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Relationship between First-Generation College Students' Expectations for Experiences with Faculty Members and Students' Success after the First Year

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Relationship between First-Generation College Students’ Expectations for Experiences with Faculty Members and Students’ Success after the First Year

by

Christina D. Nelson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in Higher Education Administration Department of Leadership, Counseling, Adult, Career and Higher Education College of Education University of South Florida


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Keywords: CSXQ, continuing-generation, persistence, retention

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, husband, and two children.

To my mom, Sheila Darpino, who has been an amazing educator since my earliest days in school. Without your constant patience and guidance, I would never have had the courage to attempt such a challenging undergraduate program at Cornell, let alone persevered to graduation and doctoral coursework. You helped me believe in making the impossible a reality despite obstacles that presented themselves along the way. Thank you for being the person that always took the time to truly listen and talk things out when I needed it most.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................................... iii

LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................................... iv

ABSTRACT ..................................................................................................................................... v

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY ................................................................. 1
  Problem Statement ............................................................................................................... 3
  Purpose of the Study ............................................................................................................ 3
  Research Questions .............................................................................................................. 4
  Theoretical Framework ........................................................................................................ 6
  Significance of the Study ..................................................................................................... 8
  Research Design ................................................................................................................... 10
  Assumptions ........................................................................................................................ 12
  Limitations ........................................................................................................................... 12
  Delimitations ........................................................................................................................ 13
  Definition of Terms ............................................................................................................. 13
  Organization of Remaining Chapters ................................................................................. 15

CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .......................................................... 16
  Introduction ........................................................................................................................ 16
  Student Persistence ............................................................................................................ 16
  Student Engagement ......................................................................................................... 17
  First-Generation College Students ..................................................................................... 20
  Importance of Student Expectations .................................................................................. 33
  Student-faculty Interactions ............................................................................................... 42
  Summary ............................................................................................................................ 56

CHAPTER THREE METHODS .................................................................................................. 58
  Introduction ........................................................................................................................ 58
  Research Design ................................................................................................................ 59
  Population and Sample .................................................................................................... 60
  Variables ............................................................................................................................ 64
  Instrument .......................................................................................................................... 67
  Instrument Administration ................................................................................................. 69
  Reliability and Validity of Data Source ............................................................................. 69
  Data Analysis Procedures ................................................................................................. 71
  Summary ............................................................................................................................ 74
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Cronbach’s Alpha for Experiences with Faculty (National Data) .........................70
Table 2: Cronbach’s Alpha for Experiences with Faculty (USF Data Set) .........................70
Table 3: Frequency Distribution for FGS and CGS ..............................................................76
Table 4: High School Grade Point Average According to Parental Status.........................77
Table 5: Experience with Faculty Descriptive Statistics .....................................................79
Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Cumulative College GPA by Parental Status .................80
Table 7: Logistic Regression Question 3 Variables in the Equation ....................................81
Table 8: Correlation of FGS and College GPA .................................................................82
Table 9: Correlation of CGS and College GPA .................................................................83
Table 10: Frequency Distribution for Enrolled and Not Enrolled Students .......................84
Table 11: Correlation of FGS and Enrollment Fall 2009 ....................................................85
Table 12: Correlation of CGS and Enrollment Fall 2009 ....................................................85
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Inputs-Environment-Outcomes (I-E-O) Model (Astin, 1985) ..............................................8

Figure 2. Student Headcount Trends USF Tampa (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013) ..........61

Figure 3. Enrollment Trends Past 5 Years (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013) .................62

Figure 4. Frequency Distribution for FGS and CGS ................................................................77

Figure 5. Frequency Distribution for Student Enrollment in the Second Year ..............................84
ABSTRACT

As the landscape of higher education changes to allow increased access for first-generation college students (FGS), emerging research should take into account the unique nature of this at-risk population of students (Aspelmeier, Love, McGill, Elliott, & Pierce, 2012). These students tend to be less prepared for the rigors of college coursework (Horn & Bobbitt, 2000; Strayhorn, 2006; Thayer, 2000) and may lack appropriate expectations (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). In particular, FGS may struggle with understanding the importance of creating and maintaining relationships with faculty (Cotten & Wilson, 2006; Davis, 2010).

In order to discover any correlation between expectations for experiences with faculty and student success, as measured by cumulative first-year grade point average (GPA) and persistence to the second year of college, this study utilized Astin’s Inputs-Environment-Outcomes (I-E-O) model. Astin’s I-E-O model outlines the relationship between inputs, environment, and outcomes in order to understand student persistence in college (Astin & Sax, 1998; Thurmond & Popkess-Vawter, 2003). Although past researchers focused on the relationship between these inputs, experiences, and outcomes, the relationship of inputs (expectations) and outcomes (academic performance) has garnered less attention. Further, many focus on the disconnection between expectations and experiences; however, this study focuses solely on the expectations and its relationship with academic outcomes.

The purpose of this research was to investigate the potential differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ (CGS) expectations for faculty experiences and to discover any correlation between parental status and academic performance. This study utilized the
College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ) in order to analyze 3,234 first-time in college students’ expectations of faculty experiences during a summer 2008 orientation at a large, public, research intensive, metropolitan university located in West-Central Florida. The study also examined differences between FGS and CGS in first year college academic performance, while controlling for high school GPA. Further, the study assessed the relationship between FGS and CGS’ expectations for faculty experiences and their academic performance after the first year of college, while controlling for high school GPA. Academic performance after the first year of college was measured as cumulative college grade point average and enrollment in the second year of college. The study analyzed secondary data in order to address seven research questions.

No statistically significant differences were discovered between FGS and CGS’ expectations for faculty experiences. Further, no statistically significant differences existed between FGS and CGS’ academic performance, as measured by cumulative first year college grade point average and enrollment in the second year of college, while controlling for high school GPA. Lastly, weak relationships were discovered between FGS and CGS’ expectations for faculty experiences and their academic performance after the first year of college.

The study did not find statistically significant differences between FGS and CGS’ academic performance, as measured by cumulative college grade point average and enrollment in the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average. Although strong relationships between expectations and academic performance were not revealed, these findings suggest that first- and continuing-generation college students may have other indicators or characteristics that impact their expectations. These indicators may correlate to academic performance measures including college GPA and enrollment in the second year.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The current state of public higher education is a perfect storm of lack of funding, increased access for at-risk populations of students and pressure from state legislatures on universities to produce graduates in a timely measure in order to secure additional funding. In part, because of these pressures, institutions are increasingly interested in how to improve retention and encourage persistence, especially for at-risk populations like first-generation college students. According to a 2010 national study conducted for the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 1,000 institutions received federal dollars aimed at serving approximately 200,000 first-generation, minority, and other at-risk students (Chaney, 2010). In 2008, these programs cost over $264 million in federal funds. This renewed federal attention to first-generation college students (FGS) as an at-risk population follows over three decades of research related to the unique needs of first-generation students (Aspelmeier, Love, McGill, Elliott, & Pierce, 2012). The research related to FGS determined that this population tends to view college as transactional (degree attainment) and may lack understanding of the role that the campus community and involvement play in persistence towards degree (Dungy, Rissmeyer, & Roberts, 2005). In particular, these students may not understand the crucial role faculty interaction may play in positive academic outcomes (Cotten & Wilson, 2006; Davis, 2010; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005).

Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, and Terenzini (2004) argued that, although FGS are increasingly allowed access to higher education, it is not clear whether their expectations are
being met in terms of on-campus experiences. These expectations may be particularly important for first-generation students as they are at an informational disadvantage because their parents have no college experiences to impart. Their expectations, then, may be underdeveloped or unrealistic. These expectations may provide insight into how some students, holding constant for innate academic ability, may be more likely than their peers to succeed.

Because of this information deficiency, much time and money have been spent building academic support programs for this at-risk population. These programs tend to work toward closing the informational gap and have paid particular attention to the important role of positive student-faculty interactions. This attention to interaction is supported, in part, by work from Pascarella et al. (2004), who determined that classroom experiences of FGS were indeed different in part because FGS placed more value on student-faculty experiences than their continuing-generation peers. These interactions, therefore, are an area of increasing research interest (Dungy et al., 2005). However, in order to appropriately address questions regarding the relevance of student-faculty interaction, it may be useful to first understand at-risk students’ expectations and how these directly affect outcomes.

Specific to this research study, FGS may view the role of faculty and the importance of faculty interactions differently than their continuing-generation peers and this may impact persistence and success after the first year. Therefore, this research study focused on areas of the College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ) that will identify whether first-generation student expectations of their experiences with faculty were important factors that shaped their commitment to degree attainment.
**Problem Statement**

Researchers have long studied the characteristics and attrition risks associated with first-generation college students. However, there appears to be a shortage of research examining the expectations of this population of students and whether or not a relationship exists between their expectations of experiences with faculty and the students’ success during their first year in college. Although many characteristics and risk factors have been recognized, few studies have identified whether first-generation students’ background plays any part in the formation of expectations of this first-year experience. Further research is necessary to determine whether or not these expectations influence and/or relate to increased interactions with faculty, as well as their relationship to student persistence. However, the proposed study investigated a correlation between what students expecting the faculty interaction or experience to be and whether or not the expectations – regardless of actual experiences – contributed to students’ subsequent success and persistence to the second year.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this investigation was to determine if a relationship exists between first-generation college students’ expectations for faculty experiences and their success, as measured by grade point average after the first year and persistence to the second year of college. The study examined whether or not students’ expectations for faculty experiences differ based on having a parent who graduated from college. While establishing if differences exist between continuing-generation and first-generation college students is important in understanding the impact of expectations, the study focused mainly on first-generation college students’ expectations for experiences with faculty. Further, the study investigated the possible connection between students’ expectations for student-faculty experiences and their persistence (as
measured by enrollment in year two) and success (as measured by first-year grade point average).

Relevant literature suggests expectations impact motivation (Geiger & Cooper, 1995; Smith & Wertlieb, 2005). Much of this literature, however, focuses on the disconnect between students’ expectations and actual college experience (Bank, Biddle, & Slavings, 1992; Brinkworth, McCaan, Matthews, & Nordstrom, 2009; Crisp, Palmer, Turnbull, Nettelbeck, Ward, Lecouteur, Sarris, Sterlan, & Schneider, 2009; Miller, Bender, Schuh, & Associates, 2005; Smith & Wertlieb, 2005; Stern, 1966). The present study diverges from this norm by focusing instead on the direct connections between expectations and outcomes.

This study explored the impact of first-generation status on expectations, specifically expectations regarding faculty experiences. If being a FGS is related to attrition and poor academic performance, and if levels of expectation are also related to first-generation status, then first-generation students with higher levels of expectation regarding faculty experiences may be more likely to obtain positive outcomes, including increased grade point average (GPA) and increased rates of persistence to year two. Understanding this correlation may allow administrators and instructors to facilitate more realistic student expectations and address the possible disconnect between student expectations and experiences, which may result in an increase in positive outcomes related to attrition and GPA.

Research Questions

This study answered questions in order to inform the body of literature on student expectations particularly those of FGS. First, this research sought to determine potential significant differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ expectations for faculty experiences. Second, the study analyzed if potential significant differences exist between
first- and continuing-generation students’ academic performance, while controlling for high school GPA. Lastly, the study examined the relationship between expectations of FGS regarding faculty experiences, and student success after their first year in college as measured by end of year one GPA and persistence to the second year, while controlling for high school GPA.

1. Prior to entering college, are there significant differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ expectations for experiences with faculty?
2. Is there a significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students in first-year academic performance, as measured by college grade point average, while controlling for high school grade point average?
3. Is there a significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students in first-year academic performance, as measured by persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average?
4. What is the relationship between first-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by college grade point average, while controlling for high school grade point average?
5. What is the relationship between first-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average?
6. What is the relationship between continuing-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by college grade point average, while controlling for high school grade point average?
7. What is the relationship between continuing-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average?

**Theoretical Framework**

Many theories of involvement (Astin, 1999), engagement (Tinto, 1975, 1993), student expectations (Miller, 2005) and persistence inform the present study; however, the Inputs-Environment-Outcomes Model (I-E-O) (Astin, 1970a, 1970b, 1977, 1985, 1991, 1993; Astin & Antonio, 2012) provided the theoretical framework (see Figure 1). Astin and Antonio (2012) highlighted the importance of the I-E-O model to assess why some institutions have more students who persist to graduation than others. The key purpose for using the I-E-O model for assessment of outcomes is to make sure that, in addition to understanding the environment, researchers also consider student inputs (Astin & Antonio, 2012).

Astin and Antonio (2012) defined outcomes, inputs, and environments in the following way:

*Outcomes* …refers to the ‘talents’ we are trying to develop in our educational program;

*inputs* refers to those personal qualities the student brings initially to the educational program (including the student’s initial level of developed talent at the time of entry); and

the *environment* refers to the student’s actual experiences during the educational program. (p. 19)

In the present study, inputs may include student demographics, expectations for interactions with faculty, and background characteristics, such as first-generation student status.
Environment may include experiences or interactions with faculty members and outcomes may include grade point average and persistence to the second year of college.

The basic tenets of the model inform the present study because first-generation college students begin college with a different set of inputs and tend to be at risk compared to their continuing-generation peers. It allows flexibility for researchers to assess single variables, such as high school or college grade point average, as well as various experiences, such as interactions with faculty (Astin & Antonio, 2012). Many times, researchers will take into account the impact of inputs (i.e., student expectations) and their direct connection to environment (student-faculty interactions). However, the present study concentrated on the potential connection between inputs (expectations, FGS status, and high school grade point average) and outcomes (first-year grade point average and persistence to the second year of college) regardless of actual experiences/environment. Therefore, this research examined how first-generation students’ expectations of student-faculty interactions contribute to the outcomes of grade point average after the first year and persistence to the second year.

Previous research in the field provides a great deal of support for utilization of the I-E-O model as a framework to assess student success or persistence in college through understanding the connection between inputs and outcomes (Astin & Sax, 1998; House, 1999; Kelly, 1996; Kittendorf, 2012; Thurmond & Popkess-Vawter, 2003; Thurmond, Wambach, Connors, & Frey, 2002). For instance, Kelly (1996) concluded that “the longitudinal nature of Astin’s I-E-O model and the general longitude theory of student retention...[and]...effects of early measures of academic performance and social integration were also important indicators of long-term persistence” (p. 17). Thurmond and Popkess-Vawter (2003) noted that “Astin’s (1993) Input-Environment-Outcome (I-E-O) model promises a valuable alternative view of
evaluating…through collection of inputs and environmental information to more fully explain traditional unitary assessments of educational outcomes,” though they cautioned that researchers who use the model should pay special attention to clearly defining each tenet of the model (inputs-environment-outcomes) for the purpose of their studies (para. 50). Specific to the present study, Kittendorf (2012) used the model to focus “on the relationship between the inputs of student expectations and major, and the outcomes of GPA and persistence” (p. 19).

The I-E-O model has been referenced widely in analyzing the relationship between inputs on both environment and outcomes. However, many focus on the relationships between all three components of the model. While, these relationships are important, the present study did not address environment and only considered the influence of inputs (first-generation college students’ expectations) on outcomes (college student grade point average and rate of persistence).

