanic students, more so than any other ethnic group, have unrealistic expectations of their college experience and experience significant barriers that they must overcome to succeed in higher education (Ishitani, 2006; Lalla, 2007; Zalaquett, 2006). When a student decides to leave college, it is usually not a single issue that led to that decision but a combination of several concerns (Longden, 2006). Examples of previous research, from 1990-2007, demonstrate that a significant gap exists between what the student expected of their college experience and what the student’s actual experiences were.

Widdows and Hilton (1990) studied 1,600 first year students from a large Mid-western university and found that most students make their decision to leave the institution during the first six weeks of their freshman year. The researchers found that most students did have “idealistic” and “exaggerated” expectations of their college experience prior to coming to college, however, the majority (92.8%) of this population was able to readjust their expectations
and were retained. The percentage of those who did not stay (7.1%) was very similar to the freshman retention rate that year, meaning that meeting the expectations of first-year students is an essential part to retention.

Keup (2002) found similar results in his study of over 3,500 students from 53 American universities researching the differences of the students’ pre-college expectations with their first-year experiences. The research discovered that these students did have pre-college expectations that impacted their first-year performance. Keup discovered that these students did have a more optimistic picture of college life prior to their freshman year than the reality provided. Expectations dealing with co-curricular activities, rather than academic experiences, had the greatest gap between expectation and reality. Knowing there is a gap, this institution now has the opportunity to be proactive, to create opportunities that reduce the gap and increase the institution’s retention.

Smith and Wertlieb (2005) took a similar approach to Keup, but studied a smaller population. The researchers worked with 31 freshmen to compare these students’ expectations with their actual experiences. They surveyed the students at the middle and end of their freshman year. Researchers have shown that the students had unmet, unrealistic expectations of college, the “freshman myth,” and concluded there was a “disconnect” between high school and college. Smith and Wertlieb found that students with unrealistically high expectations, academically or socially, have lower GPAs for their first year in college. As the students progressed through their first year, there was a steady decline in the academic and social expectations over time indicating that their previous expectations of college were unrealistic and become more realistic as time passed. Some students were able to reset their expectations to
realistic values and maintain satisfaction, while others became dissatisfied and decided to leave the institution.

Rausch and Hamilton (2006) also examined the reasons why first year students left their freshman year by interviewing twenty traditional freshmen who dropped out of college before their freshman year ended. Not surprisingly, they concluded that the students all had unmet expectations, misinformation about college, and unclear educational goals. Students were poorly prepared academically for college and found it difficult to make friends. In response to their dissatisfaction or misunderstanding of how college life would truly be, the students did not attend classes regularly, were not involved in student organizations or activities and found it hard to balance work and school demands. These students felt out of place and were not engaged in the university at any level. The students found little incentive to keep them at the institution.

Rausch and Hamilton stated that using quantitative predictors to determine “attrition and retention are not always accurate” (p. 332) and found that a qualitative approach was a more appropriate method for determining attrition issues. A limitation of their study, leading to the inaccuracies of using predictors, was that they looked at their sample as a whole. The researchers did not delineate between gender or ethnicity making a predictor for the entire sample less reliable.

In each of these studies, first year students were found to have idealistic, exaggerated, optimistic and/or unrealistic expectations of their college experience. The majority of students were able to overcome these preconceived ideas and readjust their expectations. For those students who did not adjust, most were dissatisfied with their college experience and left the institution. Understanding where gaps exist and why they exist may lead to ways to help students adjust their expectations to more realistic ones therefore forming the basis for better
preparations and performance of these students. It may also provide useful information to institutions of higher education on what colleges and universities can do to be more helpful to first-year students, possibly reducing early first-year attrition.

Retention of Hispanic Students

Because of this research’s focus on attrition, the area of the retention of Hispanic students is explored by examining the barriers Hispanics students face in higher education. As seen in the research provided above, expectations of first-year students and the lack of those expectations becoming reality is a concern for all first-year students. Hispanic students not only experience the unrealistic expectations as other students do, but also barriers, unique to Hispanics, that hamper their success in higher education (Fry, 2003; Ishitani, 2006; Jackson, 2000; Martinez, 2003; McGlynn, 2004; Seidman, 2005; Zalaquett 2006). These barriers include issues such as minimal community support, low family income, low educational expectations, misinformation about college costs and requirements, and a sense of financial responsibility to family. Hispanic females have additional barriers which include responsibility to family, cultural expectations of the “proper” role for females, minimal engagement, and low educational expectations are especially high (Horwedel, 2007).

Ream (2003) studied 25,000 high school Hispanic students on the west coast and their lack of social capital, that is, “relationship networks from which an individual is potentially able to derive various types of support via social exchange” (p. 238). Ream stated this lack of social capital leads to underachievement in higher education. Ream found that due to the high mobility of this population and lack of attention or guidance by school personnel, Hispanics have less access to social capital to help them succeed in getting into college, much less graduating from college.
Ishitani (2006) also found in his research that Hispanic students are not as successful in college as other ethnic groups. Ishitani tracked 4427 students enrolled in college between 1991 and 1994 to the year 2000. By 2000, 2,256 (51%) had graduated, but only 40% of the Hispanic population graduated from college, while 71% of White students graduated. Hispanic students are at a higher risk of not graduating than any other ethnicity. According to Ishitani, barriers that make being successful in college more difficult include low expectations by family, low expectations of self and low family income.

Rather than examining a random population, Zalaquett (2006) took a different approach and deliberately selected twelve Hispanic ‘success stories” to better understand what obstacles these twelve students had to overcome and why they succeeded while the majority of the Hispanic student population did not. Zalaquett studied a small population, twelve successful Hispanic students, in a large urban university and the negative factors that impeded their college experience. The principle negative factors were a, “lack of strong adult supervision, misinformation about college requirements, and choice of less successful options”, i.e., not applying for financial aid and scholarships, not taking challenging academic courses in high school (Zalaquett, 2006, p. 36). Zalaquett also identified eight factors that negatively contributed to these students’ college experience: “family, education, responsibility to others, sense of accomplishment, friendship, scholarship, community support, and school personnel” (p. 35). When making decision about college, these students received minimal guidance and information from their parents or from school personnel. They had misinformation about financial aid, scholarships, deadlines and application requirements. With this information these students made poor choices finding themselves inadequately prepared for their college experience. These 12 Hispanic students represent a success story for Hispanic students and how a student, committed
to their decision to attend college, can beat the odds.

Unlike Zalaquett who picked a small group of Hispanic students who successfully completed their first year, Lalla (2007) researched a small group of six students who dropped out of New Mexico State University. The intent of the study was to understand the students’ expectations and experiences while in college and explore possible reason for the decision to leave the institution. What was discovered was that the decision to leave had nothing to do with their academic experience, but more so with the values these students held such as obedience to family, responsibility to family, and family independence. Family responsibility played a big role in a Hispanic student’s college experience and felt they must leave the university to be of more assistance to their family with financial and/or familial responsibilities. Lalla made the point that a student leaving college, especially a Hispanic student, should not be considered as a negative for the institution or the student, but a “characteristic” of the student population, and colleges should know this, expect this and work on simplifying the re-enrollment process.

Another barrier for Hispanic students is misinformation about financing a college education. There is misinformation about the financial aid process, obtaining scholarships and grants, and also the total cost of attending college (Admon 2004; Immerwahr, 2003). The lack of information impacts students’ and families’ decisions when deciding on college-prep courses and college entrance exams while still in high school (Zalaquett, 2006). Hispanics tend to be reluctant to take loans, but with the cost of attending college increasing, it will be very difficult for Hispanics to earn their degree without taking out loans (Swail et al., 2003).

Research has indicated that students who attend community colleges have a greater chance of not earning their undergraduate degree (Admon, 2004; Fry, 2002). Another trend that works against Hispanic graduation rates is that Hispanic students are less likely than any other
ethnic group to attend a four-year institution (Admon, 2004). In 2003 the Hispanic student population made up only 9.5% of all college students and only 6.6% of the four-year institution enrollment (Schmidt, 2003). According to Swail et al. (2003), only 53% of the Hispanic population met the requirements for attendance at a four year institution, while 68% of Whites qualified. Students experience difficulties transferring from high school to college presumably and partially from inadequate training in both the high schools and colleges to educate their students to ensure the preparedness and understanding of the realities of college (Smith & Wertlieb, 2005).

Hispanic Female Student

Hispanic female college students are of particular interest as there has been little research done on this group as compared to other ethnicities (Cerna, Perez, & Sanchez, 2009; Sy & Romero, 2008). As stated earlier in this study, Hispanic females are now the largest minority group of females in the United States (U.S.) and are the least likely of any group of females in the U. S. to complete a bachelor’s degree (Murdoch, 2009). It is also important to study Hispanic females separate from Hispanic males as Latinas face unique barriers (Schwartz, 2001). The studies below illustrate the difficulties and obstacles Hispanic females must overcome in order to obtain a college degree.

Jackson (2000) examined students’ expectations of the benefits of a college education in regards to job attainment. Hispanic female students stood out among all others in the study as Latinas demonstrated much less “faith” in the benefits of a college education. Jackson pointed out three possible reasons for this lack of faith: (1) low college completion rates of Hispanic females, (2) a college education for Latinas may be “de-emphasized” and “devalued” and (3) a lack of mentors and role models for this population. With these assumptions, Jackson stated that
it is not difficult to understand why it is harder for Latinas to believe in the benefits of a college education.

Sy (2006) studied the influences that part-time work and family responsibilities had on the academic success of first-time-in-college Hispanic female students. Family obligations often times superseded academic responsibilities causing stress for these students. The most stressful obligation for Hispanic females was “language brokering”, or translating, for their parents or family members. An interesting finding of this study is that Latinas who worked part-time experienced had lower academic stress than those who did not. The conclusion drawn is that the student who worked part-time had less time at home to language broker relieving the overall stress. Another stress reliever for Latinos in this study is that those who were working part-time were also contributing the family’s financial situation enabling them to contribute to the family’s financial responsibilities. Hispanic females in this study were navigating between their families’ obligations and their academic responsibilities, all experiencing some sort of academic or familial stress, but the more the Latina could choose in how they contributed to the family obligations, the less stress they encountered.

Toews and Yazedian (2007) examined college adjustment of Hispanic females by examining personal and interpersonal variables – self esteem, parental and peer support. The researchers found that self esteem and peer support were critical to the success of college adjustment for this population, while parent support was not. When compared with White females, college adjustment was much more significant to the retention of Hispanic females.

While parent support may not play a role in the ability of Latinos to adjust to college, family does seem to impact Latinos in both positive and negative ways when it comes to their success in higher education. Sy and Romero (2008) studied first and second generation Hispanic
females in college to better understand the responsibilities they have to their families. They also studied the impact these responsibilities had on Latinas’ college experiences. These responsibilities limit some Hispanic females in their ability to establish themselves on campus as they may need to work, full or part-time and/or commute from home to help in child rearing. Hispanic females felt it was important to support the family financially and to assist in the raising of younger siblings, putting their family’s needs before their own. There was a sense of honor and a need to give back to their family, but at the same time experienced conflict between home expectations and school expectations. Attending and graduating from college would allow them a greater opportunity to provide financially, and provide upward mobility for their family.

According to Sy and Romero:

Because Latinas are underrepresented in higher education and because a large percentage of Latinas have parents with little or no college experience, the young women who do enroll in 4-year programs are further at risk of experiencing conflict between the expectations of their home and school contexts. (p.214)

The researchers also found that the lack of social capital, low expectations, low income, misinformation and family obligations all make the chances of graduating from college very difficult for Hispanic students, especially female Hispanic students. The family responsibilities and expectations of Hispanic males is considerably less than that of Hispanic females. As Sy found in an earlier study in 2006, the familial pressures Latinas experience include, “translating for parents or other family members, spending time with family, helping around the house, taking care of siblings and making financial contributions to the family ” (p. 215). The impact of these family obligations of Hispanic female students should not be underestimated as these responsibilities make staying in college, much less graduating from college, a real challenge for Hispanic females.
Kimura-Walsh et al. (2009) studied survey responses from counselors, teachers, parents and almost 500 high school students in the Los Angeles area to gain better insight to the college preparation provided to specifically, Hispanic females. What the researchers found was that the Hispanic female students were heavily reliant on the information provided to them by their high school. Latinas’ parents were supportive and encouraged a college education, but had little specific information they could provide. Due to the overwhelming workload of the counselors and teachers, these professionals were limited in their time to advise and mentor students, much less Latinas who could have greatly benefitted from their guidance and expertise. Students were left to make decisions on their own or with familial help. Again, many of the Latinas did not have parents with intimate knowledge of college or the college admittance process and were limited in their ability to be effective.

Engagement

Research shows that the more engaged a student is, the more the student gets out of their college experience and that involvement on campus should begin early in the first year (Astin, 1999; Gordon, Ludlum, & Huey, 2006; Kuh, Shuh, Whitt, & Kinzie, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Engagement includes involvement in activities such as student organizations, building relationships with faculty and students, intramural sports and learning communities. To the extent that attrition is a concern, student engagement into college life should be an area the institution examines closely. Astin (1999) stated that universities would have higher retention rates and robust alumni when students are highly involved. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), as cited by Reason, Terenzini, and Domingo (2007), found that “the impact of college is largely determined by individual effort and involvement in the academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings on a campus” (p. 602). Unfortunately, according to Horwedel (2007),
Hispanic students are hesitant to join organizations and get involved on campus. Students inevitably compare their expectations of their social interactions with their experiences to determine if they are satisfied. If these experiences did not meet their expectations meaning fell substantially below their expectations, then the student may decide to leave the institution (Fischer, 2007).

Astin (1977) closely studied student involvement about 40 years ago and developed his involvement theory describing the importance of engagement. A student engaging or getting involved with their institution can come in many forms. Involvement can be joining an organization, participating in study groups, playing intramural sports and/or developing relationships with peers and faculty. Each of these types of involvement increases the probability that these students will decide to stay in college. As cited in Reason et al. (2007), Astin (1993) stated “the students peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years” (p. 398). Numerous studies have illustrated that contact between the student and faculty and the student and peers and the development of relationships between these leads to engagement in the institution, resulting in higher retention rates, especially among Hispanic students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Strage, 1999). Researchers who have demonstrated the importance of engagement are Otero et al. (2007) and Reason et al. (2007).

Otero et al. (2007) surveyed 134 students who failed at least one portion of their placement exams at a predominantly Hispanic university in the Southwest, as part of a study aimed at better understanding the students’ decision process to stay or drop out of the university. They found that social integration played a primary role in the stay/leave decision – a finding consistent with Astin’s involvement theory. In their study, other factors, principally (1) the
intention of the students to graduate from their current institution and (2) academic integration, were found to be influential but less so than social integration. Neither the students’ academic success nor the extent of their interactions with faculty were influential in the students’ stay/leave decisions. What was most important to these students was much more socially driven. They were much more concerned about making friends and that their social expectations were being met.

Reason et al. (2007) conducted a research study involving 6,700 students, 5,000 faculty and 30 institutions and found results similar to those of Otera et al. (2007). Reason et al. focused on the identification of “the individual, organizational, environmental, programmatic and policy factors that individually and collectively shape first-year students’ success – in particular, the development of their social and personal competence” (p. 273). Reason et al. concluded from their study that students were more satisfied with their institution when they were satisfied with their social interactions, another research result consistent with Astin’s Involvement Theory. Experiences with diverse populations, frequent encounters with their peers, faculty and staff support, and finding mentors were other factoring positively influencing student retention.

In summary, engagement is a critical element in the students’ decision process concerning staying with or leaving an institution of higher learning. Research cited has shown that engagement demonstrates the level of commitment one has to the institution. Social interaction appears to be more important in the decision to stay at an institution than academic interaction. College and universities who provide a supportive atmosphere, support student engagement in college life, provide opportunities for social engagement will in the end have a satisfied student body and thus promote higher student retention.
Theoretical Framework - Early Attrition and Integration

One of the most cited and influential researcher on student attrition/retention issues in higher education is Vincent Tinto (Longden, 2006; Winkle-Wagner, 2009). Tinto’s theory of student departure (1993) served as the primary theoretical framework for this study. Tinto found that academic and social integration are the keys to student retention in higher education and with them satisfactorily in place, students are more likely to graduate. Factors that play a role in the sustainability of the student include pre- and post-enrollment characteristics of the student. The pre-enrollment characteristics included in Tinto’s study were family income, academic achievement in high school, parent education, sex and age of the student. The student’s high school and familial experiences help form the expectations he/she has regarding their own college experience. The post-enrollment characteristics included in Tinto’s study were social integration, academic integration, grades, commitment to the institution and commitment to graduate. The extent to which the student’s expectations “fit” with his/her actual experiences is the determining factor in the student’s decision to stay at the university or leave. The more integrated the student is in the university the more committed he/she is to the university, and the more positive the retention rates.

This study explored first-year Hispanic female students’ academic and social pre-enrollment expectations along with their post-enrollment academic and social experiences to determine if there is a gap or congruence between the two. Commitment to the institution, involvement on campus, relationships with faculty and peers and academic progress were examined in the study, following Tinto’s model. Astin’s theory is valuable and similar to Tinto’s, but Tinto’s theory includes a more comprehensive list of variables and is more quantifiable than Astin’s (Von Destinon, 2.1988). Tinto’s theory is well-accepted and this study
examines several of the precollege characteristics he has studied as potential predictors of student attrition.

Though Tinto’s theory is applied in numerous studies as stated above, he is not without critics. According to Swail et al. (2003), applying Tinto’s theory to minority students is “limiting” in that it does not take into consideration the complexity of culture and the role culture plays in the everyday decisions of minority students. McCubbin (2003) stated that Tinto’s theory is intended to apply to only traditional aged students, limiting its generalizability. Even with these potential shortcomings, Tinto’s theory was an appropriate and applicable framework for this study. The population utilized in this research is first year students where the majority were traditionally aged students. The student culture and values are addressed in the conclusion of this study.

Conclusion

The goals for education in Texas have been set out in the Closing the Gaps 2015 document prepared by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The basic premise of the document is that a population that has more educational experience and attains a higher level of educational training will be better equipped to succeed in all aspects of their lives financially, socially, and politically. Building and maintaining a highly educated populace will produce a stronger workforce and increase the advancement opportunities available to them. “The implications of continuing low attainment among a sizeable and growing segment of our population for the long term well-being of American society are staggering” (Bohon et al., 2006).

The literature states that achieving societal goals involving higher participation of Hispanic students requires substantial effort and “bold” initiatives on the part of educational
institutions across the state. The research indicates that the Hispanic population is a particularly critical component of any efforts directed to improved educational experience in Texas for several reasons:

1. Hispanics are a substantial proportion of the population in Texas and that is expected to increase;
2. There is a relatively low level of Hispanic participation in higher education;
3. Hispanic college students show high attrition rates and, correspondingly, low graduation rates.