Figure 1. Inputs-Environment-Outcomes (I-E-O) Model (Astin, 1985).

Significance of the Study

Due to the ever-changing face of higher education, which includes a growing population of first-generation college students, there is an increased need for research that focuses on their
characteristics as well as what makes them at risk. This study adds to research on students’
effects and its relationship to student success in college. It not only supplements existing
literature and future studies, but also informs the practice of administrators in the field who
design first-year programming such as first-year student success courses, peer mentor programs,
designated first-year student advisors, week of welcome, integrated core curriculum, and first-
year common reading programs. If the research identifies that this group has unique
expectations related to student-faculty interactions, then materials used to recruit students to
improve institutional fit could be modified to create reasonable expectations. It may also help in
faculty development programs since this research will focus on first-generation students’
effects for faculty experiences.

If this research identified what first-generation students expect in terms of faculty
interactions during their first year, institutions can do a better job of meeting these expectations.
Therefore, since first-generation college students are already at risk of not being successful and
are at a higher risk of dropping out, the ability to have a better understanding of first-generation
college student expectations was an important goal of the study.

Additionally, previous research indicates that pre-college characteristics are an essential
component of identifying what makes a successful student. For instance, Ishitani (2006)
maintained that “high school academic attributes were pivotal in projecting the odds of timely
college graduation among first-generation students” (p. 881). Students come to college with a
wide variety of pre-college characteristics; therefore, researchers and practitioners must become
more informed of their ultimate effects on student persistence to graduation (Ishitani, 2006). As
such, the present study took into account background characteristics, such as high school grade
point average of first-generation college students, and examined a connection between them and expectations of expectations of faculty experiences. Further, Pike and Kuh (2005) argued:

Helping those who are first in their families to go to college is challenging for many reasons, one of the more important of which is many first-generation students do not engage in the wide range of academic and social activities that the research shows are associated with success in college. (p. 292)

Therefore, the present study added to the research regarding first-generation students’ expectations for experiences in college, specifically those with faculty, and their relationship to student persistence to the second year and success (as measured by grade point average) after the first year.

**Research Design**

This research was a quantitative, correlational study and utilized secondary data analysis. The data have been collected from students who responded to the College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ) in the summer of 2008 prior to their beginning at the University of South Florida (USF), Tampa Campus. The University of South Florida was founded in 1956 and is a large, public, research active institution accredited by the Commission on Colleges of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The University of South Florida system is comprised of three institutions: USF Tampa, USF Sarasota-Manatee and USF St. Petersburg. These institutions are separately accredited through the Commission on the Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (University of South Florida, 2013). The study utilized CSXQ data from participants enrolled as first-time in college (FTIC), USF Tampa Campus students.
The Division of Student Affairs, in partnership with the Office of Orientation, collected the CSXQ data while the Student Affairs Planning, Evaluation, and Assessment Department at the USF provided additional institutional data. Institutional data items such as college grade point average after the first year of college, high school grade point average, and enrollment in the Fall Semester of year two, were utilized in this study in order to evaluate persistence and success. The Office of New Student Connections, an entity within the Division of Student Affairs, administered and collected the CSXQ instrument with the assistance of orientation team leaders during summer orientation sessions. In order to ensure the confidentiality of students who completed the CSXQ, the Director of Student Affairs Planning, Evaluation and Assessment oversaw the scoring and coding of the collected data so that individual students could not be identified.

The study focused on students’ expectations of faculty experiences based on responses to the CSXQ prior to beginning college. The study measured whether or not there was a relationship between students’ expectations and students’ success, as measured by two outcomes: grade point average after the first year of college and students’ ability to persist to year two.

In order to understand and measure first-generation college students’ expectations, this study examined data from the CSXQ regarding students’ experiences with faculty. The CSXQ identifies these expectations for experiences with faculty with items such as

- asking instructor for information regarding course;
- discussion of academic programs or course selection;
- discussion of ideas for papers or projects;
- discussions regarding career plans;
- socialization with faculty; and
• instructor feedback on performance and expectation to work on a research project with faculty.

The study attempted to answer the research questions through a quantitative secondary data analysis using descriptive statistics including measures of central tendency and variability as well as second order Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson $r$), second order point-biserial correlation, logistic regression, analysis of variance (ANOVA), analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) and a multivariate analysis (MANOVA).

**Assumptions**

1. Students have responded to the CSXQ truthfully and responses were representative of how they expected to interact with faculty members or things they expected to experience with faculty.

2. First-generation college students are an at-risk population with unique needs.

3. Experience with faculty members is directly related to success in and out of the classroom and leads to student engagement; therefore, students who expect to interact with faculty are more successful and persist to graduation.

4. Grade point average and rate of persistence are fair and standard measurements of student success.

**Limitations**

1. The age of the data may be considered a limitation of the study. The data were collected during the summer of 2008 and at the time of study completion the data were six years old, consequently there may be difficulty generalizing the findings.

2. The CSXQ is comprised of self-reported data. Participants may have answered the CSXQ with what they believed the administrators of the survey wanted them to report or
what they believed to be the most socially acceptable response. Additionally, participants may not have put sufficient thought into their responses.

3. This study utilized secondary data. The researcher did not have control over the data collection process, as the data were collected by another organization.

Delimitations

1. This study was delimited to the CSXQ data set collected in summer 2008. This data set was chosen because it offered a comprehensive picture of incoming students’ expectations. Also, a large number of students reported a university identification number, which linked students’ CSXQ to their academic records. This is important for the reproduction of this study with future cohorts of students.

2. This study only included those students who, in addition to completing the CSXQ during the summer 2008 orientation, also offered their university identification numbers, thus permitting researchers to associate responses with their institution student records.

3. The study was delimited to only University of South Florida Tampa Campus students. This impacted the external validity, as the results are not as easily generalized students at other institutions.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been defined for clarification of use throughout the study:

**Continuing-generation students (CGS).** Students who have one or both parents who have attended or graduated from college. These students may also be referred to as second-generation college students by other researchers.

**Faculty experiences.** Also referred to as interactions with faculty. These interactions are typically described in terms of quality and quantity of the experience, and can be viewed on a
continuum. For example, a less significant experience would include a student approaching a faculty member after class for help; a more significant experience would include a student interacting with a faculty member on a research project.

**First-time in college (FTIC).** Undergraduate, degree-seeking students who have never taken a college class prior to beginning their degree program (with the exception of high school dual enrollment credits) or have not previously been enrolled in a postsecondary institution as a degree-seeking student. Typically, these students have never experienced any college level coursework or attended any coursework at the university level.

**Full-time students.** Students who were enrolled in 12 or more credit hours in each semester at the beginning of the term, as based on institutional data.

**First-generation college student (FGS).** Those students for whom neither parent attended college or completed a college degree.

**First-year persistence rate.** Percentage of first-year students who re-enroll for their second year of college.

**Grade Point Average (GPA).** Average of all grades received for courses completed at an institution during a semester. Typically these are grades measured on a 4.0 scale.

**Persistence.** The ability and motivation of a student to remain in college from matriculation through degree completion (Berger & Lyon, 2005). For the purpose of this study, persistence is focused on ability and motivation of a student to re-enroll in the second year of college.

**Student expectations.** Defined as the pre-college beliefs of students relating to what they think they will experience in college (Miller et al., 2005).
Organization of Remaining Chapters

In what follows, Chapter Two will provide a review of the literature concerning the at-risk characteristics of first-generation college students, the value of understanding student expectations and how these expectations relate to student persistence. Also, Chapter Two will outline the importance and types of student-faculty interactions as a component of student engagement. In particular, the literature explores the correlation between expectations of student-faculty interactions and outcomes, such as persistence to the second year. Chapter Three provides information regarding the population and sample, variables, instrument administration, methodology, and the data set used in this study. Chapter Four presents the analysis and results in relation to the research questions. Finally, Chapter Five reviews the findings of the study, describes the limitations and implications for practice, and make recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The following literature review includes sections on student persistence and engagement, first-generation college students, the importance of student expectations, and student-faculty interactions. The information presented in this review provides the background information that forms the foundation for this study. The review of literature demonstrates how this research contributes to the current body of knowledge on first-generation college students, student expectations and student-faculty experiences.

Student Persistence

The ability for students to persist to graduation has been a concern of higher education researchers and administrators for almost forty years. The result of ensuing research “has been an ever more sophisticated understanding of the complex web of events that shape student leaving and persistence” (Tinto, 2006, p. 1). As student access to higher education has increased, the diversity of the student population, the risk of completion and the complexity of issues related to persistence to graduation for this group of students have also steadily grown. For instance, Tinto (2006) suggested that one population of students that will be increasingly at risk is “academically under-prepared low-income students” (p. 13). This is particularly important since the majority of first-generation students are of lower income levels and academically under-prepared backgrounds. Kuh (2008) noted how research on student persistence impacts not only the current literature but also, and perhaps more importantly, the value of informing the
institutions, faculty, and staff who need to promote student persistence. Despite the large body of research, much of it fails to influence those who work with students daily (i.e., faculty, staff, administrators) in order to help students become engaged with their institution (Kuh, 2008).

In order to address the concern of attrition in higher education one must examine the factors that impact students’ ability to persist. Persistence to graduation in a successful manner has been connected to a student’s ability to become engaged within the institution (Tinto, 1975, 1999; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008). Engagement occurs when students have meaningful experiences on campus (Tinto, 1999; Kuh & Hu, 2001), build positive relationships (Kuh & Hu, 2001), become involved (Astin, 1975, 1984, 1999; Astin & Sax, 1998; Tinto 1975, 1993), and have increased interactions with faculty (Kuh & Hu, 2001; Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010). Student engagement has been shown to correlate with academic development and success (Kuh et al., 2008). Persistence, student engagement and success can also be affected by pre-college characteristics (Astin, 2006; Miller, 2007; Miller & Herreid, 2008) such as student expectations of college being met (Miller, 2007; Miller & Herreid, 2008; Miller & Murphy, 2011; Miller et al., 2005; Miller, Kuh, Paine, & Associates, 2006).

Student Engagement

Although actual college experiences are not the focus of the present research study, in order to understand the importance of student expectations for engagement, specifically engagement with faculty, it is critical to understand the literature surrounding engagement itself. Research on student engagement suggests that the first year of college is an integral part of student engagement, success, and persistence. Barefoot (2000) reviewed the components of what is considered the “first year experience” and determined that, among the most important components of a successful first year, “increasing faculty-to-student interaction, especially out
of class; increasing student involvement and time on campus; linking the curriculum and the
cocurriculum; increasing academic expectations and levels of academic engagement; assisting
students who have insufficient academic preparation for college” might lead to increased student
considered these students’ first year vital to retention and concluded that “engaging them
immediately upon entry into college, not only enhances the likelihood of successful student
development, but increases the likelihood of their academic success, positive social integration,
and retention through college” (p. 262). Therefore, the current study focuses on the first year of
college and the correlation between student expectations prior to college and their impact on the
critical first-year.

However, the approaches to improve student success in the first-year have varied and
there are many theories related to a student’s ability to persist, become involved or academically
or socially engaged within an institution, Tinto, Kuh, and Astin provide much of the discipline’s
discussion on these topics. Tinto (1975) examined the reasons why students dropped out and
created one of the first theoretical models for examining student persistence. Tinto (1999)
emphasized that there needs to be a movement away from simple classes that merely addresses
the basic needs of first-year students and toward a more comprehensive approach of engaging
students during their first-year of college. Tinto (1999) also stated that the first year “should be a
year of inclusion that promotes the important ideal that all persons can and should have a voice
in the construction of knowledge” (p. 9).

Although student engagement has been studied at various institutions (as it relates to
success in the first year and persistence to graduation), some have studied the connection
between differences in institutional type and the practices that foster student success. Kuh et al.
(2008) sought to understand the process by which institutions of higher education were fostering student success. The researchers collected data from 18 colleges and universities with a diverse group of respondents (racial/ethnic). The study confirmed that student engagement showed positive relationships to academic outcomes in areas such as grades after the first-year and persistence to the second year (Kuh et al., 2008).

Like Tinto and Kuh, Astin’s models offer important insights about involvement, engagement, and success. As noted in Chapter One, the theoretical framework and model for the study is Astin’s Inputs-Environment-Outcomes (I-E-O) Model (Figure 1). One of the foundational theories of student engagement defined by Astin (1999) described student engagement as a theory of involvement. Astin (1999) stated, “student involvement refers to the quantity and quality of the physical and psychological energy that students invest in the college experience…the greater the student’s involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development” (p. 528-529). Astin (1999) asserted that, in conjunction with the student’s involvement, it is the responsibility of the institution of higher education to create opportunities for programming that promote student involvement. Further, Tinto and Pusser (2006) suggested that “involvement during that [first] year serves as the foundation upon which subsequent affiliations and engagements are built” (p. 6).

Student engagement is an overarching theme in the literature. The importance of the student-faculty relationship is also critical to student persistence to graduation. Although research has been conducted in general regarding student expectations and persistence to graduation, there appears to be limited research regarding first-generation students and expectations. Therefore, the present study contributed to this gap in the body of knowledge on first-generation students.
First-Generation College Students

The prior review of the literature provides the background regarding student engagement and persistence. It is also important to consider how student engagement and persistence is connected when examining different populations of students on campus, particularly those that are at-risk. One such population that has been considered at-risk is first-generation college students. This section reviews the literature on first-generation students and presents information pertaining to the characteristics, academic preparation, risk factors, expectations of college, transition into the college experience and risk factors related to success and persistence.

Although it can be challenging to identify and establish accurate counts of FGS, the enrollment data demonstrate a definite surge in this population (Davis, 2010). First-generation college students are typically defined as having parents who have never attended college (Billson & Terry, 1982; Choy, 2001; Choy, Horn, Nunez, & Chen, 2000; Hsiao, 1992; Ward, Siegel, & Davenport, 2012). In general, these students have characteristics that put them at a disadvantage when they enter college (Bui, 2002; Davis, 2010; Hsiao, 1992; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Purswell, Yazdjian, & Toews, 2008; Strayhorn, 2006; Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996; Ward et al., 2012).

Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) stated that these students are “lacking the intergenerational benefits of information about college [which] also makes participation in college a particularly formidable task for first-generation students” (p. 409). In addition, Hsiao (1992) suggested that first-generation college students encounter obstacles on their path to degree completion such as “conflicting obligations, false expectations, and lack of preparation or support are among the factors that may hinder their success” (p. 2). Davis (2010) stated “first-generation college students are unfamiliar with the culture of college and, to one degree or another, unfamiliar with
what it means to be a college student” (p. 29). Ward et al. (2012) agreed that this cultural capital is gained while attending college and parents of FGS students may not be able to properly provide access to this knowledge. Given these disadvantages, first-generation college students are less likely to complete a degree than students whose parents have attended college (Billson & Terry, 1982; Davis, 2010; Ishitani, 2003; Pike & Kuh, 2005; Terenzini et al., 1996).