Much research on retention/attrition exists for White and Black students, but little research has been done on the issue regarding Hispanic students (Admon, 2004; Bohon et al., 2006; Frost, 2007), and this is especially the case for Hispanic females (Cerna et al., 2009; Sy & Romero, 2008). Therefore, a study focusing on educational issues concerning Latinas is appropriate for a number of reasons:

1. Latinas are now the largest minority group of females in the U. S. (Murdoch, 2009)
2. Latinas are the least likely of any group of females in the U. S. to complete a bachelor’s degree (Murdoch, 2009)
3. Latinas tend to interrupt or leave their education earlier than other women (Corbett, Hill & Rose, 2008)
4. Latinas confront a unique combination of issues (Schwartz, 2001)
   - Welfare of the family (and community) tend to supersede individual aspirations
   - Latina adolescents often assume adult roles at home
   - Short term economic needs of the family may derail the parents’ desires of support for long term educational goals
○ Gender role socialization
○ Lack of financial support
○ Internalization of society’s negative messages toward minorities

To attain higher levels of education among Hispanics in Texas both college enrollment and graduation rates must be increased. This is particularly true for Hispanic females, since this group makes up the majority of the college-going Hispanic population. Research has been undertaken regarding college access, college choice and even first-year expectations for Hispanic students; however, no studies have focused on the gap between first-year expectations and experiences of Hispanic females. Understanding the expectations and experiences of Hispanic females during their first semester in college would provide an improved basis for programs directed to improved attrition and graduation rates for this important group (THECB, 2009). Retaining students from the first to second year of college is a major concern, since most attrition occurs during this time period (ACT, 2002; Pancer et al., 2000; Seidman 2005; Tinto, 1993; Yazedijon 2006), especially for Hispanics (Otero et al., 2007; Rivas & Rivera, 2007; Tinto, 1993).
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This chapter describes the selected method of inquiry, the student population of this study, and the data collection and analysis procedures utilized to address the research questions. The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify variables that have the potential to increase the risk of first year early attrition of Hispanic female students. This study utilized a descriptive research design, a fundamental method widely used in educational research (Groleau, 2004). Correlations between and/or among the variables of interest were used to determine how well pre-selected, pre-college characteristics influenced persistence decisions for Hispanic students. This type of analysis was used to indicate any relationship between like responses on both surveys, the FES Part I and the FES Part II. If a discrepancy was found between the responses, then that item was expected to serve as a potential predictor of attrition.

Population Demographics of Texas Woman’s University

TWU is a public institution, “the nation’s largest university primarily for women” (TWU website, 2009). The average age of the undergraduate population is 26 with the majority of students being commuters. According to the TWU Fact Book (2008), the undergraduate population of TWU in 2008 was 7,420, with 6,898 (93%) being female and 1,333 (18%) being Hispanic. There has been a 5% increase in the Hispanic population at TWU over the past 5 years, with Hispanic students totaling 758 (13% of the total student population) in 2004 and 1,333 (18%) in 2008 (TWU Fact Book, 2008). This trend of an increase in the proportion of Hispanic students is expected to continue.

At TWU in the fall of 2008, the full-time, first-time-in-college population consisted of
778 students. Of that 778 students, 746 (96%) were female students and 188 (24%) were Hispanic. The entire freshman class who attended freshman orientation in the summer of 2008 served as the sample population. These students voluntarily participated in both portions of the survey instrument. From this population, the sub-group of first-time-in-college Hispanic female students were selected as the population for analysis in this study.

Instrument

This study utilized data from two, two-part Likert-type instruments, the Freshman Experience Survey (FES) Parts I and II. This survey was created by Nicholas (1990) for a study conducted in 1989 to examine college choice and students’ expectations of and experiences in their first year of college. The reliability and validity of these instruments were established in prior research (Nicholas, 1990) and used in at least two other studies (Blum, 1993; Smith, 1995).

Part I of the FES, distributed during the summer of 2008, prior to the students’ freshman year, included items regarding college choice and expectations that the students had about their first year in college. Part II of the FES was distributed during the 10th week of the 2008 fall semester and used to determine if the students’ expectations of their first year were being met or if there was a gap between their earlier expectations and the realities of their early college experience. The study then assessed (1) the disparities, where present, between their pre-college expectations and their actual first semester experiences and (2) the extent to which these disparities correlated with early attrition. The surveys were untimed and typically required approximately 15 minutes for the students to complete. See Appendices A and B for examples of the FES Part I and II.

By utilizing a pre and post survey (surveys both before and after the students’ initial college experience), this study attempted to determine if certain factors related to pre-college
expectations influenced early freshman year attrition. Nicholas (1990), Widdows and Hilton (1990), Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994), Keup (2002), and Najera (2007) used this approach to explore attrition issues. This survey approach was designed to obtain information from a specific group at a given time and yield information of interest on the group’s responses and not that of the individuals participating in the survey. The information of interest was that of the group and not the individual level of data.

Data Collection

Approval for this study was obtained from both the University of North Texas’ and Texas Woman’s University’s Institutional Review Boards. Data for this study were provided by Texas Woman’s University’s Information Technology Services in the form of Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. The data consisted of survey responses from the FES Part I and II. Institutional records were used to obtain the enrollment status of each participant for the spring semester. Part I of the FES was administered online during TWU’s freshman orientation program the summer prior to these students’ first semester in fall 2008. The students completed the survey prior to registering for fall classes, which allowed all students attending orientation to participate in the survey. Since this portion of the survey was administered prior to the fall semester, some of the participants who completed surveys did not attend TWU in the fall semester.

Part II of the FES was administered to the students who participated in Part I of the FES in three ways: (1) electronically to all who participated in Part I of the FES, (2) delivered by the university’s housing staff to those who lived on-campus in a hard copy version, and (3) mailed to those who lived off-campus. Part II of the survey was distributed 10 weeks into the semester based on indications from previous research that this time period is a critical one for decision making regarding continuing college (Astin, 1999; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Immerwahr,
Variables of Interest

The independent variables for this quantitative study consisted of responses to the Freshman Experience Survey (FES) Parts I and II in the areas of involvement on campus, academic progress and relationships with faculty and students. Prior research, according to Yazedijan and Toews (2006), showed “that non-cognitive variables are better predictors of college adjustment than cognitive variables, particularly for ethnic minorities” (p. 11). The dependent variable of attrition was measured by female Hispanic freshman students’ enrollment status from the fall semester of 2008 to the 2009 spring semester at TWU.

Data Analysis

Data from the Part I of the FES was collected using a custom written, Web-based application. The data were securely collected and stored in an Oracle database. Third normal form was used to streamline the database architecture for efficient management and rapid and reliable analysis. Excel and SPSS were used to perform the descriptive analysis and correlation analysis. These analyses were used in this research to determine the extent to which certain factors (involvement on campus, relationships with faculty and students and academic progress) influenced attrition for first-time-in-college Hispanic female students at TWU. This type of analysis was used in this study to identify the most useful independent variables in influencing persistence.

Correlation, according to Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (2003) is a “widely used analytical procedures in the behavioral sciences” (p. 115) and allows a quantitative examination of the relationship between variables. Understanding the extent to which variables relate to one another
is critical to gaining a better understanding of student behaviors and retention issues (Reason, 2003). Reason (2003) indicated that minorities’ college experiences are unique and should be studied separately from the college experiences of White students. This study analyzed the responses of Hispanic students and compared those responses to the responses of both Black and White students.

Bivariate correlations were utilized to determine if there was a relationship between the responses among and between ethnicities. Pearson correlation ($r$) was used to measure the strength of the relationship. Linear regression was utilized when analyzing the independent variables and the relationship they had with the dependent variable. Descriptive statistics and linear regression were both utilized to create a profile of the population and allowed for inferences or predictions to be made about the population (Hinkle et al., 2003). If a strong relationship was determined to exist then it was possible to predict others’ responses in that category. The alpha level utilized for this research was .05. The degrees of freedom were the sum of the responses in both groups minus 2.
CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The attrition of college students is a continuing issue for higher education, especially among Hispanic females. The purpose of this research was to explore the attrition of early first year Hispanic female students by examining survey responses of this population concerning their expectations of and experiences during their first semester of college. Identifying factors that produce increased risk of early first year attrition for Latinas provides the opportunity for colleges and universities to reduce barriers and positively assist in the persistence decision this unique population faces. This chapter provides analyses of the data collected and the findings of this research.

For this study, data were collected from institutional records of Texas Woman’s University (TWU) and from 2 two-part Likert-type instruments, i.e., the Freshman Experience Survey (FES) Parts I and II. Part I of the FES was distributed prior to the students’ freshman year during the summer of 2009 and included topics regarding expectations that the students had of their first year in college. Part II of the FES, distributed during the 10th week of the 2008 fall semester, collected information on the students’ actual experiences and was used to determine if the students’ expectations of their first year were being met or if there were gaps between their earlier expectations and realities of their early college experience. Out of 778 possible first year respondents, 769 (98.8%) participated in the FES Part I. Of those who participated in FES I, 252 (32.8%) participated in the FES Part II.

Survey responses were recorded in an Oracle database and custom written scripts were used to extract data in a form suitable for use in Excel and SPSS utilization. Institutional data were selected from the university’s primary student database to determine enrollment status for
the spring 2009 semester. The manufacturer of the university’s student system was Datatel, and the database used was Oracle.

As stated in Chapter 3, nine questions related to pre-college expectations and early college experience were utilized to obtain a more quantitative understanding of the role disparities in these factors play a part in early attrition. Data from Part I of the FES were used to address three questions pertaining to expectations of academic progress, involvement on campus and relationships with others. FES Part II data were used to address three related questions regarding early experiences of academic progress, involvement on campus, and relationships with others. Correlations between FES Part I and FES Part II addressed three questions that examined the congruence between the expectations and actual experiences of academic progress, involvement on campus and relationships with others.