First-generation college students can be described through various background characteristics and may be demographically different than their continuing-generation peers. Terenzini et al. (1996) explained that in most cases they are:

- more likely to have…weaker cognitive skills…lower degree aspirations, and are less involved with peers and teachers in high school…expect to take longer to complete their degree programs, and report receiving less encouragement from their parents to attend college. (p. 16)

This population of students has characteristics that may be unique, but may also place them at increased risk for attrition.

For instance, Bui (2002) focused on the background characteristics of first-generation college students, their reasons for pursuing higher education, and their actual experience during the first-year of college. Through a small, quantitative study, first-generation students were compared to students whose parents have attended college. The first-generation college students in the study were notably demographically different and “more likely to be ethnic minority students, to come from a lower socioeconomic background, and to speak a language other than English at home” (Bui, 2002, p. 9). These demographic differences impacted the first-generation college students’ reasons for attending college, and were noted in responses that included “pursuing higher education so that they can later help out their families” (Bui, 2002, p. 9). These
reasons are in addition to FGS having “greater fear of failing in college, worry about financial aid, and feel they have to put more time into studying” (Bui, 2002, pp. 10).

Furthermore, not only does this group of students face different risks based on pre-college characteristics, they also encounter increased challenges in the unfamiliar academic world once they matriculate (Terenzini et al., 1996). These students were not only more likely to perceive their campus environment differently but they also have a tendency to participate in the campus community in ways that were not as likely to be linked to success and persistence. Terenzini et al. (1996) summarized this by stating:

> Overall, the picture suggests these students come less well prepared and with more nonacademic demands on them, and they enter a world where they are less likely to experience many of the conditions that other research indicates are positively related to persistence, performance, and learning. (p. 18)

Therefore, research relating to this at-risk population of students is critical for practitioners and future researchers who hope to study and understand student persistence and expectations.

This growing research has called attention to some of the unique risk factors associated with the persistence of first-generation college students (Hsiao, 1992), which is a population that has increased over the past decade as higher education has become more accessible (Bowen, Kurzweil, & Tobin, 2005; Davis, 2010; Housel & Harvey, 2009; Saenz, Hurtado, Barrera, Wolf, & Yeung, 2007; Strayhorn, 2006). While first-generation students have been positively impacted by increased access to higher education, their ability to persist throughout their college experience is often hindered by a number of disadvantages, including socioeconomic status and lack of appropriate pre-college coursework (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005). Therefore, Ishitani (2006) reaffirmed that it is critical that educators become more cognizant of the pre-college
characteristics within this population of students and “of the prolonging effects these precollege characteristics have on students’ time to degree behavior” (p. 881).

The additional disadvantages faced by FGS, which are present above and beyond the challenges they share with CGS, can compound their ability to persist to graduation. Being female (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005), having a lower socioeconomic status (Bradbury & Mather, 2009; Bui, 2002; Choy, 2001; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005), being part of a minority race (Bui, 2002), lacking support from family and/or peers, (Bradbury & Mather, 2009; Choy, 2001; Hsiao, 1992; Terenzini et al., 1996; Thayer, 2000;), as well as having ill-formed or uninformed expectations about college (Hsiao, 1992; Thayer, 2000) impact these first-generation college students’ ability to persist. Therefore, first-generation students “inhabit intersecting sites of oppression based on race, class, and gender” (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005, p. 418), which creates even more challenges for first-generation college students in their journey to degree completion.

Among the demographic characteristics noted earlier, socioeconomic status has been recognized as one of the most powerful indicators of first-generation college students’ ability to persist to graduation (Bradbury & Mather, 2009; Bui, 2002; Choy, 2001; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012). For instance, Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) suggested that “lower-income first-generation students are not only disadvantaged by their parents’ lack of experience with and information about college, but also by other social and economic characteristics that constrain their educational opportunities” (p. 418). First-generation students’ inability to utilize this cultural and financial capital impacts their ability to persist (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005). First-generation college students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tend to have more disadvantages, have additional financial strain, and may attend college part-time and/or work while attending college, thus impacting how they
choose to engage with their campus environment (Bui, 2002; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Terenzini et al., 1996). However, Hertel (2002) discovered that FGS were not necessarily working more than their CGS peers, though he did confirm that FGS struggle more to adjust socially to campus life. Further, “the gap in performance between first-generation and continuing-generation students is, at least in part, a product of the predominantly middle-class cultural norms of independence that are institutionalized in many American colleges and universities” (Stephens et al., 2012, p. 1193). These studies confirm the idea that first-generation college students are an at-risk population who enter college many times from different cultural backgrounds and from lower socioeconomic statuses, thus compounding their disadvantages and placing them more at risk. However, Davis (2010) cautions researchers to be careful to not identify all FGS as also being from a lower-income, as this is not always the case. In fact, it is important to distinguish between the concerns of disadvantaged groups of students and what is unique about being a first-generation student (Davis, 2010).

First-generation college students are also distinct in terms of their lack of information from their parents (who have not attended college) regarding the college experience (Hicks, 2003; Padgett et al., 2012; Pike & Kuh, 2005; Ward et al., 2012; Westbrook & Scott, 2012). Therefore, first-generation students’ expectations regarding college may indeed differ from their continuing-generation peers and make FGS less likely to be engaged as “an indirect result of being first in one’s family to go to college and are more directly a function of lower educational aspirations and living off campus” (Pike & Kuh, 2005, p. 290). Misinformation about college experiences and unrealistic expectations, however, are also a trait of continuing-generation students. For instance, first- and continuing-generation students have common misperceptions
about what to expect from college faculty (e.g., that faculty members teach study skills), or they have a limited view of the intensity of college coursework (Hicks, 2003).

As a way of understanding first-generation students, Padgett et al. (2012) concentrated on the influence of parental education on “cognitive and psychosocial outcomes” after the first year of college (p. 259). They discovered that first-generation students scored significantly lower in relation to literacy activities and writing. Further, they noted “this finding supports aspects of cultural capital theory that college-educated parents transmit skills, attitudes, and interests to their children about the importance of engaging in educationally meaningful activities such as reading and writing” (Padgett et al., 2012, p. 260). This disadvantage extended to a lack of openness to diversity and psychological well-being as compared to their continuing-generation peers. Recent findings determined that “within the first academic year in college, first-generation students begin to lag behind in cognitive and psychosocial development” (Padgett et al., 2012, p. 262).

Another comparative study of first-generation and continuing-generation students by Purswell et al. (2008) concluded that students with parents who had some exposure to the college experience could relay some information to their students about the college experience and, thus, impact students’ academic behaviors. Further, Purswell et al. (2008) was consistent with previous researchers’ findings that first-generation college students enter college with a different set of intentions for experiences based on their background, life experiences and parental educational level, which may provide insight to the challenges that they face. For example, a student whose parent emphasizes the importance of building relationships with faculty through participation in class because they too have experienced college may have a positive impact on their student’s academic behavior (Purswell et al., 2008). Gibbons and Borders (2010) also
confirmed that even prior to entering college, first-generation college students were more likely
to have positive expectations of outcomes in college, more perceived barriers and lower self-
efficacy than their first-generation college peers. However, Westbrook and Scott (2012)
discovered that even when first-generation college students have little parental support, they may
still have high perceived self-efficacy.

In addition to demographic differences, first-generation college students’ academic
experiences in high school find them less prepared to enter college-level work (Horn & Bobbitt,
2000; Strayhorn 2006; Terenzini et al., 1996; Thayer, 2000). When compared to CGS, FGS have
been found to be less academically prepared to do college level work (Horn & Bobbitt, 2000;
Chaney, Muraskin, Cahalan, & Goodwin, 1998; Strayhorn 2006; Terenzini et al., 1996;
Warburton, Burgarin, Nunez, & Carroll, 2001; York-Anderson & Bowman, 1991) and “entered
college with lower reading, math and critical thinking skills” (Terenzini et al., 1996, p. 18).
First-generation college students are likely to have lower scores on standardized tests (Terenzini
et al., 1996) or have not even attempted to take the standardized tests or college entrance exams
at all (Warburton et al., 2001).

However, some caution is needed when using precollege characteristics as a way to
predict college success and persistence. Although some research suggests that high school grade
point average is seen as connected to future success in college coursework and persistence
throughout college (Geiser & Santelices, 2007), there is significant debate as to the validity of
predictive measures such as high school grade point average and SAT scores in college
admission (Berry & Sackett, 2009).

The transition from high school to college presents a unique challenge for first-generation
college students and they tend to have a more difficult time with it (Terenzini et al., 1996). First-
generation college students typically experience the same transitory issues that their continuing-generation peers face; however, they also have the added challenges of the cultural shift felt by many in their attempt at educational mobility (Choy, 2001; Davis, 2010; Pascarella et al., 2004).

While pre-college characteristics, determinants, and expectations are important, actual experiences in college also have significant impacts on persistence. Pike and Kuh (2005) further noted that “surprisingly little is known about their college experiences” (p. 276). Bui (2002) showed that “first-generation college students express greater fear of failing in college, worry more about financial aid, and feel they have to put more time into studying” (p. 10). The present study adds to the body of knowledge in this area of first-generation college students’ expectations of college experiences, particularly their expectations of relationships/interactions with faculty.

An increasing number of first-generation college students work while attending college (Bradbury & Mather, 2009; Pascarella et al., 2004; Terenzini et al., 1996; Ward et al., 2012) and many will attend college part-time (Choy, 2001; Pascarella et al., 2004; Ward et al., 2012). Pascarella et al. (2004) suggested that “the added work responsibilities of first-generation students may in part explain the fact that, despite a lighter academic load, first-generation students had significantly lower cumulative grades than similar students whose parents were both college graduates” (p. 277). Demographic differences of FGS indicate that they tend to experience college differently. Pascarella et al. (2004) concluded that their additional commitments outside of the institution, combined with their lower levels of involvement in extracurricular and campus activities in their second year of college, contributed to less involvement and interaction among peers in their third year of college. FGS differed in not only the number of credit hours they took and the amount of time they worked on their courses, but
also in that they were less likely to live on-campus as compared to second-generation students (Pascarella et al., 2004). However, there appears to be conditional effects including the first-generation students’ likelihood engaging at a higher level in their institutions’ social and peer networks due to their limited time they have to allocate to these activities (Pascarella et al., 2004). Pascarella et al. (2004) argued that “first-generation students perhaps benefit more from their academic experiences than other students because these experiences act in a compensatory manner and thus contribute comparatively greater incremental increases in first-generation students’ stock of cultural capital” (p. 280).

Unfortunately, the one area in which Pascarella et al. (2004) indicated a significant difference was the first-generation students’ lack of second- and third-year degree plans, which may be attributed to their inability to realize the need for future degree attainability and its connection with social mobility. As a result Pascarella et al. (2004) concluded that first-generation students would benefit from increased engagement through academic experiences.

In a comparative study of first- and continuing-generation students, Pike and Kuh (2005) outlined additional key components of the college success of first-generation students. They confirm the findings of Pascarella et al. (2004) and stated that first-generation students were “less engaged overall and less likely to successfully integrate diverse college experiences; they perceived the college environment as less supportive and reported making less progress in their learning and intellectual development” (p. 289). Pascarella et al. (2004) noted that the first-generation students’ lack of involvement may be due to their lack of understanding as to why they should be involved. Similarly, Pike and Kuh (2005) concluded that “compared to second-generation college students, they have less tacit knowledge of and fewer experiences with college campuses and related activities, behaviors, and role models” (p. 290). One important
difference suggested by Pike and Kuh (2005) was that lower levels of engagement and academic achievement may not be strictly related to status as first-generation students, but may be connected to residence on campus and lower overall academic ambitions.

Additional findings by Woosley and Shepler (2011) supported earlier research by Pascarella et al. (2004) and Pike and Kuh (2005):

Results support the theoretical understanding of students’ enrollment experience and may add to the literature by demonstrating that early integration, which influences persistence decisions, may function much like student’s longitudinal adjustment-to-college life process. Results further indicate that first-generation students share similarities to non-first generation students in terms of which variables should be considered in future research settings. (p. 710)

Thus, first-generation students may have different experiences than their continuing-generation peers; however, some of the struggles experienced during the first year may be the same as their peers. Because of the importance of early integration, the first year is integral to ensuring that first-generation students become engaged; therefore, the present study examined success after the first year.

Strayhorn (2006) suggested that the relationship between first-generation college students and their ability to integrate or become engaged with the university is more complex than one may think. They found that “academic integration was positively related to academic achievement and social integration was negatively related to college grades, although the latter was nonsignificant and therefore unremarkable” (pp. 98-99).

In a comparative study of first- and continuing-generation students, Aspelmeier et al. (2012) also concluded that first-generation college students share similar “predictors of academic
adjustment”; however, they found that it is unclear what exactly causes a first-generation college student to be at-risk (p. 778). They noted the importance of paying close attention to this population of students in order to understand what helps them be successful (Aspelmeier et al., 2012). As an example, they suggested that even if a first-generation student was not considered at-risk upon arrival at college and was “highly motivated and confident in their own abilities”, they would likely still require a different set of services to assist them in persisting to graduation (Aspelmeier et al., 2012, p. 778).

First-generation college students’ ability to interact with faculty has been connected to first-to-second year persistence (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005). However, research indicates that first-generation college students tend to spend less time interacting with faculty (Murphy & Hicks, 2006; Terenzini et al., 1996). Additionally, these students may lack the confidence to initiate an interaction with a faculty member, which further impacts the frequency and quality of their interactions with faculty (Padgett et al., 2012). Although many factors correlate to the ability of FGS to persist in college, navigating the university system and understanding the importance of faculty in relation to their academic journey are two areas that have been shown to help these students become more engaged with the institution and persist to graduation.

To fully understand the pre-matriculation expectations of first-generation college students, it is important to review the literature related to first-generation college student experiences and outcomes. Not only do first-generation college students differ both academically and socially prior to college and experience their first year of college differently, but they also have differing academic and social outcomes (Horn, 1998; Padgett et al., 2012; Pascarella et al., 2004; Pike & Kuh, 2005; Strayhorn, 2006). Strayhorn (2006) noted that “first-generation status was a significant predictor of cumulative grades in college” (p. 101). Similarly,
Pike and Kuh (2005) concluded that “first-generation students were less engaged overall and less likely to successfully integrate diverse college experiences; they perceived the college environment as less supportive and reported making less progress in their learning and intellectual development” (p. 289). They tend to have a lower first-year grade point average (Riehl, 1994) and normally struggle to persist into the second year of college (Inman & Mayes, 1999; Ishitani, 2003; Riehl, 1994). The rate that first-generation college students persist to graduation tends to be lower than that of their continuing-generation peers (Horn, 1998; Ishitani, 2006; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Riehl, 1994). Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) offered a comprehensive overview that took into consideration the connection between first-generation college students’ pre-college characteristics, examined their experiences in college and measured their ability to persist from year one to year two, and identified three key background characteristics of first-generation college students that were connected to issues with persistence: being Hispanic, having lower income, or being female. In addition, Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) found that these characteristics created issues in continuing-generation students’ persistence to graduation.

Further, Ishitani (2006) showed that FGS were “less likely to complete their degree programs in a timely manner” (p. 880). Overall, Ishitani (2006) concluded that first-generation college students were more at-risk to not persist and complete degree programs in a timely manner. However, it is important to understand that confounding factors including “high school academic attributes along with other factors, such as family income, affect the college persistence rate for first-generation students longitudinally” (Ishitani, 2006, p. 880). Therefore, an examination of what caused students to leave college even though they initially chose these very institutions to complete their degrees. Examining first-generation college students’ pre-
college characteristics and student expectations prior to entry is yet another factor to consider when creating first-year programs in order to reduce dissonance and have higher persistence into the second year.

In addition to socioeconomic status, gender is another characteristic that impacts first-generation college students and their likelihood to persist to graduation (Bailey & Dynarski, 2011; Choy, 2001; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Strayhorn, 2006). Females comprise the majority of first-generation college students (Choy, 2001; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005) and are steadily increasing in enrollment in universities across the nation. However, the current literature surrounding gender as a factor in persistence is scarce. Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) called attention to this group as needing additional support since “gender-based inequities in educational opportunities still exist” (p. 419). Again, increased access for first-generation college students does not necessarily constitute equal opportunities for persistence because of their additional challenges. Bailey and Dynarski (2011) utilized almost seventy years of data and concluded that:

"A new and puzzling finding is that these increases in educational inequality are driven largely by women…Sex differences in educational attainment, which were small or nonexistent thirty years ago, are now substantial, with women outpacing men in every income group. The female advantage in educational attainment is largest in the top quartile of the income distribution. These findings present a formidable challenge to standard explanations for rising inequality in educational attainment. (p. 1)"

It is important to note that the increase in attainment in college degrees is restricted to upper-income students. Socioeconomic factors have a great deal of impact on persistence and degree
attainment and the majority of first-generation students come from lower socioeconomic statuses.

As the gender demographics of matriculating students have changed over the past decade due to increased access, the needs of students have also changed. One of the most significant findings by Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) was that the additional factor of gender posed added risks for first-generation students. Strayhorn (2006) confirmed the idea that males who are first-generation college students are actually more disadvantaged.

**Importance of Student Expectations**

As mentioned in the discussion of first-generation college students, student expectations are particularly important for understanding why students persist to graduation. Expectations are formed based on past experiences and can be influenced in many ways by peers, family, mentors, and even the media. The expectations a person forms determines how they will approach or respond to future situations (Howard, 2005). For example, Howard (2005) described the general use of the word “expectations” as a way one utilizes past experiences in order to formulate a view on what should happen in the future. However, these expectations constantly change as one experiences new situations (Howard, 2005). Expectations are an important area in educational research because through understanding the importance of expectations, institutions may be better equipped to meet students’ needs once they matriculate (Howard, 2005; Miller, 2005). The following section discusses some of the more pertinent research on theories related to student expectations and the impact of the college transition, the disconnect between expectations and experience, the connection to persistence, as well as an examination of first-generation students’ expectations.
Researchers have noted the importance of understanding expectations of students prior to college matriculation (Cole, Kennedy, & Ben-Avie, 2009; Martin & Hanrahan, 2004; Miller, 2005). Cole et al. (2009), for example, argued that pre-college data assists practitioners in understanding student success once students transition into the university. They concluded that “understanding student backgrounds, experiences, and expectations so that institutions can minimize unmet expectations and increase student engagement, learning, satisfaction, and persistence” is one of the reasons why precollege data are necessary (p. 67). Furthermore, their research indicated that there may be a connection between pre-college data, expectations and graduation rates and student persistence (Cole et al., 2009).

In order to gather this pre-college data, as well as information about students’ expectations, several different methods have been employed, including surveys, the College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ), open ended questionnaires, focus groups or interviews. These methods of research have all helped provide insight into what students may be expecting out of their college experience (Martin & Hanrahan, 2004). Martin and Hanrahan (2004) utilized the CSXQ and suggested that although cognitive ability does play a role in academic success; other factors are similarly significant and are under the direct control of the students. Specifically, they suggested that effort and motivation, which might be managed through programmatic measures like mandatory attendance policies, were as important as cognitive ability in predicting student success.

In order to understand the importance of students’ expectations and their connection to students’ persistence in college, one must begin with theories related to expectations and studies that tested these theories. Expectancy-value theory (Geiger & Cooper, 1995; Smith & Wertlieb, 2005) and ecological theory (Astin, 1993; Smith & Wertlieb, 2005; Tinto, 1993) have been used
Expectancy-value theory posits that if one sees value in an action or outcome and believes s/he can be successful in achieving that outcome, s/he will be more motivated to succeed versus those who do not see the value in an action or outcome and/or do not believe they can be successful (Geiger & Cooper, 1995; Smith & Wertlieb, 2005). Therefore, a student’s expectation for value and success impacts their motivation to behave in a certain way. For example, a student who believes that attending office hours with a faculty member will be beneficial to how well they perform in class will more likely be motivated to visit the faculty member during office hours.

Utilizing expectancy value-theory, Smith and Wertlieb (2005) described the transition between high school and college as a disconnect and they attributed this to the difference between students’ expectations and the reality these students face when they matriculate. Another study examining the expectancy-value theory by Bank et al. (1992) utilized a questionnaire that suggested five major categories of aspirations: social, academic, personal, positional and financial hopes. Bank et al. (1992) concluded that students’ expectations were not reflective of their actual college experiences. They stated that “fully half of all their hopes were either social or personal and could have been satisfied in nonacademic settings” and “that such weak relationships were found between students’ expectancies and their persistence” (Bank et al., 1992, p. 330). Significantly, the conclusions of Bank et al. (1992) contradict the relationship between expectation and positive outcomes posited by expectancy-value theory: “contrary to
expectancy-value theory, students who expected most of their hopes to be realized were no more likely to remain at the university where they began their college careers than were students who expected disappointments” (p. 330). Researchers suggest a need to examine expectations more closely, as debate continues over what aspect of student expectations is important as an area to investigate.

Ecological theory focuses on the students’ connection to the university environment and how much a student feels that s/he found a fit with the institution (Astin, 1993; Smith & Wertlieb, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Bank et al. (1992) believed that expectations were connected to persistence so long as it was possible to fulfill these specific expectations at said institution. Smith and Wertlieb (2005) stated “when student characteristics do not align with the environment, students can experience a sense of regret for selecting the college and subsequently leave the institution” (p. 155). Further, Smith and Wertlieb (2005) argued that one contributing factor to students’ attrition is the lack of fit between the student and the environment, and that ultimately this relates to student’s expectations of the institution.

Although the present study did not study the relationship between expectations and experiences, it is still important to understand the literature on this connection. Researchers have long focused on the link between students’ expectations and their actual college experiences. Stern (1966) was one of the first researchers to discuss the idea of the “freshman-myth” that can occur when students arrive with the best intentions, only to fail to match those expectations with reality (p. 411). Many times students will behave in a certain way based on these expectations, but when these expectations are not met; students tend experience disappointment and disconnections (Brinkworth et al., 2009; Crisp et al., 2009; Smith & Wertlieb, 2005; Stern,
1966). Further, Howard (2005) stated, “if students expect certain things to be true, they will operate in a manner consistent with those expectations” (p. 32).

An important study conducted by Braxton, Vesper, and Hossler (1995) connected the importance of Tinto’s (1993) model of persistence, where a student’s aspiration or ability to integrate into the academic community impacts student persistence to graduation. Braxton et al. (1995) also found an important linkage between institutions’ ability to portray themselves accurately to incoming students and persistence; the disconnect between students’ perceptions and expectations prior to matriculating, and students’ experiences seem to be a factor in rates of attrition. Also, Braxton et al. (1995) indicated a need for research based on institutional type or even at-risk populations, such as first-generation college students.

Beyond academic outcomes like persistence, the connection between expectations and integration may impact social outcomes as well. For example, Helland, Stallings, and Braxton (2002) examined how institutions fulfill the expectations of students, more specifically, if student expectations impact the social integration of the student, and whether or not this leads to their persistence to graduation. They studied students’ disenchantment with the social community aspect of the university and how this, in turn, related to how well (or how poorly) a student became integrated into the social community of an institution. This also examined interactions with faculty outside of the classroom. Helland et al. (2002) concluded that the importance of the fulfillment of a student’s social expectations and their ability to socially integrate into the university community played a critical role in their institutional loyalty. Further, it was clear that students with better social expectations demonstrated an increased ability to socially integrate into the university community, which also included their ability to interact with faculty.
The disconnect between students’ expectations and their experiences are likely to occur during the first year of college and has been shown to be connected to the risk of not persisting to the second year and/or not being as successful during their first year (Smith & Wertlieb, 2005; Weissberg, Owen, Jenkins, & Ernest, 2003). Therefore, institutions need to understand students’ expectations of the university and their future experience in order to create ways to help these students become successful and persist to graduation (Brinkworth et al., 2009). Smith and Wertlieb (2005) discovered from the responses given to the Academic and Social Expectations-Experiences Survey that “in general, student expectations were not aligned with their academic and social experiences in the first year” (p. 160). The key finding of the study was “that students with unrealistically high academic or social expectations had lower first-year GPAs than students with average or below average expectations” (Smith and Wertlieb, 2005, p. 167).

Therefore, in order to promote student persistence throughout the first year, one critical element is the understanding student expectations. Many times what students expect may not match what they actually experience at the university (Brinkworth et al., 2009; Smith & Wertlieb, 2005). As noted above, this disconnect may negatively impact persistence to the second year as well as other academic and social outcomes; specifically, Miller et al. (2005) noted that “the consequences of ‘expectations dissonance’ can be very challenging for students as well as their colleges and universities” (p. 95).

Crisp et al. (2009) also discussed this disconnect between what students expect to experience and what they actually experience once they matriculate into college. They pointed to several possibilities as to why this may happen. This could occur “because students have unrealistic expectations of what will transpire during their time at university; …because of misunderstandings associated with the information provided by the institution about its culture or
because the institution is simply unaware of the students’ expectations” (Crisp et al., 2009, p. 13). There are ways of utilizing the research on student expectations to impact retention rates by either “changing students’ expectations to better match the reality of the university experience or by the institution changing some of its approaches to student engagement to better match the students’ needs” (Crisp et al., 2009, p. 14). Overall, their study focused on student expectations and how to utilize the results to impact practice. Crisp et al. (2009) found one clear response was that the staff felt that discussions surrounding expectations would provide an opportunity for them to have open and honest conversations with students about the reality of the amount of time necessary to study and help students form realistic expectations regarding the amount and frequency of feedback they would receive. Also, it was clear that “communicating to students the time commitment required outside of class for successful university study would enable them to make better informed decision regarding combining study with paid employment” (Crisp et al., 2009, p. 23).

Students’ form expectations based on their experiences in high school and this can lead to unrealistic or incorrect expectations of college (Brinkworth et al., 2009). Curricular choice in high school as well as relationship with high school teachers have all been related to students’ expectations prior to entering college (Jackson, Pancer, Pratt, & Hunsberger, 2000). A key moment, then, for students is when they transition into the university. In general, it has been noted that this transition may be a time of increased stress because they form inaccurate expectations of college life and/or being unprepared for the change (Brinkworth et al., 2009; Jackson et al., 2000). In particular, Jackson et al. (2000) noted that:

students’ expectations about university probably arise at least as much from what they are told by high school teachers, parents, or friends, as from their previous successes in a
high school environment. These kinds of expectancies may, indeed, influence the transition to university in addition to expectancies based on past success in academics or personal adjustment. (p. 21-22)

Brinkworth et al. (2009) hoped to have a “deeper understanding of the relationship between the expectations of students entering the university, the experience of first year students, and their teachers’ perceptions” (p. 160). Brinkworth et al. (2009) found that although students realize that college is different, they do not expect to experience college any differently than high school, and the reality is that they experience college differently. Further, with regard to the transition to college, Brinkworth et al. (2009) confirmed that “a successful transition is not solely due to academic ability, but depends also on an ability to make a rapid adjustment to a learning environment that requires greater autonomy and individual responsibility than students expect upon commencement” (p. 168).

Gender, race and socioeconomic status have all been factors in how students formulate expectations of their future college experience (Dungy et al., 2005). Their expectations may also differ based on characteristics such as gender (Bradley, Kish, Krudwig, Williams, & Wooden, 2002; Dungy et al., 2005). For example, Martin and Hanrahan (2004) suggested that “as a group, young women have higher expectations about the nature of the college environment, their own involvement in that environment, and the quality of interactions with both peers and faculty” (p. 307). Further, Bradley et al. (2002) concluded that women expect lower levels of student-faculty interaction than men and stated “female students may concurrently feel excluded, marginalized, and underrepresented, and articulate fewer expectations for interactions” (p. 81).

Although past research on first-generation college students’ expectations suggests that they experience similar expectations as their continuing-generation college peers, factors
including lower socio-economic status, being a member of a minority group, academic underpreparedness, and less family support make them an at-risk population (Dungy et al., 2005; Nunez et al., 1998; Pascarella et al., 2004). Dungy et al. (2005) stated “one obvious characteristic of the parents of first-generation students is that they do not have firsthand knowledge of the college-going experience” (p. 182). This may impact the type of expectations these students form as well as how the university can assist both the students and parents of this group in order to promote persistence during the first year (Dungy et al., 2005).

One qualitative research study in particular conducted by Stieha (2010) focused specifically on the expectations and experiences of first-generation college students in relation to retention of this at-risk population. In this one student’s experience, the researcher noted that the student was actually well aware of the benefits of being involved, living in a residence hall and applying for scholarships despite her family support system’s inability to understand the value of these activities. Much of her inspiration and motivation was derived from a family member who attended college and she was grateful to have that influence.

Jackson et al. (2000) argued that programs that address an at-risk group’s needs, such as first-generation college students, during a transition should be focused on those who have negative expectations and are perceived as having less self-efficacy in regards to their own ability to manage challenges. In another article, referencing the same study, Pancer, Hunsberger, Pratt, and Alisat (2000) indicated that:

Students who had more complex expectations tended to report having more information about classes, professors, social life, and life in general at college, and were more satisfied with the amount of information they had than were students with simpler expectations…Our results are consistent with studies that demonstrate a relationship
between freshman-myth kinds of thinking and poor adjustment at university. The romanticized, idealistic thinking about university that characterizes the freshman myth is likely to be integratively simple. The present research suggests that if students subscribing to such a myth undergo stressful experiences, they will cope poorly with them. Optimistic thinking, however, is not necessarily simplistic thinking. (p. 53-54)

The key component appeared to be that programming must adapt to provide students with strategies that address expectations, whether or not those expectations are optimistic (Pancer et al., 2000). For instance, Miller and Murphy (2011) found that, although intention to participate in clubs positively impacts a student’s persistence, actual engagement (regardless of initial expectation) leads to the highest persistence rates among students. These factors may be important in examining first-generation college students who may not have the ability to create complex expectations based on their limited information about college.