Data Analysis

A summary of the survey responses to each item relevant to this study is provided below. For easier understanding, the response data were divided into three sections, i.e., expectations (FES Part I), early experiences (FES Part II), and correlations relating to attrition. The number of responses reported in the tables varied due to some items having multiple responses for each participant and/or omitted data occurring on individual surveys.

Expectations - Freshman Experience Survey (FES) Part I

As noted previously, Part I of the FES was distributed in the summer of 2008 at new student orientation prior to the students’ first semester at the institute identified by the study. As a part of the orientation program, all students were asked to complete the survey prior to registering for fall classes. A high level of participation was achieved due to the timing of the survey, obtaining strong participation by Hispanic, Black, and White students as shown in Table
1. Another important factor is that since the survey was completed at the new students’ orientation, their expectation levels might have been elevated.

Table 1

_FES I Participation by Ethnicity_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>% Participated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>93.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>93.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>97.89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Expectations of Involvement on Campus_

Six items on the FES Part I were selected to measure the expectations of students regarding their involvement in campus activities their first semester. These items were joining academic interest/honor societies, athletic organizations, Campus Activities Board, Greek organizations, student government, and volunteer organizations. Students rated each item on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = _strongly disagree_ to 5 = _strongly agree_). Tables were divided into two categories of students: (1) persisters and (2) early drop outs. Persisters were students who had enrolled in spring 2009. The term “early drop outs” referred to students not enrolled in the spring of 2009 semester at the institution. Early drop outs might have transferred to another institution of higher education, opted out of college temporarily for the spring semester, or completely dropped out college permanently.

When looking at expectations of involvement by ethnicity for females (see Table 2), Black female students who persisted had higher expectations of involvement than Hispanic or White females. Of the students who dropped out early, Black females, again, had the highest
expectations of involvement. White females had the lowest level of expectations for involvement, whether they persisted or not. Hispanic female persisters and early drop outs had essentially the same level of expectation of involvement.

Table 2

*Expectations of Involvement (FES I): Female Ethnicities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>N</em></td>
<td><em>M</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1,212</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n= number of unique student responses.*

When considering the involvement expectations of all female responders, there was very little difference between persisters and early drop outs (see Table 3). Getting involved in volunteer organizations was the activity students most strongly agreed that they would be participating in while participating in an athletic organization and student government were the least positive for persisters and early drop outs respectively. For all responses in Table 3, the standard deviations were at least 1.00, meaning there was some variation among the responses.
### Table 3

**Expectations of Involvement (FES I): Female Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Organizations</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Interest Club/Honor Society</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Activities Board</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Organization</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Government</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics Organization</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Average</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $n =$ number of unique student responses.

As with the female results, Hispanic females recorded the highest expectation of involvement in volunteer organizations (see Table 4). Hispanic females also showed the highest average regarding the expectation of involvement in volunteer organizations, while they had the lowest expectation for student government. Hispanic persisters and early drop outs provided virtually the same average responses regarding expectations of involvement and varied very little with the all female results.
Table 4

*Expectations of Involvement (FES I): Hispanic Female Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Organizations</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Activities Board</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Interest Club/ Honor Society</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Organization</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics Organization</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Government</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of student participants.*

*Expectations of Relationships*

Four items on the FES Part I were selected to measure students’ relationship expectations with faculty and peers. The items included student expectations (a) of faculty to care about their students, (b) of the faculty to be superior teachers, (c) to have frequent contact with faculty outside of class, and (d) to develop close friendships with other students. The relationship expectations of persisters and early drop outs exhibited little difference among the three female ethnicities (see Table 5).
Table 5

*Expectations of Relationships (FES I): Female Ethnicities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = number of unique student responses.

These same four items related to expectations of relationships were examined by focusing on the responses of only females. Students’ expectations of relationships had a high aggregate average, whether they persisted or not (see Table 6). Students who persisted had high expectations of their faculty to care about students (4.60) and about developing close friendships with other students (4.49). The same was true for students who did not return the second semester. The early drop outs had high expectations of their faculty caring about students (4.66), higher than that of the persisters. Developing close friendships with other students (4.48) was a high expectation as well for early drop outs. Even for the item with the lowest average, expectations to have frequent contact with faculty outside of class had a high average for both groups. The standard deviations were smaller for relationships than for involvement expectations and virtually the same between the two groups, except for the item regarding contact with faculty outside of class.
Table 6

Expectations of Relationships (FES 1): Female Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I expect instructors to care about their students.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4.60 0.64</td>
<td>174 4.66 0.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to develop close friendships with other students.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4.49 0.70</td>
<td>174 4.48 0.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect most of the faculty to be superior teachers.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4.32 0.73</td>
<td>174 4.32 0.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to have frequent contact with faculty outside of class.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4.05 0.78</td>
<td>174 3.92 0.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.36 0.75</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.34 0.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $n =$ number of unique student responses.

In narrowing the focus to Hispanic females, similar responses occurred in both the persister or early drop out categories, as seen in Table 7, as with the all female responses. Faculty caring about their students had the highest average for both groups, while having frequent contact with faculty was the lowest, though still a high measure of expectation, 4.02 and 3.91, respectively. The results for Hispanic females were essentially the same as the results for all females. The standard deviations were more varied within the Hispanic population than with the all female population. An item to note is the early drop outs and their responses to the item regarding instructors caring about their students. This group had an extremely high level of expectation (4.70) for this item with a .47 standard deviation, adding to the importance of this expectation.
Table 7

*Expectations of Relationships (FES I): Hispanic Female Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect instructors to care about their students.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to develop close friendships with other students.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect most of the faculty to be superior teachers.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to have frequent contact with faculty outside of class.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *n* = number of student participants.

*Expectations of Academic Progress*

One item on the FES Part I was included to measure expectations of satisfaction of academic progress by the end of the freshman year. By ethnicity, this item produced the highest aggregate average of expectations, more than involvement or relationship expectations for both persisters and early drop outs, when the data were examined by ethnicity, all females, or female Hispanics (see Tables 8, 9, and 10). All three ethnicities had a high average, regardless of whether they persisted or not, and the standard deviations for all three groups were small indicating very little variation in responses within the groups for this item.
Table 8

*Expectations of Academic Progress (FES I): Female Ethnicities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of student participants*

Table 9

*Expectations of Academic Progress (FES I): Female Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the freshman year.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = Number of student participants.*

Table 10

*Expectations of Academic Progress (FES I): Hispanic Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the freshman year.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of student participants.*
In looking at the FES Part I as a whole, Table 11 provides a summary of female responses for this survey. The aggregate averages of the expectations of persisters and early drop outs were very similar. For persisters, being satisfied with academic progress produced the largest average response with expecting faculty to care about students as the second highest. early drop outs reported the same two items in reverse as the items with the highest level of expectation. The item with the largest disparity between the two groups (0.27) was the expectation to be in an academic interest club or academic honor society, indicating the closeness in levels of responses between predictors and early drop outs. The standard deviations are almost identical, adding more validity to the numbers being comparable.

Table 11

*Summary of Averages and SD for Persisters and Early Drop Outs for FES I -Female Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the freshman year.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect instructors to care about their students.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to develop close friendships with other students.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect most of the faculty to be superior teachers.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to have frequent contact with faculty outside of class.</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Organizations (i.e. Helping Hands)</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Interest Club/Academic Honor Society</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Activities Board</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Organization</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Government</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics Organization</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregated Averages</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of unique student responses.*
Hispanic persisters and Early Drop Outs scored their expectations of college similarly. The highest expectation for persisters was their satisfaction of academic progress, followed closely by instructors caring about their students and developing close friendships with other students. For Hispanic Early Drop Outs, the highest expectation was that instructors care about their students with academic progress and developing close friendships following. There was little variation within the top three expectations. The lowest expectation for both groups was the expectation to join student government. Students’ expectations of faculty and of academic progress were much higher than expectations of involvement in social activities (see Table 12).

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the freshman year.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect instructors to care about their students.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to develop close friendships with other students.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect most of the faculty to be superior teachers.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to have frequent contact with faculty outside of class.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Interest Club/Academic Honor Society</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Organizations (i.e. Helping Hands)</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Activities Board</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Organization</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics Organization</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Government</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregated Averages</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early Experiences – Freshman Experience Survey (FES) Part II

Part II of the FES was distributed 10 weeks into the students’ first semester at host university in order to gather information on early college experiences of the responders. The same expectation items from FES Part I were asked on FES Part II with the tense changed to reflect their experience at the 10-week point of the semester. The same 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was used to measure the responses. Of the students who participated in FES Part I, 252 (32.8%) also participated in FES Part II. Breaking it down by ethnicity participation pertinent to this study, 37% of the participants of FES Part II were Black, 34% were Hispanic, and 28% were White (see Table 13).

Table 13
Participation by Ethnicity (FES II)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>% Participated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>34.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>37.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>28.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of student participants.*

Experiences with Involvement on Campus

Regarding involvement experiences by ethnicity, the mean of the persisters’ responses was consistent within the ethnicities (see Table 14). The averages for persisters were roughly the same between persisters and early drop outs for each ethnicity; however, there was a much wider variation in the averages between ethnicities when looking at students who dropped out. White and Black early drop outs had low averages (2.29 and 2.73) in the measurement of involvement experiences, but Hispanic early drop outs had a much higher mean of 4.67. There were also
large differences between the persisters and early drop outs for each ethnicity. White and Black persisters were more satisfied than their corresponding early drop outs, but Hispanics were unique in that Hispanic Early Drop Outs had a much higher average than Hispanic persisters. Persisters by ethnicity were more consistent in their responses than were the early drop outs as seen by the standard deviations.

Table 14  

Experiences of Involvement (FES II): Female Ethnicities 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n= number of unique responses.*

When examining the responses for all females’ early experiences of involvement, differences were more apparent between persisters and early drops outs than when exploring expectations (FES Part I). The persisters’ aggregated average for involvement experiences was 3.64, while the average for early drop outs was 2.97. (See Table 15.) The lowest averages among involvement experiences for early drop outs were being involved in campus activities and having joined one or more campus organizations. The highest average among involvement experiences was for the persisters who indicated the campus social provided many opportunities for participation. The largest discrepancy in the averages (0.77) occurred between persisters and early drop outs for the item, “I am involved in campus activities through attendance or
participation.” The early drop outs also had a high standard deviation, meaning there was variation within the early drops outs’ responses.

Table 15

*Early Experiences of Involvement: (FES II): Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>N</em></td>
<td><em>M</em></td>
<td><em>SD</em></td>
<td><em>N</em></td>
<td><em>M</em></td>
<td><em>SD</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The campus social life provides many opportunities for participation for me</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am involved in campus activities through attendance or participation</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have joined one or more campus organizations or clubs</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Average</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of student participants.*

When examining the Hispanic female population, the persisters had the same aggregate average for all female responders (3.64). Early drop outs had a much higher aggregate average for Hispanic females than the all female average, but it is important to note that the small number of Hispanic early drop outs (see Table 16) was made up of only five Hispanic females and this relatively small number might have been a factor in the difference (1.03) between Hispanic female persisters and early drop outs.
Table 16

Early Experiences of Involvement (FES II): Hispanic Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The campus social life provides many opportunities for participation</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am involved in campus activities through attendance or participation</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have joined one or more campus organizations or clubs</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregated Average</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( n \) = number of student participants.

Experiences with Relationships

When examining all female responses of experiences of relationships, relationships with faculty and other students were strong for both persisters and early drop outs, except for experiences with finding faculty being superior teachers (see Table 17). This was the lowest average of all items measured for persisters and early drop outs in the entire study. As predicted, the mean for the early drop outs was lower than that of the persisters. The averages by ethnicity were similar for persisters while Hispanic early drop outs had a higher average (3.80) than White (3.34) or Black (3.06) students and a higher average than Hispanic persisters as seen in Table 18.
Table 17

*Early Experiences of Relationships (FES II): Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have developed close friendships with other students</td>
<td>223 4.26 0.89</td>
<td>25 3.84 1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors here care about their students</td>
<td>223 4.05 0.79</td>
<td>25 3.88 0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have frequent contact with faculty</td>
<td>223 3.63 0.92</td>
<td>25 3.40 0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have found most of the faculty to be superior teachers</td>
<td>223 2.51 1.03</td>
<td>25 2.28 0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Average</td>
<td>3.61 0.91</td>
<td>3.35 1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of student participants.*

Table 18

*Early Experiences of Relationships (FES II): Female Ethnicities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>236 3.67 1.13</td>
<td>20 3.80 1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>300 3.60 1.12</td>
<td>32 3.06 0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>276 3.64 1.15</td>
<td>44 3.34 1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of unique responses.*

Just as was reported for all females, Hispanic females reported the highest satisfaction with developing close friendships with other students (see Table 19). Hispanic females, along with the aggregate of all females, had the lowest level of agreement with finding faculty to be superior teachers. An interesting result lay with the early drop outs and their strong satisfaction
results, omitting the item regarding superior faculty. Early drop outs had a higher aggregate average in their responses with two items, developing close friendships with other students (4.80) and frequent contact with faculty (4.0) and a low standard deviation on those two items (.45 and .71). Again, the low number of Hispanic in the early drop out category may be the reason for the low standard deviation and the uniqueness of this group’s early drop out averages.

Table 19

*Early Experiences of Relationships (FES II): Hispanic Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N  M  SD</td>
<td>N  M  SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have developed close friendships with other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td>59 4.27 0.85</td>
<td>5 4.80 0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors here care about their students</td>
<td>59 4.22 0.79</td>
<td>5 4.20 0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have frequent contact with faculty</td>
<td>59 3.51 0.99</td>
<td>5 4.00 0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have found most of the faculty to be superior teachers</td>
<td>59 2.68 1.07</td>
<td>5 2.20 1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Average</td>
<td>3.67 1.13</td>
<td>3.80 1.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of student participants.*

*Experiences with Academic Progress*

The all female responses to early experiences of academic progress showed significant differences between persisters and early drop outs (see Table 20). As predicted, the persisters in the category of academic progress scored a high average (4.22), while the early drop outs had a much lower average (3.25). Similar averages were found between ethnicities, and a lower average was recorded for early drop outs than for persisters (see Table 21). All three ethnicities had a difference of about 1.0 between the persisters and early drop outs. The persisters had a consistently lower standard deviation in their responses than the early drop outs. Hispanics had
the lowest average for persisters and for early drop outs. Interestingly as indicated in earlier charts, Hispanic females tended to have higher averages than the all female responses or by ethnicity. This item, satisfaction with academic progress, stood out for the Hispanic female population.

Table 20

*Early Experiences of Academic Progress (FES II): Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the freshman year</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of student participants.*

Table 21

*Early Experience of Academic Progress (FES II): Female Ethnicities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of student participants.*

Looking at the summary of all female responses to FES II, persisters scored a higher average than did the early drop outs on every item (see Table 22). The highest average for persisters was for the item developing close friendships with other students, while the highest satisfaction level for early drop outs was the item regarding instructors caring about students.
Both groups scored finding the faculty to be superior teachers the least positive. The items with the largest discrepancy (0.87) between persisters and early drop outs were satisfaction with academic progress and joined one or more campus organizations.

Table 22

*Summary of Early Experiences (FES II): Female Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have developed close friendships with other students</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the freshman year</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors here care about their students</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The campus social life provides many opportunities for participation for me</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am involved in campus activities through attendance or participation</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have frequent contact with faculty</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have joined one or more campus organizations or clubs</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have found most of the faculty to be superior teachers</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Average</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of student participants.*

When narrowing the focus to Hispanic females and looking at a summary of only their responses, the Hispanic Early Drop Outs aggregated average of their experiences was higher than that of the persisters (see Table 23). Three items were scored lower by early drops outs than by persisters; these were satisfaction with academic progress, instructors caring about their students, and faculty being superior teachers. Omitting the item of finding faculty to be superior, the
satisfaction levels of the remaining items were quite high, ranging from 3.51 to 4.80 for both persisters and early drop outs. Developing close friendships was the item producing the most positive response for both groups, while faculty being superior teachers was the least positive by a substantial margin. Finding faculty to be superior teachers resulted in a low average, but it was low with both persisters and early drop outs. Satisfaction with academic progress did not rate as low as the superior faculty item with early drop outs; however, there was quite a difference (0.92) in this item between persisters and early drop outs that might have played more of a roll in who persisted or did not persist. The discrepancy between persisters and early drop outs was less for Hispanic females (0.33) than for the all females (0.48) responses.

Table 23

*Summary of Early Experiences (FES II): Hispanic Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have developed close friendships with other students</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors here care about their students</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freshmen year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The campus social life provides many opportunities for participation</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am involved in campus activities through attendance or participation</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have joined one or more campus organizations or clubs</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have frequent contact with faculty</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have found most of the faculty to be superior teachers</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Average</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = number of student participants.*
FES Part I TO FES Part II Comparison

The overall expectations from both persisters and early drop outs were similar (see Table 24), but the actual experiences for early drop outs scored lower consistently than for persisters. The expectations of persisters were high except for one item regarding joining a campus organization. This item was scored much lower (3.35) than any of the other items surveyed. As predicted, for actual experiences, the item measuring satisfaction with academic progress had the largest differences (0.99) in the means between persisters and early drop outs. There was not much difference (.16) between persisters and the early drop outs on FES I Aggregate Average, but there a difference (.50) between the two groups on FES II. There are more variations within the responses in the actual experiences (FES II) than with the expectations (FES I) as was demonstrated in the standard deviations. The largest difference in the average responses between FES I and FES II, for both persisters (1.83) and early drop outs (1.96), was the item regarding faculty as superior teachers.

The previous results tables in this study have provided information about the students’ responses in averages. To get more specific information on how students recorded their expectations of college and their actual early experiences, it is important to view the actual responses. Previous researchers indicated that first year students, in particular Hispanic females, have unrealistic expectations (Lalla, 2007; Moore, 2007; Zalaquett, 2006). Table 26 and Figures 2 and 3 illustrate how the students in this study recorded their precollege expectations and early college experiences.