Pre-college data and the understanding of student expectations can not only help with strategic planning but also to discover key components that need to be carefully considered when designing programming for the first-year experience. Further, it helps to assist practitioners with building programs that are designed to include effective teaching and learning methods. Research has been conducted in general regarding student expectations and persistence to graduation; however, there seems to be limited research regarding first-generation students and expectations.

**Student-faculty Interactions**

Student-faculty interactions are an important component of student engagement and success in the university (Astin, 1993; Delaney, 2008; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). These interactions are particularly important when looking at how students experience their first year of
college and whether positive outcomes occur (Delaney, 2008). It is necessary to examine the literature surrounding student-faculty interactions in order to establish the relevance of expectations for these interactions. Astin (1999) argued that “frequent interaction with faculty is more strongly related to satisfaction with college than any other type of involvement or, indeed, any other student or institutional characteristic” (p. 525). The more involved and connected students are with faculty, the more likely it is that they will have positive experiences and, therefore, persist in college (Astin, 1999).

Tinto (1997) stressed that the classroom may be one of the most beneficial ways to create involvement opportunities where involvement may not otherwise exist. Tinto (1997) discovered that the collaboration of many faculty members, including comprehensive curriculum development, encouraged interaction and was an essential component to student persistence. Specifically, Tinto (1997) found that the efforts of one faculty member were not necessarily enough for students to feel connected with faculty. Rather, he argued that interacting within an academic environment encourages learning from many points of contact, which has a greater influence on engagement.

In one foundational study, Kuh and Hu (2001) focused on faculty-student interaction in the 1990s. Their four major conclusions are that (1) “contact between students and faculty members increases during the four years of college”; (2) “the positive effects of student-faculty contact on satisfaction and gains” are impacted by the number of and depth of involvement students have in other activities; (3) “institutional type and selectivity have limited influence on the manner in which student-faculty interaction affects student satisfaction and gains”; and (4) “the effects of student-faculty interaction are conditional” (p. 326-327). Based on these
conclusions, it appears that more intentional efforts to connect students with faculty members throughout the first year should be fostered.

Confirming previous studies that link interaction and persistence past the first year, Delaney (2008) concluded that several outcomes are related to the first-year experience and that “students who got to know faculty reported greater success in understanding professors’ expectations, developing effective study skills, adjusting to academic demands, managing time effectively, and utilizing campus services” (p. 238). Another significant finding by Delaney (2008) stated “after controlling for academic characteristics at entrance and academic adjustment and commitment to study in the first year of college, interaction with faculty significantly predicted students’ first year cumulative average grade” (p. 238). Research that investigated the relationship between gender and students’ interactions with faculty indicated that a difference does indeed exist (Colbeck, Cabrera, & Terenzini, 2001; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Kim & Sax, 2009; Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005). The results of past research revealed that female students tend to have increased interactions with faculty, and these interactions tend to be viewed more positively by the student (Hagedorn, Maxwell, Rodriguez, Hocevar, & Fillpot, 2000; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994; Sax et al., 2005).

Although extensive research of the value on student-faculty interactions has been conducted, increased clarity is needed as to what motivates students to interact with faculty (Cotten & Wilson, 2006). However, existing research suggests that student-faculty interactions affect both social and academic outcomes (Cotten & Wilson, 2006; Endo & Harpel, 1982). Faculty members may influence these outcomes in negative and positive ways (Chickering, 1969; Delaney, 2008; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Jacob, 1957; Terenzini, Theophilides, & Lorang, 1984). Further, the quality and quantity of the interactions
affect both the perception and value of these interactions (Endo & Harpel, 1982; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Sax et al., 2005).

Despite this consensus, there appears to be a lack of understanding of the value of the interactions as well as limited understanding of how faculty and students view engagement and how to encourage it (Cotten & Wilson, 2006; Cox & Oreovec, 2007). Even when faculty and students place a value on the interactions, they disagree about what these types of interactions should look like (Cotten & Wilson, 2006; Olsen, Kuh, Schilling, Schilling, Connolly, Simmons, & Vesper, 1998). For instance, Olsen et al. (1998) determined that many times students misunderstand what they should expect a faculty member’s role to be during the student’s first year of college and see the interaction to be more social versus connected to academics.

Further, the type of interaction between student and faculty appears to matter in students’ ability to engage with their institution and, in turn, impacts their future academic and social outcomes (Astin, 1993; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Jacobi, 1991; Komarraju et al., 2010; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). Student characteristics such as race, gender, and parents’ educational background (first-generation), may also impact a student’s ability to interact with faculty and also contribute to different experiences with faculty (Komarraju et al., 2010). This means that faculty must not only be aware of the needs of students, but also how to make meaningful connections with students.

The ability of students to become engaged in the classroom has been connected to increased quality of faculty interactions and, in turn, student success (Astin, 1993; Endo & Harpel, 2002; Kuh et al., 2008; Tinto, 1997). The curricular choices of faculty as well as the pedagogical choices, specifically active learning, are ways that faculty can encourage student engagement within the classroom (Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000; Braxton, Jones, Hirschy,
Lastly, the classroom can also be viewed as a way for students to develop a network of peers that encourage students to connect with their institution and encourage engagement (Delaney, 2008; Pascarella et al., 2004; Tinto, 1997). For many students, particularly commuters or part-time students, the classroom may be the only point of contact in order to become connected to the institution; therefore, the role of faculty becomes increasingly important (Kuh et al., 2008).

Kuh et al. (2008) discussed this growing importance of student-faculty interaction within the classroom community. Many factors, such as participating in a learning community may encourage students to become more connected with their institution and contribute to persistence (Engstrom, 2008; Tinto, 1997). Tinto (1997) concluded that classrooms could even be seen as smaller versions of learning communities and serve an equally important role.

According to Delaney (2008), engagement within the classroom contributed to increased positive outcomes such as higher grade point averages, academic successes and persistence to graduation. Delaney (2008) further recognized the importance of student-faculty interaction during the first year of college, which leads to positive outcomes for students. The significance of these relationships reinforces the increasing need for faculty to be involved in students’ success, both in terms of learning and progression towards their degree.

There are two important ways that faculty purposefully interact with students: active learning, which requires students to be consistently participate in classroom knowledge construction, and intentional establishment of peer networks. Since it has been established that it is necessary to examine faculty involvement in the success of students within the classroom (Engstrom, 2008; Braxton, et al., 2000; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005), the role of active learning and its connection to student persistence has also been a focus (Braxton et al., 2000;
Braxton et al., 2008; Engstrom, 2008). Researchers argued that the use of active learning strategies within the classroom contributed to increased student engagement, which helped enhance student learning and persistence (Astin, 1993; Braxton et al., 2000; Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006; McClenny & Greene, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Research demonstrated that the implementation of active learning techniques by faculty contributed to students’ ability to attain and comprehend course content (Anderson & Adams, 1992; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991; McKeachie, Pintrich, Yi-Guang, & Smith, 1986).

Braxton et al. (2000) demonstrated that there is a connection between increased utilization of active learning by faculty and students’ ability to better connect, become integrated socially, and persist to graduation. Braxton et al. (2000) concluded that three of the four “indices of active learning wield a statistically significant influence on one or more of the central constructs of this study’s theoretical perspective: social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and students’ intent to return” (p. 581). Through understanding the role of active learning and the aspects that influence student success, Braxton et al. (2000) further concluded that their study adds to the growing body of research that faculty behaviors play a significant part in active learning and social integration of students. Braxton et al. (2000) suggested that data from research that examined faculty classroom behaviors could lead to conclusions about the role of teaching as it influences a student’s social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and departure decisions.

Further, Braxton et al. (2008) conducted a study focused primarily on the influence of active learning within the classroom. This research is crucial because it relates the importance of increasing the frequency of student-faculty interaction to the type of interaction, primarily active
learning, which was found to contribute to college student success and persistence (Braxton et al., 2008). Overall, they argued that “faculty use of active learning practices plays a significant role in the retention of first-year college students” (Braxton et al., 2008, p. 81).

Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) studied the role of faculty in student learning and engagement and its effect on student perception of their experience. This key element explored the relationships between faculty and students and noted the critical nature of students needing more active and collaborative challenges in their learning activities. Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) argued that these interactions not only related positively within the classroom, but the gains were seen in personal development as well. The most significant result was that faculty are seen as holding the key to student learning, and, therefore, their ability to connect with students is an even more important factor in student persistence.

The ability of students to become engaged in the classroom has been connected to increased quality of faculty interactions and, in turn, student success (Astin, 1993; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Komarraju et al., 2010; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Tinto, 1997; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). The curricular choices of faculty as well as the pedagogical choices, specifically active learning, are ways that faculty can encourage student engagement within the classroom (Braxton et al., 2008; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). Specifically, Reason, Cox, Quaye and Terenzini (2010) concluded that “faculty members who engage in active teaching and assessment practices…were more likely to encourage encounters with difference” (p. 409).

Student-faculty interactions not only exist within the classroom but also continue beyond the walls of the classroom. The types of student-faculty interactions that occur outside the classroom are often as critical as those found within the classroom; however, many times students are not participating in this type of interaction (Astin, 1993; Cotten & Wilson, 2006;
Endo & Harpel, 1982; Kuh & Hu, 2001). Endo and Harpel (1982) expanded on earlier research and confirmed that positive student-faculty interactions were shown to impact intellectual development and outcomes. These researchers determined that informal interactions were more influential on outcomes than formal interactions, specifically in regards to intellectual development.

Cotten and Wilson (2006) found that students’ failed to understand that “faculty are available to do more than help them with homework” (p. 497). However, although third- and fourth-year students recognized that faculty relationships were significant, the reasons why were “related to specific problems and needs, rather than to intellectual curiosity” (Cotten & Wilson, 2006, p. 497). More important to the proposed research study is the underlying cause for students’ lack of awareness as to why student-faculty interactions are not important and what their role is in student success (Cotten & Wilson, 2006). Further, Cotten and Wilson (2006) found that when the interactions did occur they tended “to be brief, and centered on specific, course related issues” (p. 508).

There are numerous reasons for students’ lack of attention to faculty interactions. For instance, Cotten and Wilson (2006) suggested that “students may not feel sufficiently comfortable with faculty to actually approach them” and that these students “need active and consistent encouragement in order to be reassured that their inquiries are welcome and that they will be taken seriously” (p. 508). Cotten and Wilson (2006) further discovered that those students who participated in targeted programs (e.g., faculty mentor program) had increased interactions. Even still, these students did not initially understand the value of the program in which they were participating. Also, many students did not see that the benefits outweighed the costs of interacting with faculty members outside of the classroom and many indicated they were
simply too busy to make time for interactions. Further, Cotten and Wilson (2006) argued that when students “feel comfortable with faculty inside of the classroom, they are more likely to feel comfortable approaching them outside of the classroom” (p. 505).

The differences in the types of informal student-faculty interactions can also affect the corresponding learning outcomes a student may or may not experience (Komarraju et al., 2010). They vary in terms of length, frequency, and type and all affect the efficacy of these interactions (Cox & Orehopec, 2007; Cotten & Wilson, 2006; Delaney, 2008; Iverson, Pascarella, & Terenzini, 1984; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). The types can vary from brief, incidental or even unplanned interactions to more in-depth, mentoring relationships (Cox & Orehopec, 2007). Relationships that students have with faculty members have been linked to the academic (Terenzini et al., 1984) and social outcomes are clearly an important factor in students’ success (Chickering, 1969; Komarraju et al., 2010). However, Cotten and Wilson (2006) implied that academic growth may be hindered by a students’ inability to have interest in their own learning and this in turn impacted the frequency of informal interactions with faculty.

A student’s ability to feel comfortable approaching faculty is particularly important in terms of students’ ability to be interested, engaged, and actively involved in the process of learning (Thompson, 2001; Woodside, Wong, & Weist, 1999). Cox and Orehopec (2007) studied a residential college and expected to find an increase of close student-faculty interactions outside of the classroom, however, discovered that there was a lack of “meaningful interactions between students and faculty members outside the class” (p. 357). The differences in the types of interactions can also affect the corresponding learning outcomes a student may or may not experience (Endo & Harpel, 1982; Komarraju et al., 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).
Regardless of how short or informal the interactions may seem, they impact a student’s ability to do well academically, be satisfied with their college experience, and develop on a personal and intellectual level (Halawah, 2006; Iverson, et al., 1984; Lamport, 1993; Rosenthal, Folse, Allerman, Bourdeaux, Soper, & Von Bergen, 2000). Cox and Orehovec (2007) confirmed “that all interactions (except disengagement) have value and that the value of a particular type of interaction is dependent upon the individual student and the context(s) in which such interactions take place” (p. 358). Other researchers have found that informal interactions can be increasingly important within the first year of college because they help students connect what they are learning both inside and outside the classroom (Goodman & Pascarella, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Research conducted by Cox and Orehovec (2007) emphasized the importance of determining the types of faculty interactions that are possible and the frequency that these types occur out of the classroom. The most valued type of interaction may often times be seen as the most intrusive interaction such as mentoring; however, this study provided support to the notion that any engagement between faculty and students is relevant and has value (Cox & Orehovec, 2007). Although these less invasive encounters may be seen as insignificant, Cox and Orehovec (2007) pointed out that they may also “serve as a stepping stone to more substantial interactions later” (p. 360).

Like Cox and Orehovec (2007), Komarraju et al. (2010) examined the importance of faculty interactions as well as the types of faculty interactions and how they relate to academic self-concept, motivation, and achievement of the students. Komarraju et al. (2010) discovered that indeed student-faculty interactions are important to student motivation; however more importantly “that students’ perceptions of faculty members as being genuinely respectful toward
them are associated with stronger student self-confidence and motivation” and further, those identified as “at risk” are “most likely to perceive faculty members to be less respectful and less interested in their learning and progress” (p. 339). This study provided empirical evidence in support of the need for quality informal student-faculty interactions for all students, which may result in increases in students’ self-confidence, motivation and achievement.

In addition to the impact of various types of interactions, characteristics such as gender, race, and ethnicity have been shown to relate to the interaction/experience/relationship that students have with faculty members (Cole, 2007; Delaney, 2008; Kim & Sax, 2009; Komarraju et al., 2010; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Padgett et al., 2012; Pascarella et al., 2004). This is particularly important in the case of at-risk populations. Komarraju et al. (2010) intimated that at-risk populations, or those that struggle to persist to graduation, including first-generation college students, tend to feel that their faculty members are less considerate and less concerned with their academic advancement. Pascarella et al. (2004) noted that although no causal, clear connections can be made, there is some evidence showing that the interactions these first-generation students experience within the classroom with faculty members added to their social capital and ultimate social integration, thereby, contributing to their persistence to graduation. Therefore, there appears to be value added to the overall experience of first-generation students by simply interacting with faculty members. The literature regarding student-faculty interactions involving first-generation college students demonstrated that interaction with faculty has a meaningful impact on students’ success, institutional engagement, and satisfaction with their college experience (Chickering, 1969; Delaney, 2008; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Halawah, 2006; Kuh & Hu, 2001).
Kim and Sax (2009) did find, though, that second-generation college students were more likely than first-generation college students to “assist faculty with research for course credit, communicate with faculty by email or in person, and interact with faculty during lecture sessions” (Kim & Sax, 2009, p. 443). Kim and Sax (2009) concluded that “first generation college students tend to less frequently assist faculty with research for course credit, communicate with faculty during lecture class sessions than non-first generation students” and are less satisfied with their experiences with faculty (p. 452). Also, not only is frequency of faculty interaction important, but also whether or not the students were satisfied with the interaction. Kim and Sax (2009) found that first-generation college students were less satisfied “with both advising by faculty on academic matters and access to faculty outside of class” (p. 445).

However, Kim and Sax (2009) cautioned that first-generation students may not be all that different than their continuing-generation peers in the impact that faculty have on their success. Although the rates of interaction varied between first- and continuing-generation students, the value and impact of these interactions were largely consistent. Kim and Sax (2009) reported that in both cases “the effects…were both significant and positive” (p. 450). In one key measure, though, there was a significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students: course-related faculty interaction did not improve college GPA for first-generation college students, yet did in second-generation students.

More recently, in a large comparative study of first-generation and continuing-generation students, Padgett et al. (2012) utilized longitudinal data from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education to examine cognitive and psychosocial outcomes. Their study provided evidence in support of previous research conducted on these two populations of students and
confirmed that first-generation students are indeed at risk and at a substantial disadvantage in college. More specifically, Padgett et al. (2012) suggested that “first-generation students are underprepared to interact with faculty upon entering college” (p. 261). They concluded that this may be attributed to their lack of connection with their high school teachers and this may translate to an increased level of discomfort in the college classroom with their faculty members. Their deficit of preparation and/or knowledge of the importance may be due to their lack of social and academic capital when entering college.

Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) focused primarily on items that indicated increased interaction between faculty and students and found that faculty and their role in the academic environment are critically important in the success of first-generation college students. They stated that “validation is most effective early in the college experience and it occurs when faculty actively seek to reaffirm first-generation students” (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005, p. 421). Although there are differences between the factors that contribute to the success of first-generation and continuing-generation college students, Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) did not find that precollege characteristic variables were significantly important in either sample of students.

As noted in the previous sections, student-faculty interactions correlate to positive academic and social outcomes (i.e., persistence) for many groups of students, including at-risk populations like first-generation college students (Cole, 2007; Delaney, 2008; Kim & Sax, 2009; Komarraju et al., 2010; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Padgett et al., 2012; Pascarella et al., 2004). Both formal classroom and informal interactions can have an impact on student outcomes (Astin, 1993; Cotten & Wilson, 2006; Kim & Sax, 2009; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977; Sax et al., 2005). For example, Bradley et al. (2002) found that students who tend to be involved in campus “activities, coursework, peer interactions” also
expect to be involved with their faculty (p. 80). However, the likelihood a student will seek out these interactions may be negatively impacted by precollege characteristics, including first-generation status, which may result in a lack of knowledge about or appropriate expectations for faculty relationships (Padgett et al., 2012). Also, they suggested that “first-generation students are underprepared to interact with faculty” (p. 261).

Further research by Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006) focused on student expectations and whether or not these impacted satisfaction in a course. Their belief is that in order to understand students’ satisfaction in a course, which should be critical to faculty, it is necessary to first understand student expectations in order to meet them within the classroom experience. Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006) discovered in the first study that “students whose expectations were exceeded were more satisfied than those for whom the cohort experience fell short of expectations” (p. 258).

As noted previously, the best way to measure expectations may not be in conjunction with measuring student experience or satisfaction at the end of the course but prior to the start of the course, therefore, study two focused on the latter approach. Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006) pointed out that not only the timing of the assessment of expectations should be important but also the timing of any evaluations for satisfaction. Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006) discovered:

that students’ post-course assessment of whether their expectations were fulfilled does not match their actual levels of positive or negative disconfirmation as measured by a comparison between their actual expectations prior to the course and their perceptions at the end of the semester. In fact students who state that their expectations were met show
significant levels of disconfirmation of expectations of three of the five levels measured. (p. 260)

Therefore, they concluded that perhaps in the first study students were forming expectations based on their experiences since both were measured after the course was complete.

In both of these studies, it was shown that there was a need to examine expectations that students have more closely as they relate to satisfaction. Moreover, it is important to realize that simply fulfilling students’ expectations of a course does not necessarily equate to satisfied students (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006). In an effort to better understand how student expectations impact satisfaction, Crisp et al. (2009) utilized approximately 2,000 total student surveys regarding their expectations. Staff focus groups were asked to then react to the student expectation responses. Many of the findings in this study were in line with the Brinkworth et al. (2009) study. Crisp et al. (2009) confirmed the findings of Brinkworth et al. (2009) that students expected to have feedback on their work. The main discovery, is that faculty work together with students to identify students’ expectations as well as revisiting expectations at the end of the course. Understanding expectations of courses directly relate to understanding student expectations of faculty and can help faculty and administrators design curriculum that better aligns with these expectations.

Summary

As the literature presented in Chapter Two demonstrates, student engagement has an important influence on the ability for students to persist in higher education. This engagement is predicated upon specific kinds of expectations, including those surrounding student-faculty interactions, which are particularly important to student success. Therefore, the present study examined the expectation of these types of experiences in order to understand how expectations
may impact outcomes of success such as grade point average and persistence. As noted in the literature, special interest must be given to first-generation college students. This group tends to be less engaged and less likely to have positive outcomes of success. The present study examined whether or not a relationship exists between first-generation college students’ expectations for faculty experiences and their success, as measured by grade point average after the first year and persistence to the second year of college. Further, the present study sought to inform and fill the gap in the literature regarding first-generation students, student expectations for student-faculty interactions and different outcomes of success.

Chapter Three discusses the study’s research design, population, and sample as well as the data source that was utilized. Additionally, Chapter Three describes the study’s instrument, The College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ), and its administration.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

The review of the literature outlined the importance of student-faculty interactions and their impact on student engagement and, ultimately, success in college. Further, research suggests there is a connection between student expectations and their experiences in college. However, few researchers discuss the correlation between student expectations and outcomes, such as success in academic performance, and this is an area that needs to be explored further. The present study contributed to this area of the research through examining student expectations of student-faculty experiences and their possible correlation to student success at the University of South Florida. Chapter Three will discuss the study’s research design, population, and sample as well as the data source that was utilized. Additionally, Chapter Three will describe the study’s instrument, The College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ), and its administration.

There are seven main research questions central to the study:

1. Prior to entering college, are there significant differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ expectations for experiences with faculty?

2. Is there a significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students in first-year academic performance, as measured by college grade point average, while controlling for high school grade point average?
3. Is there a significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students in first-year academic performance, as measured by persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average?

4. What is the relationship between first-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by college grade point average, while controlling for high school grade point average?

5. What is the relationship between first-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average?

6. What is the relationship between continuing-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by college grade point average, while controlling for high school grade point average?

7. What is the relationship between continuing-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average?

**Research Design**

The study analyzed secondary data from the College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ) and examined possible differences between first- and continuing-generation college students’ expectations of student-faculty experiences. Further, the study utilized a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to determine whether or not first- and continuing-
generation college students at the University of South Florida have different outcomes of academic performance, while controlling for high school GPA based on institutional data. The study utilized the CSXQ secondary data to explore the potential partial correlational relationship between first-generation college students’ expectations for faculty experiences and their academic performance after year one. Additionally, the study examined the possible partial correlational relationship between continuing-generation students’ expectations for faculty experiences and their academic performance after the first year of college. In both cases, academic performance was measured by cumulative first-year college GPA and enrollment in the second year of college, while controlling for high school GPA.

Population and Sample

This study utilized data collected from the CSXQ, in addition to institutional data obtained from the University of South Florida (USF), in order to evaluate first-year, FTIC undergraduate students’ expectations of faculty experiences. The population included students from the USF Tampa Campus, which is a large, public, highly research active, metropolitan university located in West-Central Florida. The USF Tampa Campus, located near downtown Tampa in Hillsborough County, is comprised of 273 buildings and covers 1,562 acres (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013). Further, the USF Tampa Campus has over 1,400 full-time faculty and close to 4,000 administrative and professional as well as university support personnel (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013).

USF Tampa is part of the larger University of South Florida system, which also includes the USF St. Petersburg and USF Sarasota-Manatee campuses. These three separately accredited institutions serve more than 47,000 students (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013). USF has
an annual budget of $1.5 billion and an annual impact of $3.7 billion on the surrounding community (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013).

In Fall 2012, USF Tampa was comprised of 30,000 undergraduate students; more than 23,000 students attended full-time (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013). Additionally, the entering first-year, FTIC students totaled 2,801 and had the following entrance measures: an average high school GPA of 3.88, average SAT of 1191, and average ACT of 27; additionally, 50% were in the top 20% of their class (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013). The USF Office of Decision Support reported the student-to-faculty ratio in Fall 2011 to be 27:1 at USF Tampa. According to the most recent available data, first-year, full-time students who entered during the Summer or Fall 2011 semesters were reported to persist to the second year (Fall 2012) at a rate of 87%. Additionally, the six-year graduation rate for the 2005 cohort was reported as 52% (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013). Figure 2 offers information on student headcount trends for USF Tampa for the past five years. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the first-time in college students at USF Tampa who applied, were accepted and enrolled for the past five years.

Figure 2. Student Headcount Trends USF Tampa (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013)
To better understand the population under consideration in this study, additional background information regarding the USF Tampa Campus student population in 2008 follows. The average standardized test scores of those students who entered in Fall 2008 were SAT Reading 564, SAT Math 578, SAT Writing 533, and ACT Composite of 25 (Princeton Review, 2008-2009). The average GPA of FTIC freshmen was reported as 3.73 and 92 percent of Florida resident students were recipients of Bright Futures scholarships, for which eligibility is based on a strong academic record. For the 2008-2009 academic year, over ten thousand students received Pell Grants totaling over 32 million dollars (State University System of Florida, 2013) Overall, 52 percent of FTIC students were in the top 20 percent of their high school class and over 30 percent were minority students (African American, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Other/Not Reported) (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013). Over 58% of undergraduate students enrolled in the Fall of 2008 were female. Since its beginning, USF Tampa has been considered a commuter school, and in Fall 2008, only 54% of students lived in on-campus housing (USF Office of Decision Support, 2013).
During the Fall 2008 semester, there were a total of 1,437 instructional faculty at the USF Tampa campus. Of that number, approximately 80 percent of faculty members had earned a terminal degree and 447 were ranked as Professor (USF Office of Decision Support). Although the student-to-faculty ratio was listed as 19:1 for the 2008 academic year, class sizes vary widely dependent on a students’ classification. For example, it is not uncommon for lower-level, introductory classes to have very high enrollment in lecture sections, with smaller recitation or discussion sections attached and led by graduate teaching assistants. However, as students move through upper-level coursework, class sizes tend to become much smaller and are more commonly led by faculty themselves.

The data set includes 3,234 FTIC student responses from fully completed CSXQ surveys in the paper format during Summer orientation of 2008. Additionally, the study sample only included those students whose CSXQ answers were connected to their university identification number. Information regarding this sample’s responses to the CSXQ as well as institutional data via the university identification number was also utilized. All responses were anonymous, as the researcher did not have access to the students’ personally identifiable information in order to protect the students’ identities.

The study delimited the sample to traditional-aged students and used the criteria of age (19 years or younger) based on institutional data. Further, only students who were taking a full-time load, considered twelve or more credit hours in each semester (Fall 2008 and Spring 2009) were considered in this sample. The sample was delimited to include only those students who answered the question “Did either of your parents graduate from college?” with any of the following answers: “no” or “yes, both parents” or “yes, father only” or “yes, mother only”. Each student was coded depending on their status as either a first- or continuing-generation college
student. A student who responded with “don’t know” in response to parental education level was not included as part of the data set. The data set also included only those students with a reported cumulative GPA at the end of Spring 2009 and had enrollment data for the Fall 2009 term.

**Variables**

Multiple variables were examined in the study as follows:

1. Parent education status (CGSFGS) - this variable is measured in two ways depending on the answer to the question regarding the student’s educational level. Also referred to as parental status.

2. First-generation college students (FGS) - refers to those students who respond as “no” to the question on the CSXQ that asks “Did either of your parents graduate from college?” These students were coded with a value of 0.

3. Continuing-generation students (CGS) - refers to those students who respond as “yes, both parents” or “yes, father only” or “yes, mother only” to the question on the CSXQ that asks “Did either of your parents graduate from college?” These students were coded with a value of 1.

4. Academic performance - this dependent variable was measured in two ways. The first measurement is first-year cumulative GPA, and the second measurement is enrollment in the second year of college. These students have also completed a minimum of 12 credits in each of the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 semesters.

5. First-year cumulative college GPA - this is a measure of all the grades received by a student during Summer 2008, Fall 2008, Spring 2009. This GPA was based on institutional data and used a 4.0 scale. This is a continuous variable.
6. Persistence to second year of college - refers to whether a first-year student re-enrolls for his or her second year of college. This is defined as those students admitted and enrolled in Fall 2008 who then re-enroll in the Fall 2009 semester. This is a categorical measure that differentiates those who re-enroll in Fall 2009 semester and those who do not re-enroll in Fall 2009 coursework. Since it is a dichotomous categorical dependent variable, students who do not re-enroll were coded with a value of 0 and students who reenroll were coded with a value of 1.

7. High school GPA - this was based on institutional data collected from the Admissions office at USF Tampa Campus. It was a recalculated, weighted GPA that was comprised of grades received by a student during high school and took into account accelerated coursework (AP/IB/Dual Enrollment/Honors Courses). This is a continuous variable.

8. Expectations for experiences with faculty - this was measured in the “College Activities” section of the CSXQ in the category “Experiences with Faculty.” This category was comprised of seven different questions that related to how students expected their experience to be with the faculty on their campus. Students were provided with directions that stated “DIRECTIONS: During the coming year in college, how often do you expect to do the following? Indicate your response by filling in one of the circles to the right of each statement.” The descriptive analysis of these variables looked at the responses to each question individually and collectively using a four level scale of “Very Often,” “Often,” “Occasionally,” and “Never.” Each of these levels of responses was coded as follows: very often = 4, often = 3, occasionally = 2, and never = 1.
Kuh and Pace’s (1999) CSXQ stated these questions as follows and were coded by FAC1_, FAC2_, FAC3_, FAC4_, FAC6_, FAC8_, FAC10_:

FAC1_  Ask your instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.)

FAC2_  Discuss your academic program or course selection with a faculty member.

FAC3_  Discuss ideas for a term paper or other class project with a faculty member.

FAC4_  Discuss your career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.

FAC6_  Socialize with a faculty member outside of classroom (have a snack or soft drink, etc.)

FAC8_  Ask your instructor for comments and criticisms about your academic performance.

FAC10_  Work with a faculty member on a research project.