The overall expectations (FES Part I) of female Hispanics from both persisters and early drop outs were almost the same (see Table 25). The actual experiences of both groups were also similar, but the early drop outs, in general, responded more positively than the persisters.
Table 24

*Means of FES I and FES II for Persisters and Early Drop Outs - Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FESI</td>
<td>FESII</td>
<td></td>
<td>FESI</td>
<td>FESII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with academic progress at the end of the freshman year.</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors care about their students</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close friendships with other students</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Campus Social life</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the faculty are superior teachers.</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in campus activities.</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent contact with faculty</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined one or more campus organizations or clubs</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Average</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n= number of student participants.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Persisters</th>
<th>Early Drop Outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FESI</td>
<td>FESII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close friendships with other students.</td>
<td>N 4.71 SD 0.49 AVG 4.27 SD 0.85</td>
<td>N 4.80 SD 0.45 AVG 4.80 SD 0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with academic progress at the end of the freshman year.</td>
<td>N 4.71 SD 0.49 AVG 4.12 SD 0.74</td>
<td>N 4.40 SD 0.55 AVG 3.20 SD 1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors care about their students.</td>
<td>N 4.64 SD 0.52 AVG 4.22 SD 0.79</td>
<td>N 4.60 SD 0.55 AVG 4.20 SD 0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Campus Social life</td>
<td>N 4.46 SD 0.54 AVG 3.85 SD 0.94</td>
<td>N 4.60 SD 0.55 AVG 4.80 SD 0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the faculty are superior teachers.</td>
<td>N 4.29 SD 0.74 AVG 2.68 SD 1.07</td>
<td>N 4.20 SD 0.84 AVG 2.20 SD 1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in campus activities.</td>
<td>N 4.20 SD 0.80 AVG 3.53 SD 1.07</td>
<td>N 4.20 SD 0.84 AVG 4.40 SD 0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent contact with faculty</td>
<td>N 4.05 SD 0.83 AVG 3.51 SD 0.99</td>
<td>N 3.80 SD 0.84 AVG 4.00 SD 0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined one or more campus organizations or clubs</td>
<td>N 3.41 SD 0.62 AVG 3.51 SD 1.39</td>
<td>N 3.20 SD 0.84 AVG 4.80 SD 0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate average</td>
<td>4.31 0.76 3.72 1.11</td>
<td>4.23 0.80 4.05 1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N refers to number of student participants.
The biggest difference between expectation and experience for both Hispanic female persisters and early drop outs was the item about finding faculty to be superior teachers, averaging 1.61 and 2.00, respectively. For early drop outs, satisfaction with their experiences was high with the exception of having superior faculty (2.20) and academic progress (3.20).

On FES Part I the students overwhelmingly responded to expectations as strongly agree, agree, or neutral. Well over half (65%) responded that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the various expectation items (see Table 26). Regarding the students’ actual experiences (FES Part II), the results were similar. Eighty-three percent responded as neutral, agree, or strongly agree with the satisfaction level of the items. Sixty-three percent agreed or strongly agreed for their satisfaction level. Though more respondents agreed than strongly agreed, the largest change (11.98%) between FES Part I (expectations) and FES Part II (experience) was the category of strongly agree. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of these responses and how they cluster toward providing positive feedback with agree and strongly agree responses.

Table 26

FES I and II Responses for All Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>FES I – Expectations</th>
<th>FES II – Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>4.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Disagree</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>7.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Neutral</td>
<td>2207</td>
<td>23.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Agree</td>
<td>2720</td>
<td>28.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3482</td>
<td>36.49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In examining how the Hispanic females responded, they overwhelmingly responded to expectations as neutral, agree, or strongly agree on the FES Part I. Over half (65%) responded that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the expectation (see Table 27), the very same percentage as the all female responses (see Table 26). On the FES Part II, the Hispanic female students’ actual experiences were similar to those of the all female responders. Eighty-six percent responded as neutral, agree, or strongly agree with the satisfaction levels for the items. Sixty-six percent agreed or strongly agreed with their satisfaction level. The results the Hispanic female responders versus the all female responders indicated that Hispanic females responded slightly more positively than the all female group.
Table 27

FES I and II Responses – All Hispanic Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>FES I</th>
<th></th>
<th>FES II</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.93%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Disagree</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Neutral</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>24.83%</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>20.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Agree</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>30.16%</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>38.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – Strongly Agree</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>34.83%</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>27.73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Hispanic female responses to FES Part I and FES Part II.
Correlation to Persistence

In addition to examining precollege expectations and early college experiences, persisters’ and early drop outs’ responses were compared for differences in congruence, that is, for differences between college expectations and their actual college experience. Most students had high expectations and those expectations were met through their early college experiences. There were a few items that demonstrated some differences between what students expected and satisfaction with their actual experience. Those items included finding faculty to be superior teachers, satisfaction with academic progress, and the campus social life. To test these items further, the following tables give the Pearson $r$ results for the correlations between item responses and student persistence. Each item is further examined by ethnicity. A single asterisk (*) indicates a significant correlation exists at ($p < .05$) and a double asterisk (**) indicates a significant correlation exists at ($p < .01$) between the students’ response and their persistence.

Table 28 provides the FES Part I (expectations) correlations by item on the survey and by ethnicity. For the Hispanic female population, no FES Part I item was found to be statistically significant by the Pearson $r$ method at the $p$ less than .05 or .01 levels. There were two items of significance for White females and one for Black females, but there were no items of significance in common for any two ethnicities.
Table 28

*FES Part I Expectations Correlations by Item and Ethnicity Using Pearson r*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>All Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I expect to join the Campus Activities Board.</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I expect to join student government</td>
<td>-0.029</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I expect to join volunteer organizations</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td>0.090*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I expect to join Greek organizations</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>-0.149*</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td>-0.084*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I expect to join academic interest/honors organizations</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.139*</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>0.108**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I expect to join athletic organizations</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>-0.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I expect to attend or participate in campus activities.</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I expect the campus social life to provide many opportunities for participation for me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I expect to have frequent contact with faculty outside of class.</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I expect most of the faculty to be superior teachers.</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>0.174*</td>
<td>0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I expect instructors to care about their students.</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I expect to develop close friendships with other students.</td>
<td>-0.056</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
<td>-0.079</td>
<td>-0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the freshman year.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the freshman year.</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
<td>-0.033</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When examining FES Part II (early college experiences) correlations, several items exhibited significance for the Hispanic female population. Having joined one or more campus organizations, campus social life provides many opportunities, and satisfaction with academic progress were all statistically significant at the .05 level. Only two items were statistically significant for White females while five items were significant for the Black female population. Furthermore, these items for the Black female population were significant at the .01 level. For Hispanic females being satisfied with academic progress had the highest level of significance.
The item regarding the campus social life was significant for Hispanic females as it was for Black and All Females, but Hispanics were again unique in that their correlation was negative while the other groups’ correlations were positive.

Table 29

*FES II – Experiences Correlations by Item and Ethnicity – Pearson r results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>All Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I have joined one or more campus organizations or clubs.</td>
<td>.252*</td>
<td>.293**</td>
<td>.201</td>
<td>.150*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I am involved in campus activities through attendance or participation.</td>
<td>-.210</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.398**</td>
<td>.197**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The campus social life provides many opportunities for participation for me.</td>
<td>-.272*</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.413**</td>
<td>.150*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I have frequent contact with faculty.</td>
<td>-.136</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.312**</td>
<td>.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I have found most faculty to be superior teachers.</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Instructors here care about their students.</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I have developed close friendships with other students.</td>
<td>-.172</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>.288**</td>
<td>.134*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the freshman year.</td>
<td>.301*</td>
<td>.394**</td>
<td>.371**</td>
<td>.308**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last three research questions asked about a positive correlation between expectations of and satisfaction with actual experiences related to three topics: academic progress, involvement on campus, and relationships with others. No statistical significance was found for involvement on campus or relationships with others, and these items were excluded from subsequent analysis. A statistically significant correlation ($p < .001$) was found for academic progress when looking at all females. When breaking down this item by ethnicity, no statistical significance was found (see Table 30).
Summary

The intent of this research was to explore the extent to which precollege expectations, early college experiences and any disparities in these could help predict a tendency for increased attrition in Hispanic females. Through the data provided in the FES Part I and FES Part II, it was firmly confirmed that Hispanic students do have high expectations of college. Being satisfied with academic progress, instructors caring about their students and developing close friendships with other students were the top three precollege expectations for Hispanic females. Few differences were observed between the expectations of college for Hispanic female persisters and early drop outs. Differences between persisters and early drop outs were much more prominent for the early college experiences of Hispanic females. Early drop outs had a much higher aggregate average than did the persisters indicating that the items with high satisfaction results are not items to consider when looking at ways to enhance their retention rate. Three experience items for the early drop outs had an average response of 4.8, six of the eight items were rated over 4.0 and the standard deviations for these six items are small.

The responses of Hispanic females on three items on FES Part I and FES Part II correlate with the tendency of attrition in college attendance for this group. These items were: (1) satisfaction with academic progress at the end of the freshman year, (2) campus social life

Table 30

*FES I and FES II p-values for Correlations by Academic Progress*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Females</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Progress</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. ** p < .001.*
provides many opportunities for participation, and (3) joining one or more campus organizations. Only one item, academic progress, was found to be statistically significant when comparing the differences between responses of FES Part I and FES Part II and the attrition rate, but this was only the case when examining the responses for all participating females.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, implications, recommendations and suggestions for future research are discussed. As stated in Chapter 1, it is clear that the more educational experience and the higher level of educational training attained by a population, the better equipped that population will be to succeed in all aspects of their lives - academically, financially, socially and politically (Admon, 2004). Since both the number of Hispanic high school students in Texas and the proportion of the total Texas population that is Hispanic is projected to increase significantly in the coming years, the problem of low participation of Hispanics in both secondary and higher education will likely become more acute. Obtaining a higher level of participation of Hispanic students in college will require substantial effort and strong initiatives on the part of educational institutions across the state of Texas. Since the Hispanic population makes up such a large percentage of the state’s population, it is essential that this group receive particular attention in efforts to improve education in Texas. More specifically, to attain higher levels of education among Hispanics in Texas, both college enrollment and graduation rates must be increased.