These variables were defined as independent or dependent based on the research question as follows:

Independent variable for the first, second, and third research questions was parent education status. This is a categorical measure of the independent variable, resulting in the dichotomous classification of first-generation students and continuing-generation college students. These independent variables were coded with a value of 0 for first-generation college students and a value of 1 for continuing-generation college students. The label for this variable is CGS_FGS.
For research questions four and five, the independent variable was expectations for experiences with faculty and was the composite score of the responses to all seven questions in the “Experiences with Faculty” section in the category of “College Activities” in CSXQ.

For the first research question, the dependent variables were the individual responses to each of the seven questions in the “Experiences with Faculty” section in the category of “College Activities” in the CSXQ.

For the second and fourth research question, the dependent variable was academic performance, as measured by first-year college cumulative grade point average.

For the third and fifth research question, the dependent variable was academic performance, as measured by persistence to the second year of college.

Instrument

The College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ) was chosen for the proposed study because it has been proven to measure the expectations of students prior to entry into college. This questionnaire was adapted from the College Student Experiences Questionnaire, is in its 2nd edition, and was originally created in 1997 (Kuh, Gonyea, & Williams, 2005; Kuh & Pace, 1999). The CSXQ was designed by Kuh and Pace to gather empirical data regarding “student expectations for college, including their attitudes and beliefs about how they will spend their time during their first year” (Kuh, et al., 2005, p. 40). The instrument takes approximately 30 minutes for students to complete and can be administered either online or on paper. The questionnaire is normally administered before the fall semester begins (Kuh & Pace, 1999).

The intent of the questionnaire is to gauge the goals, motivations and expectations students hold in the following areas: “College Activities,” “Conversations,” “Reading/Writing,” “Opinion about College” and “The College Environment.” The “College Activities” section
includes sub-sections such as “Library and Information Technology,” “Experiences with Faculty,” “Course Learning,” “Writing,” “Campus Facilities,” “Student Acquaintances” and “Scientific and Quantitative Experiences.” The CSXQ also includes a section at the end of the survey for the institution to create and include 20 additional questions, demographic and background information as well as a place for the student to include a university identification number so CSXQ responses may be viewed in relation to the student’s academic record (Kuh & Pace, 1999). Among the noted uses for the survey, the CSXQ may be used to gauge “new student expectations of the nature and frequency of interactions with faculty members” (Indiana University Bloomington, 2007).

Student expectations for experiences with faculty were measured in the College Activities section of the CSXQ in the category “Experiences with Faculty.” Students are asked to respond to seven different questions that relate to how they expect their experience to be with the faculty on their campus. Directions at the top of the CSXQ, College Activities category are the following: “During the coming year in college, how often do you expect to do the following? Indicate your response by filling in one of the circles to the right of each statement.” The students have four different levels of expectations including: “Very Often,” “Often,” “Occasionally,” and “Never.” The seven questions in this section are as follows:

FAC1_ Ask your instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.)

FAC2_ Discuss your academic program or course selection with a faculty member.

FAC3_ Discuss ideas for a term paper or other class project with a faculty member.
FAC4_ Discuss your career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.

FAC6_ Socialize with a faculty member outside of classroom (have a snack or soft drink, etc.)

FAC8_ Ask your instructor for comments and criticisms about your academic performance.

FAC10_ Work with a faculty member on a research project.

**Instrument Administration**

In Summer 2008, the Division of Student Affairs, in partnership with the Office of Orientation, collected the CSXQ data. The Office of New Student Connections, an entity within the Division of Student Affairs, administered and collected the CSXQ instrument with the assistance of orientation team leaders during summer orientation sessions. In order to ensure the confidentiality of the students who completed the CSXQ, the Director of Student Affairs Planning, Evaluation and Assessment oversaw the scoring and coding of the collected data so that individual students could not be identified. The Student Affairs Planning, Evaluation, and Assessment Department at USF provided additional institutional data. These data items, such as college grade point average after the first year of college, enrollment in the Fall Semester of year two, and credit hours earned prior to entering USF were utilized in this study in order to evaluate persistence and success.

**Reliability and Validity of Data Source**

In terms of the reliability and validity of CSXQ, Kuh et al. (2005) demonstrated that “the reliability coefficients were acceptable, ranging from .60 to .86 for the ‘experience’ factors and between .70 and .89 for the ‘expectation’ factors” (p. 43). The Center for the Study of Postsecondary Research reported on the analysis of over 50,000 national CSXQ records.
indicated in Table 1. Table 1 represents the Cronbach’s Alpha score of .84 and intercorrelations for “Experiences with Faculty” that range from $r = .24$ to $r = .58$. This table reinforces the findings of Kuh et al. (2005) that CSXQ data demonstrated reliability and validity over time.

| Table 1: Cronbach’s Alpha for Experiences with Faculty (National Data) |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FAC1_ | 1.000 |
| FAC2_ | .58 | 1.000 |
| FAC3_ | .46 | .56 | 1.000 |
| FAC4_ | .39 | .56 | .57 | 1.000 |
| FAC6_ | .24 | .34 | .36 | .43 | 1.000 |
| FAC8_ | .40 | .46 | .49 | .48 | .41 | 1.000 |
| FAC10_ | .30 | .38 | .44 | .41 | .43 | .48 | 1.000 |

Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.84$

(Center for the Study of Postsecondary Research, 2005)

The study’s data set was analyzed and Table 2 represents the Cronbach’s Alpha and intercorrelations for the USF data set. This was done in order to confirm CSXQ’s reliability of this particular data set. The reliability analysis was performed in SPSS and the USF data set had a Cronbach’s Alpha score of .82 and intercorrelations for “Experiences with Faculty” ranged from $r = .20$ to $r = .55$. The results from the CSXQ USF data set are in line with the nationally reported data from the Center for the Study of Postsecondary Research.

| Table 2: Cronbach’s Alpha for Experiences with Faculty (USF Data Set) |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FAC1_ | 1.000 |
| FAC2_ | .552 | 1.000 |
| FAC3_ | .406 | .524 | 1.000 |
| FAC4_ | .366 | .517 | .536 | 1.000 |
| FAC6_ | .204 | .268 | .334 | .379 | 1.000 |
| FAC8_ | .403 | .426 | .435 | .436 | .348 | 1.000 |
| FAC10_ | .246 | .344 | .407 | .365 | .415 | .424 | 1.000 |

Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.82$
Data Analysis Procedures

For the purpose of the study, statistical analysis of the data was completed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Each variable was analyzed based on descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency, variability, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values, skewness, and kurtosis. For all inferential statistics, alpha was set at .05. In addition to the descriptive statistics, an explanation of the statistical analysis procedures were used to analyze the study’s research questions as follows:

Question One: The multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine if there were any statistically significant differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ responses to each of the seven questions in the section in the CSXQ titled “College Activities” regarding their expectations for experiences with faculty. Additionally, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to establish if there was a statistically significant difference between aggregate responses of first- and continuing-generation students regarding their expectations for experiences with faculty.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is a useful statistical method that allows researchers to view the data from a multivariate perspective by determining if a difference exists between groups with multiple dependent variables (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). “Multivariate analysis of variance helps the researcher conceptualize and analyze the nature of these interrelated characteristics, and determine whether the groups being studied differed on them” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 324).

Question Two: The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students’
academic performance, as measured by grade point average after the first year of college, while controlling for high school GPA.

The ANCOVA, a variation of the ANOVA method, allows researchers to control for the initial difference in high school GPA the students may have. High school GPA may be considered a control variable in an ANCOVA. “The effect of ANCOVA is to make the two groups equal with respect to one or more control variables. If a difference still remains between the two groups, we cannot use the control variable to explain the effect” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 320). This method is necessary since high school GPA has been found to impact academic performance in college, so controlling for this variable is essential.

Question Three: A logistic regression was utilized to discern if there was a statistically significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students’ academic performance, as measured by enrollment in the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average. Gall et al. (2007) stated that this type of analysis is used “for determining the correlation between a dichotomous criterion variable and a set of predictor variables” (p. 354). This technique was chosen since the dependent variable of whether or not the student enrolled is a dichotomous, categorical variable.

Question Four and Six: A second order Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the possibility of a relationship and its strength between students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and academic performance, as measured by first-year college GPA, while controlling for high school GPA. Question four focused on first-generation college students and question six focused on continuing-generation college students.
A correlational research design is useful to researchers who hope to determine if a relationship exists and what the degree of the relationship is between the variables being studied (Gall et al., 2007). The study utilized a second order Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, also referred to as a Pearson r, in order to determine if, and to what degree, the relationship between expectations of students (first- or continuing-generation) and their first-year college GPA, while controlling for high school GPA. Gall et al., (2007) stated, “the product-moment correlation coefficient (r) is computed when both variables that we wish to correlate are expressed as continuous scores” (p. 347). This method of correlational testing would be appropriate since both variables are continuous (expectations and GPA).

Question Five and Seven: A second order point-biserial correlation technique was utilized to determine if a relationship existed and its strength between students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and academic performance, as measured by their persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school GPA. Question five focused on first-generation college students and question seven focused on continuing-generation college students.

The second order point-biserial correlation technique was performed in order to examine if, and to what degree, a relationship existed between the variable of expectations and student enrollment in the second year, while controlling for high school GPA. Point-biserial correlation technique is used when the first variable is continuous and the second variable is a true dichotomous categorical variable (Gall et al., 2007). This technique was used to analyze the data in response to both questions since the variable of enrollment is a true dichotomy (enrolled or not enrolled) in year two.
Summary

The study included secondary data analysis of the expectations of first-time in college students at the University of South Florida. The data file from the Director for Student Affairs Planning, Assessment and Evaluation was obtained in order to complete the statistical analysis. Chapter Four presents the findings of the statistical analysis in order to answer each of the research questions.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this investigation was to determine if a relationship exists between first-generation college students’ expectations for faculty experiences and their success, as measured by grade point average after the first year and persistence to the second year of college. The study examined whether or not students’ expectations for faculty experiences differ based on whether or not they have parents who graduated from college. Establishing whether differences existed between first- and continuing-generation college students was important to understand the impact of expectations. This study focused mainly on first-generation college students’ expectations for experiences with faculty. Further, the study investigated the possible connection between students’ expectations for student-faculty experiences and their persistence (as measured by enrollment in year two) and success (as measured by first-year grade point average). Chapter Four will begin with the descriptive statistics for each of the variables of the study and will then go into the results for each of the seven research questions.

In general, this study found no statistically significant differences between first- and continuing-generation college students’ expectations for experiences with faculty. Also, the study found no statistically significant differences between first- and continuing-generation college students’ success, as measured by first-year grade point average and persistence to the second year of college. Finally, the study found no correlation between expectations of faculty experiences and success.
Survey Responses

The original data set included 3,533 students who completed the CSXQ during orientation in the summer of 2008. All respondents were over the age of 19 and had completed 12 or more credit hours in the Fall of 2008 and Spring of 2009 semesters. All of these records were connected to university identification numbers so institutional data that was available was included.

The data set was then coded and missing records were removed. Students who did not answer the appropriate questions on the CSXQ (expectations of faculty experiences and whether or not the student’s parent graduated college) were removed from the data set. It should also be noted that 63 students answered “Do not know” to the parent education status question and were removed.

Sample Population and Demographic Profile

The final data set resulted in 3,234 students who met all the criteria with completed CSXQ surveys and matching institutional records. Of that group, 1,229 students reported their status as first-generation college students and were coded accordingly, while 2,005 reported their status as continuing-generation college students. Table 3 details student frequencies and percentages based on their CSXQ responses. It is also represented in Figure 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Frequency Distribution for FGS and CGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 presents a comparison of the mean high school grade point average for first- and continuing-generation college students as well as the mean of the original data set.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Status</th>
<th>High School GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FGS</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGS</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Research Questions

In what follows, the findings of this study will be broken down by research question and the analysis of each question will be discussed. For each of the statistical tests, findings were only considered significant at α=.05.

The data set includes the answers to the CSXQ subsection regarding expectations for faculty experiences (QEFAC). The range of the scores for QEFAC was from 7 to 28. The aggregate mean of all seven questions for the data set in this section was 18.42; the median was 18; the mode was 17.
Analysis of Research Question One

Question One: Prior to entering college, are there significant differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ expectations for experiences with faculty?

To answer research question one, a MANOVA was used to determine if there were any statistically significant differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ responses to each of the seven questions in the section in the CSXQ titled “College Activities” regarding their expectations for experiences with faculty. The results revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ expectations for experiences with faculty.

According to the data in Table 5, the descriptive analysis of the variable expectations for experiences with faculty revealed means between 1.85 and 3.34. The lowest mean was related to the question “Socialize with a faculty member outside of classroom (have a snack or soft drink, etc.)” and the highest response mean was related to the question, “Ask your instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.).” The descriptive analysis reported individual responses to each question using a four level scale of “Very Often,” “Often,” “Occasionally,” and “Never.” Each of these levels of responses was coded as follows: very often=4, often=3, occasionally =2, and never=1. Two important findings were discovered: first, individual FGS and CGS results showed only slight deviations from the mean for their group, which indicates that respondents’ expectations were largely uniform within each group (Table 5). Second, the means for each group are similar to one another, which suggests the two groups had similar expectations for experiences with faculty.
Table 5: Experience with Faculty Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiences with Faculty</th>
<th>Parent Status</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAC1_ Ask your instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.)</td>
<td>FGS</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.701</td>
<td>1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC1_ Ask your instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.)</td>
<td>CGS</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.727</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC1_ Ask your instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up work, assignments, etc.)</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.718</td>
<td>3234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC2_ Discuss your academic program or course selection with a faculty member.</td>
<td>FGS</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.766</td>
<td>1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC2_ Discuss your academic program or course selection with a faculty member.</td>
<td>CGS</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC2_ Discuss your academic program or course selection with a faculty member.</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.770</td>
<td>3234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC3_ Discuss ideas for a term paper or other class project with a faculty member.</td>
<td>FGS</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td>1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC3_ Discuss ideas for a term paper or other class project with a faculty member.</td>
<td>CGS</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.765</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC3_ Discuss ideas for a term paper or other class project with a faculty member.</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.770</td>
<td>3234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC4_ Discuss your career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.</td>
<td>FGS</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>.800</td>
<td>1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC4_ Discuss your career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.</td>
<td>CGS</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>.780</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC4_ Discuss your career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.787</td>
<td>3234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC6_ Socialize with a faculty member outside of classroom (have a snack or soft drink, etc.)</td>
<td>FGS</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.775</td>
<td>1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC6_ Socialize with a faculty member outside of classroom (have a snack or soft drink, etc.)</td>
<td>CGS</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>.735</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC6_ Socialize with a faculty member outside of classroom (have a snack or soft drink, etc.)</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>3234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC8_ Ask your instructor for comments and criticisms about your academic performance.</td>
<td>FGS</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC8_ Ask your instructor for comments and criticisms about your academic performance.</td>
<td>CGS</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>.796</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC8_ Ask your instructor for comments and criticisms about your academic performance.</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.814</td>
<td>3234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC10_ Work with a faculty member on a research project.</td>
<td>FGS</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td>1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC10_ Work with a faculty member on a research project.</td>
<td>CGS</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAC10_ Work with a faculty member on a research project.</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>.824</td>
<td>3234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A one-way MANOVA showed no significant multivariate main effect for parent status, Wilks’ $\lambda = .997$, $F(7, 3226) = 1.394$, $p < .05$, partial $\varepsilon^2 = .003$. The observed power was .600. According to these findings, there are no significant differences between first- and continuing-generation student expectations for faculty experiences. Further, the multivariate partial $\varepsilon^2 = .003$ suggests that there is no practical significance to this finding.