Implications

Analysis of the data provided on the Freshmen Experience Survey (FES) parts I and II confirmed that Hispanic students do have high expectations of college. Academic progress, instructors caring about their students, and development of close friendships with other students were the highest ranking pre-college expectations for Hispanic females. With respect to pre-college expectations, there was very little difference between ethnicities in the levels of expectations these groups had for academic progress, establishing relationships, and getting involved on campus. Several studies in the literature indicated that Hispanics tend to have more
unrealistic expectations than any other ethnicity, but the data did not support that case for this study. The high expectations of all ethnicities may be due to the fact that the students completed their surveys during their freshman orientation. The freshman orientation experience may have heightened the level the participants’ responses.

The data in this study indicated that small differences between ethnicities exist in their assessments of early college experiences. Hispanic females tended to have slightly higher averages than the responses by all females when examining early college experiences responses by ethnicity. The Hispanic female population reported high expectations for their first year experiences and slightly lower levels of responses in the assessment of their actual experience, though that lower score was still strong. This may mean that the items studied in this research were not items that led to their particular attrition decisions. Since the Hispanic female Early Drops Outs were only five students, broad generalizations cannot be easily drawn based on this number of respondents.

In looking at the correlations of FES I (expectations) for each item on the survey by ethnicity and attrition rate, no FES I item was found to be statistically significant for Hispanic females. There were three items of significance for White and Black females, demonstrating Hispanic females to be a unique population. The highest expectation for Hispanic female Persisters was their level of academic progress, followed closely by instructors caring about their students and developing close friendships with other students. For Hispanic Early Drop Outs, the highest expectation was that instructors care about their students with academic progress and developing close friendships following second. Though these items ranked high in expectations, none of these items exhibited any significant correlation with persistence.

In looking at the correlations of FES II (early college experiences) for each item on the
survey by ethnicity and attrition rate, Hispanic females being satisfied with academic progress had the highest level of significance and a positive correlation. The item regarding the campus social life was significant for Hispanic females, as it was for Black and all females combined, but Hispanics were again unique in that their correlation was negative while the other groups’ correlations were positive. This has an interesting implication in that previous studies have indicated that involvement on campus leads to retention. This does not appear to be the case for Hispanic females, and determining appropriate involvement levels may be necessary for this population.

The responses of Hispanic females on three items of the FES I and FES II correlate with the probability of attrition in college attendance for this group. These items were: (1) satisfaction with academic progress at the end of the freshman year, (2) campus social life provides many opportunities for participation, and (3) joining one or more campus organizations. Only one item, academic progress, was found to be statistically significant when comparing the differences between responses of FES I and FES II and the attrition rate, but this was only the case when examining the responses for all females. Obviously, academic progress was of great concern to Hispanic females and the leading variable in this study that impacted students’ decisions to stay or leave the institution. Campus life is important to Hispanic females, but determining the right level of involvement is critical. It is possible that the types of campus activities available to Hispanic students are not ones that are helpful or reinforcing for this population’s success. Joining one or more campus organizations had a positive impact on attrition, while campus social life provided many opportunities for participation, it had a negative impact on attrition. Getting involved on campus is critical, but if not balanced, involvement could take away from the purpose of college and begin to affect academic performance in a negative way.
Recommendations

The Hispanic population, underrepresented in higher education, is increasing at a rapid rate and funding for education in the state is decreasing. Texas is already ranked well below the national average in the proportion of the population enrolled in higher education, so addressing this impending educational crisis must become a priority for the state. The implications for Texas include not only the education of its population, but for the general wellbeing of society are extremely far reaching (Bohen, et al., 2006). Improving the Hispanic population’s success rate in college enrollment and graduation benefits not only this particular portion of society but also creates a better educated population who can make strong, positive contributions to the economy and to the cultural fabric of the society. Not only would lowering Hispanic female student attrition rates benefit this population, but it would also all benefit higher education by allowing it to conserve resources, by having a more successful graduation rate and leading to better funding.

The first step toward reducing attrition among Hispanic female students during their first year in college is identifying the factors contributing to attrition for this group. Because college attrition usually happens during the first year (Tinto, 1993; Hicks, 2005; Rausch & Hamilton, 2006; Yazedijan & Toews, 2006), particularly among Hispanics students (Otero et al., 2007), it is important that higher education better understand what students are expecting and experiencing and put into place policies and programs to better bridge that potential gap. It is this discrepancy between expectation and reality where students may struggle with their decision to stay or leave the institution. Hispanic females face enormous obstacles in their path to college graduation. Factors that must be considered when deciding on ways to improve the chances of success in college for Hispanic females include the fact that many are first generation students,
attend college part-time, work part-time, work full-time, delay enrollment, attend a community college, and experience a lack of social capital and academic preparation (Fry, 2003).

It is now well demonstrated that the Hispanic female college student population has a unique set of characteristics and issues to face in regard to completing their degrees. What can higher education do today to make a positive impact on these student’s lives and increase the chances of college success? Where expectations, experiences, and expectation-experience gaps of Hispanic female students are found to influence attrition, the institution of higher education can to do the following to facilitate expectations, involvement on campus, and academic progress.

Expectations

Because previous studies indicated that first-year students, in particular Hispanic females, have unrealistic expectations this is an area worthy of more in-depth research. The results of this study showed that Hispanic females generally have the same level of expectations as did students of other ethnicities, unrealistic or not. Understanding what students are expecting and the level of those expectations is critical to the attainment of Hispanic females. The following recommendations are made regarding expectations:

- Devise efforts to adjust expectations to be more ‘realistic’
- Create training, programs, and experiences aimed at satisfying the expectations of this population
- Create training and provide education to staff and faculty aimed at satisfying the expectations of the this population
- Educate students and families earlier in the college experience about realistic expectations (i.e., through High School Visits, Open Houses, New Student Orientation)
• College recruitment efforts should provide specific information providing an accurate picture of what college will be like at that particular institution

• Improve outreach efforts with parents to ensure they are informed of college processes, procedures, and experiences their student will be facing.

Involvement on Campus

The results of this study indicated that with more involvement on campus Hispanic females are at a higher risk of attrition, going against Tinto’s theory of involvement. Better understanding what this particular group is getting involved in and at what level is critical in directing these students to appropriate involvement opportunities and level of participation. The following recommendation is made regarding involvement on campus:

• Address those areas of experience that are particularly detrimental to retention of Hispanic females

Academic Progress

Satisfaction with academic progress had the strongest correlation with attrition for Hispanic females in this study. The more satisfied they were with their academic progress the more likely they were to stay at the institution. Finding ways for Texas Woman’s University to assist in the academic success of the Hispanic female population is critical in the success of this group. The recommendations follow:

• Provide student support services (i.e., tutoring, career services, etc.) and market these services to students

• Improve early warning system for students exhibiting troubling academic performance and proactive measures to assist students improve their academic standing.

With the ability to identify tendencies in female Hispanic student attrition, opportunities
present themselves to colleges to intervene in ways that will positively influence enrollment and retention. It is critical for institutions to better understand what the expectations are and reflect on how institutional actions can demystify or reinforce these expectations. It is critical for institutions to better understand what expectations are being held by students and put in place actions that address these appropriately.

Areas of Additional Research

As with many research projects, there are several areas that this study did not cover and could be included or expanded upon in another project. The value in knowing what college students are expecting and then experiencing is invaluable to higher education when it comes to improving attrition rates. Such knowledge provides the opportunity for the university to better shape expectations on the one hand, and on the other hand, the opportunity to focus effort on improving those experiences that most impact retention. Knowledge of how these factors uniquely apply to Hispanic females provides yet further opportunity to bring appropriate, well positioned efforts to bear. It is apparent that being able to identify variables that lead to retention or attrition deserves further research. The time period researched by this study was restricted to one semester. Extending the research period to one year would offer a more complete picture of attrition and improve prediction. Another area of research that could be undertaken is a better understanding of drop outs (i.e., students who do not return to college) versus stop outs (i.e., those who do return to college), especially among the Hispanic population. Extending the time frame for the study might well capture more precisely this population’s college expectations and experiences.

Another research area, which future studies could profitably pursue is why Hispanic Females’ expectations are so high. For this study, the Hispanic female population was not found
to be unique, but nationally, it has been found to be so. The timing of the FES I may have contributed to the high response rate due to it being facilitated during freshman orientation. After orientation, but before the start of school, may be a better time to get a more accurate read on the students’ expectations. Another option is to include the survey in students’ acceptance letters and allow newly admitted students to complete the survey without any influences from new student orientation program. Conducting follow up interviews with the students after the surveys are completed may allow for more in-depth, qualitative analysis of the research topics.

Other variables that should be considered in future studies include high school GPA since this would provide a more accurate picture of the student’s likelihood of college success and better alignment with Tinto’s theory. Admissions status would be another variable to consider. Whether a student was admitted as a provisional student as opposed to regular admission may impact the expectations and experience of the student admitted provisionally. Knowing if the student is a first generation college student or not would be another interesting variable to include as this population is at a higher risk of not completing their college education (Sy & Romero, 2008). Lastly, off campus activities should be considered as an involvement variable as students may not be involved on campus but may be involved in activities within their local communities and churches.
APPENDIX A

FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2008: PART I

This instrument is reproduced with permission from R. Nicholas.
These first few questions concern your decision to attend Texas Woman's University.

1. What were the three most important factors in your decision to attend Texas Woman's University instead of another college?
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 

2. How many colleges or universities did you seriously consider attending (including TWU) before selecting Texas Woman's University?
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 More than 10

3. How many colleges or universities did you apply to, including Texas Woman's University?
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 More than 10

4. When did you make your final decision to attend Texas Woman's University?
   before your junior year of high school
   during your junior year of high school
   during your senior year of high school
   after graduating from high school

5. Compared to other colleges, attending Texas Woman's University was your:
   first choice  second choice  third choice  fourth choice or higher

6. Other than yourself, who was most influential in your decision to attend Texas Woman's University?
   High school teacher(s)
   High school counselor(s)
   Parent(s)
   Friend(s)
   Relative(s) other than parents
   College representative
   Other: ____________

7. How important it is to you to eventually complete a bachelor's degree from some four-year college or university?
   Very important  Somewhat important  Neither important nor unimportant
   Somewhat important  Very unimportant

8. How important is it for you to graduate from TWU?
   Very important  Somewhat important  Neither important nor unimportant
   Somewhat important  Very unimportant

9. Have you decided on a major? Yes  No
10. At Texas Woman's University at this time, I plan to:
   Take some courses, but not pursue a degree
   Complete at least one semester
   Complete at least one year
   Complete a bachelor's degree
   Pursue graduate or professional study beyond the bachelor's

11. Which of the following statements best describes your search for a college to attend?
   I only considered TWU.
   I gathered some information on a few colleges then selected TWU.
   I carefully compared a few colleges before selecting TWU.
   I carefully compared several colleges before selecting TWU.

12. The list below describes sources of information about colleges which might be used by some students. Check each item you used to get information before deciding on a college to attend.
   high school teacher(s)
   high school counselor(s)
   commercial guidebooks to colleges
   parent(s)
   students enrolled in college
   college catalogue(s)
   other printed material from college(s)
   college admissions representative
   visit to the campus
   college faculty
   website
   other: _________________________

13. Below are some reasons that might have influenced your decision to attend TWU. How important was each reason in your decision to come to TWU?
   My relatives wanted me to come here.
   Very important
   Important
   Somewhat important
   Somewhat important
   Very unimportant
My teacher(s) advised me to come here.
   Very important
   Important
   Somewhat important
   Somewhat important
   Very unimportant

This college has a very good academic reputation.
   Very important
   Important
   Somewhat important
   Somewhat important
   Very unimportant

I was offered financial assistance.
   Very important
   Important
   Somewhat important
   Somewhat important
   Very unimportant

I was not accepted anywhere else.
   Very important
   Important
   Somewhat important
   Somewhat important
   Very unimportant

Someone who had been here before advised me to go.
   Very important
   Important
   Somewhat important
   Somewhat important
   Very unimportant

This college offers a special program in which I wanted to study.
   Very important
   Important
   Somewhat important
   Somewhat important
   Very unimportant

This college has low tuition.
   Very important
   Important
   Somewhat important
Somewhat important
Very unimportant

My guidance counselor advised me.
  Very important
  Important
  Somewhat important
  Somewhat important
  Very unimportant

I wanted to live at home/close to home.
  Very important
  Important
  Somewhat important
  Somewhat important
  Very unimportant

A friend suggested attending here.
  Very important
  Important
  Somewhat important
  Somewhat important
  Very unimportant

A college representative recruited me.
  Very important
  Important
  Somewhat important
  Somewhat important
  Very unimportant

This college is small.
  Very important
  Important
  Somewhat important
  Somewhat important
  Very unimportant

14. TWU's cost of attending to you and your family after financial aid and scholarships was
  Higher than that of other colleges considered
  About the same as that of other colleges considered
  Less than that of other colleges considered
  Unable to compare
These next questions relate to the expectations you now have of your freshman year at Texas Woman's University. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

15. I expect to join one or more of the following campus organizations or clubs:

- **Campus activities board**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- **Student government**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- **Volunteer organizations (i.e. Helping Hands)**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- **Greek Organization**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- **Academic Interest club/Academic Honor Society**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- **Athletics Organization**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- **Other Organization:**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

16. Please answer the following questions:

- I expect to attend or participate in campus activities. (i.e. speakers, entertainment, cultural activities, sports, etc.)
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- I expect the campus social life to provide many opportunities for participation for me.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- I expect to live in on-campus housing.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- I expect to have frequent contact with faculty outside of class.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- I expect most of the faculty to be superior teachers.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral/undecided
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
I expect instructors to care about their students.
   Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral/undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

I expect administrators to care about students.
   Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral/undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

I expect to develop close friendships with other students.
   Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral/undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

I expect most of my courses to be stimulating.
   Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral/undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

I expect channels for expressing student complaints to be easily accessible.
   Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral/undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the freshman year.
   Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral/undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

I expect to change my major this year.
   Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral/undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

I expect to have financial difficulties this year.
   Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral/undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

I expect to be enrolled at TWU for my sophomore year.
   Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral/undecided    Disagree    Strongly disagree

17. In which quarter of the freshman class do you expect to stand at the end of the freshman year?
   Top Quarter    Second Quarter    Third Quarter    Lowest Quarter

These final questions ask about you in order to help us understand the survey results. All information you provide is completely confidential.

19. What is your gender?    Male    Female

20. What is your racial/ethnic group?
    White/Caucasian    Black/African American    Hispanic
    Asian/Pacific Islander    American Indian    Other:_________

21. What size was your high school?
    Large (over 1000 students)
    Medium (500-1000 students)
    Small (less than 500 students)
22. What type was your high school?
   Public       Private       Home-School

23. How far is Texas Woman's University from your permanent home?
   5 miles or less
   6-10 miles
   11-50 miles
   51-100 miles
   101-500 miles
   More than 500 miles

24. What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your parents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school or less</td>
<td>Elementary school or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>Some high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>High school graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary school other than college</td>
<td>Postsecondary school other than college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Some college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>College degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some graduate school</td>
<td>Some graduate school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. What previous college work have you done before attending Texas Woman's University?
   None
   One or two courses at another college
   One semester or more at another college

26. The following family members have attended TWU:
   Mother
   Father
   Sister(s)
   Brother(s)
   Grandparent(s)
   Other relative(s): ___________________

   Thank you for your assistance and participation in this project.
APPENDIX B

FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE SURVEY: PART 2

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FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE SURVEY: Form II

The first questions concern your experiences so far this year at Texas Woman's University.

Using the numbers at the right, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement by clicking on the appropriate circle (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral/undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

1. I have joined one or more campus organizations or clubs.

2. I am involved in campus activities through attendance or participation.

3. The campus social life provides many opportunities for participation for me.

4. I live in on-campus housing.

5. I have frequent contact with faculty.

6. I have found most of the faculty to be superior teachers.

7. Instructors here care about their students.

8. Administrators here care about students.

9. I have developed close friendships with other students.

10. Most of my courses are stimulating.

11. Channels for expressing student complaints are easily available.

12. I expect to be satisfied with my academic progress at the end of the freshman year.

13. I expect to change my major this year.

14. I expect to have financial difficulties this year.

15. I expect to be enrolled at Texas Woman's for my sophomore year.
Select the best answer.

16. What are your plans for the second semester? for the next year?
   a. Second Semester
      ○ I will definitely return to Texas Woman's University.
      ○ I will probably return to Texas Woman's University.
      ○ I am undecided.
      ○ I will probably not return to Texas Woman's University.
      ○ I will definitely not return to Texas Woman's University.
   b. Next Year
      ○ I will definitely return to Texas Woman's University.
      ○ I will probably return to Texas Woman's University.
      ○ I am undecided.
      ○ I will probably not return to Texas Woman's University.
      ○ I will definitely not return to Texas Woman's University.

17. Did you attend a freshman orientation program at Texas Woman’s University this past summer?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

18. Were you enrolled in University 1011 this semester?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

19. Have you selected a major or program of study?
   ○ Yes, if yes, which major __________________
   ○ No
   c. If yes, how certain are you of this choice of major?
      ○ Very certain
      ○ Fairly certain
      ○ Neither certain nor uncertain
      ○ Fairly uncertain
      ○ Very uncertain

20. How often are you directly involved in class, such as by asking questions, participating in discussions, or giving oral reports or demonstrations?
   ○ Very often
   ○ Fairly often
   ○ Sometimes
   ○ Seldom
   ○ Almost never
21. How often have you had a discussion of at least ten minutes with an instructor outside of class?

The next questions concern your satisfaction with your decision to attend Texas Woman's University and with your experiences so far this year.

22. In general, how satisfied are you with your decision to attend Texas Woman's University?
   - Very satisfied
   - Satisfied
   - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
   - Dissatisfied
   - Very dissatisfied

Using the numbers at the right please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement by clicking on the appropriate circle (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral/undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

23. I am confident that I can successfully meet the academic demands here.
   1  2  3  4  5

24. The academic program here has generally met my expectations.
   1  2  3  4  5

25. I am not with the help I have received from my academic advisor in the selection of my courses.
   1  2  3  4  5

26. I am satisfied with my academic performance so far this year.
   1  2  3  4  5

27. The social life here has generally met my expectations.
   1  2  3  4  5

28. I am satisfied with my social life here.
   1  2  3  4  5

29. I know at least one student here very well.
   1  2  3  4  5

30. I know at least one member of the faculty, staff, or administration well enough to talk to them if I need to.
   1  2  3  4  5

31. I do make use of the campus services available to students.
   1  2  3  4  5
The next questions ask about you in order to help us understand the survey results. All information you provide is completely confidential.

32. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male

33. What is your racial/ethnic group?

34. I am enrolled:
   - Part-time
   - Full-time

35. Student ID number: 

Thank you for your assistance and participation in this project.

Please email the questionnaire to: HSspeed@twu.edu

Heather Speed
Texas Woman’s University - Dean of Students
Division of Student Life
REFERENCES


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