Additionally, an ANOVA was used to conclude if there was a statistically significant difference between aggregate responses of first- and continuing-generation students regarding
their expectations for experiences with faculty. The results of this analysis indicated that there was not a statically significant difference between first- and continuing-generation student expectations for faculty experiences, as determined by one-way ANOVA, $F(1,3232) = 1.462$, $p = .227$.

**Analysis of Research Question Two**

Question Two: Is there a significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students in first-year academic performance, as measured by college grade point average, while controlling for high school grade point average?

The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students’ academic performance, as measured by grade point average after the first year of college, while controlling for high school GPA.

In Table 6, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and number of participants) are presented for first- and continuing-generation college students’ cumulative grade point average after the first year of college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Status</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FGS</td>
<td>2.9791</td>
<td>.58047</td>
<td>1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGS</td>
<td>3.0703</td>
<td>.59788</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.0356</td>
<td>.59289</td>
<td>3234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of the ANCOVA indicated that first- and continuing-generation students’ academic performance, as measured by cumulative college GPA after the first year, while controlling for high school grade point average, had no statistically significant effects $F(1, 3231) = 3.592$, $p < .05$, partial $\varepsilon^2 = .001$.  

80
Analysis of Research Question Three

Question Three: Is there a significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students in first-year academic performance, as measured by persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average?

A logistic regression was utilized to discern if there was a statistically significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students’ academic performance, as measured by enrollment in the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average. The results of the logistic regression are presented in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1a</th>
<th>CGSFGS(1)</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High_School_GPA</td>
<td>.540</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>12.900</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.715</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.436</td>
<td>.556</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td>1.546</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The logistic regression model was not statistically significant, $X^2 (2, N = 3,234) = 17.99, p < .05$. When viewed in its entirety, the model was a weak predictor of student enrollment in the second year of college. The model explained only 1.2 percent variance in enrollment in the second year of college using Nagelkerke’s $R^2 (.012)$ or 0.6 percent if Cox and Snell’s $R^2 (.006)$ is utilized. The 1.715 odds ratio for high school GPA indicated that the odds of enrollment increase more than double for each one point increase in students high school GPA. Therefore, students were more than twice as likely to persist if they had higher high school GPA. Alternatively, parental status did not prove to be as strong an indicator of persistence to the second year, with an odds ratio of .789.
Analysis of Research Questions Four and Six

Question Four: What is the relationship between first-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by college grade point average, while controlling for high school grade point average? Question Six: What is the relationship between continuing-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by college grade point average, while controlling for high school grade point average?

A second order Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the possibility of a relationship and its strength between students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and academic performance, as measured by first-year college GPA, while controlling for high school GPA. Question four focused on first-generation college students and question six focused on continuing-generation college students.

According to the findings in Table 8, the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis indicated an weak, positive correlation between first-generation college student expectations for faculty experiences and cumulative college GPA at the end of year one, while controlling for high school GPA. These results are not statistically significant ($r = .054$, $n = 1226$, $p < .05$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8: Correlation of FGS and College GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSGPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEFAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the results in Table 9, the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis indicated a weak, positive correlation between continuing-generation college student expectations for faculty experiences and cumulative college GPA at the end of year one, while controlling for high school GPA. These results are not statistically significant (r = .022, n = 2002, p < .05).

Table 9: Correlation of CGS and College GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Variables</th>
<th>QEFAC</th>
<th>College GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSGPA</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College GPA</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis of Research Questions Five and Seven**

Question Five: What is the relationship between first-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average? Question Seven: What is the relationship between continuing-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and their first-year academic performance, as measured by persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school grade point average?

Table 10 and Figure 5, reveal that, of the sample data set of 3,234, 290 students did not enroll in the Fall 2009 semester while 2,944 did enroll.
Table 10: Frequency Distribution for Enrolled and Not Enrolled Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2994</td>
<td>92.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3234</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Frequency Distribution for Student Enrollment in the Second Year

A second order point-biserial correlation technique was utilized to determine if a relationship existed and its strength between students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and academic performance, as measured by their persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school GPA. Question five focused on first-generation college students and question seven focused on continuing-generation college students.

According to the results in Table 11, the second order point-biserial correlation analysis indicated an weak, positive correlation between first-generation college student expectations for faculty experiences and enrollment in the second year of college, while controlling for high school GPA. These results are not statistically significant ($r = .009$, $n = 1226$, $p < .05$).
Table 11: Correlation of FGS and Enrollment Fall 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Variables</th>
<th>QEFAC</th>
<th>EnrollFA09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HSGPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEFAC</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>df</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EnrollFA09</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>df</td>
<td>1226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the results in Table 12, the second order point-biserial correlation analysis indicated an weak, negative correlation between continuing-generation college student expectations for faculty experiences and enrollment in the second year of college, while controlling for high school GPA. These results are not statistically significant ($r = -.003$, $n = 2002$, $p < .05$).

Table 12: Correlation of CGS and Enrollment Fall 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Variables</th>
<th>QEFAC</th>
<th>EnrollFA09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HSGPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEFAC</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>df</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EnrollFA09</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>df</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Chapter Four provided an analysis of the results for each of the seven research questions using appropriate statistical methods. Using self-reported data gathered from the College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ), as well as parental status, cumulative college GPA,
and high school GPA information from institutional data, the statistical analyses concluded three main findings. First, the study found that there were no statistically significant differences in students’ expectations for experiences with faculty based on whether their parents attended college. Additionally, the differences between first- and continuing-generation college students’ success, as measured by first-year grade point average and persistence to the second year of college were not found to be statistically significant, while controlling for high school GPA. Finally, the study found no correlation between expectations for faculty experiences and success, while controlling for high school GPA. Chapter Five reviews the findings and discusses the limitations, implications for practice, and make recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

While Astin’s I-E-O model examines the relationship between inputs, environment, and outcomes, the present study placed emphasis on the relationship between inputs and outcomes. Past research has supported using Astin’s model in this manner in order better understand student persistence in college (Astin & Sax, 1998; House, 1999; Kelly, 1996; Kittendorf, 2012; Thurmond & Popkess-Vawter, 2003; Thurmond, Wambach, Connors, & Frey, 2002).

As existing literature suggests, student engagement is critical to a student’s ability to persist in college (Kuh, 2008; Kuh & Huh, 2001; Kuh et al., 2008; Tinto, 2006; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). A student’s motivation to become engaged in college is based upon certain expectations, which are especially significant to student success (Cole et al., 2009; Martin & Hanrahan, 2004; Miller, 2005). Among the many ways students might engage, meaningful experiences with faculty are among the most important (Kuh & Huh, 2001; Komarraju et al., 2010). The literature also intimates that attention be given to first-generation college students. First-generation college students tend to have characteristics that may present obstacles to both engagement and success in college (Bilson & Terry, 1982; Davis, 2010; Ishitani, 2003; Pike & Kuh, 2005). Thus, the present study assessed student expectations for faculty experiences in order to understand how these expectations may impact indicators of success; further, this study compared the expectations and outcomes of first- and continuing-generation college students and assessed whether there was a correlation between parental status and expectations/outcomes.
Chapter Five summarizes the study’s findings, outlines implications for practice and suggests recommendations for future research.

The study presented seven research questions in order to determine if statistically significant differences or relationships exist between the variables. Three major findings emerged: first, no statistically significant differences existed between FGS and CGS respondents regarding their expectations for experiences with faculty. Second, there was not a statistically significant difference between first-and continuing-generation students’ academic performance, as measured by first-year cumulative GPA and persistence to the second year of college. Finally, data analysis showed a weak, statistically insignificant correlation between expectations for experiences with faculty and academic success.

**Findings Regarding Parental Status and Expectations**

The first research question focused on identifying whether differences exist between first- and continuing-generation students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty.

A MANOVA was conducted to evaluate potential statistically significant differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ responses to each of the seven questions in the “College Activities” section of the CSXQ. These questions addressed specific pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty. When looking at each of the faculty experience questions individually, the findings revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ expectations for experiences with faculty. Therefore, the results suggest that both groups of students enter college with similar expectations for faculty experiences, regardless of whether their parent(s) graduated from an institution of higher education. While the mean responses for each of the seven questions were similar between the two groups of students, the responses related to
socialization (FAC6_Socialize with a faculty member outside of classroom), had far lower mean scores for both first-generation ($\mu=1.86$) and continuing-generation ($\mu=1.85$) when compared to the other six questions. It could be concluded that both groups of students expect to be more comfortable interacting with faculty members about academic subjects, such as course content, versus socializing outside of the classroom.

Further, the aggregate responses for both groups were analyzed using an ANOVA to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students’ expectations for experiences with faculty. The results indicated that, in general, there was not a statically significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students’ expectations for faculty experiences. Further exploration into whether these initial expectations for faculty experiences would need to take place in order to determine whether the similarity of responses can be attributed to their parental status.

One possible explanation for the similarities in students’ expectations for faculty experiences may be attributed to not controlling for high school GPA when analyzing the data for research question one. It could be argued that regardless of parental status, similarities in high school GPA may impact students’ pre-matriculation expectations. Additionally, since first- and continuing-generation college students appear to have similar expectations for faculty experiences prior to matriculation, researchers should investigate whether these students have similar experiences once they matriculate.

Previous research on first-generation college student expectations suggests that factors including socio-economic status, academic preparedness, and familial support impacts these students’ ability to be successful in college (Dungy et al., 2005; Nunez et al., 1998; Pascarella et al., 2004). Previous research also noted differences between the two groups’ background
characteristics; however, very little research exists regarding expectations. While these unique characteristics are believed to impact first-generation college students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty, the results of this study are consistent with the limited body of research focused on this area, which suggests overall the similar expectations in both first- and continuing-generation students.

**Findings of Parental Status and Academic Performance**

Research questions two and three focused on determining if there was a significant difference between first- and continuing-generation college students’ academic performance, as measured by first-year cumulative GPA and persistence to the second year of college, respectively. Both questions were analyzed while controlling for high school GPA.

In order to answer question two, an ANCOVA was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students’ academic performance, as measured by grade point average after the first year of college, while controlling for high school GPA. In order to answer the third question, a logistic regression was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students’ academic performance, as measured by persistence to the second year of college, while controlling for high school GPA.

The findings of the ANCOVA concluded that there was no statistically significant difference between both groups’ cumulative college GPA. While continuing-generation college students had a slightly higher average cumulative GPA (μ=3.07) after the first year than their first-generation peers (μ=2.98), it is not clear what this minor difference in means is attributed to. The findings of the logistic regression concluded that there was not a statistically significant difference between each groups’ enrollment in the second year of college. However, the findings
suggest that parental status is not a clear indicator if a student will enroll in the second year of college; instead, high school GPA continues to be strong indicator of a student’s reenrollment in year two (p < .05).

Prevailing research in the study of first- and continuing-generation college students argued, that unique challenges experienced by each group (including gender, socioeconomic status, race, support system and expectations) can impact academic performance (Bradbury & Mather, 2009; Bui, 2002; Choy, 2001; Hsiao, 1992; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Terenzini et al., 1996; Thayer, 2000). When taking into consideration parental status, as a unique characteristic, the results of this study suggest that first- and continuing-generation college students did not differ significantly in their levels of academic performance. However, further research is needed to determine if parental status would be a significant indicator of academic performance if all other characteristics of risk are controlled for in future studies.

Furthermore, first-generation college students’ academic preparation during high school leaves them less able to handle the academic rigor of college and likely to encounter challenges when transitioning to college (Horn & Bobbitt, 2000; Chaney et al., 1998; Strayhorn 2006; Terenzini et al., 1996; Thayer, 2000; Warburton et al., 2001; York-Anderson & Bowman, 1991). This lack of academic preparation may take the form of lower high school grade point averages (Ishitani, 2006). Research suggests that high school grade point average may be connected to future academic performance, in both coursework and persistence (Geiser & Santelices, 2007).

Given the research surrounding academic preparedness of first-generation college students, it may be possible that the lack of significant differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ college academic performance, as reported in the results of this study, could
be due to the inclusion of the control variable of high school GPA. It could be argued that, in controlling for high school GPA, the study analysis removed the potential for significant differences in college academic performance by placing the students at the same academic level prior to matriculation, though FGS may be less prepared on average and have lower high school GPAs (Ishitani, 2006). As a result, parental status unintentionally becomes a control variable, perhaps contributing to the lack of significant differences between first- and continuing-generation students’ enrollment in the second year and college cumulative GPA.

**Findings of Expectations and Academic Performance**

Research questions, four, five, six and seven examined the relationship between first- and continuing-generation college students’ expectations for experiences with faculty and their connection to academic performance, as measured by first-year cumulative GPA and persistence to the second year of college, respectively. All four questions were analyzed while controlling for high school GPA.

In order to answer the fourth and sixth questions, a second order Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the relationship between students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and first-year college GPA, while controlling for high school GPA. Although the results were not statistically significant, they indicated a positive correlation, although weak, between first-generation college students’ expectations for faculty experiences and their first year cumulative college GPA. The findings suggest that first-and continuing-generation college students may have other indicators or characteristics that impact their expectations, which in turn, correlates to their ability to perform well academically, as measured by college GPA.
In order to answer questions five and seven, a second order point-biserial correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between students’ pre-matriculation expectations for experiences with faculty and academic performance, as measured by enrollment in the second year of college, while controlling for high school GPA. The results for questions five and seven are not statistically significant. However, the relationship between first-generation college students’ expectations for faculty experiences and enrollment in the second year, although incredibly weak, was positive whereas the same relationship with continuing-generation students was negative.

The findings suggest that there may be other characteristics (i.e., financial, institutional fit, academic preparedness), which were not included in this study, and may have impacted college students’ expectations for experiences with faculty. Consequently, as mentioned in previous research, not taking into account these alternative factors may be what is contributing to the weak correlational relationship between expectations and academic performance, as measured by cumulative college GPA and enrollment in the second year (Bradley et al., 2002; Dungy et al., 2005; Nunez et al., 1998; Pascarella et al., 2004).

The literature suggests the relationship between expectations and experiences often occurs during the first year of college and can be an indicator of academic performance (Smith & Wertlieb, 2004; Weissberg et al., 2003). Although, this study does not examine this connection specifically, the results suggest that first- and continuing-generation student expectations may not be directly correlated to academic performance. The lack of statistically significant findings in this study highlights the importance of including experiences with faculty into future research. The strength of the relationship between expectations and experiences may prove to be a more significant factor in understanding connections to academic performance.
**Limitations**

As outlined in Chapter One, three limitations were initially identified, however, as the study progressed, unanticipated limitations were revealed. These two additional limitations are listed as number four and five below.

1. The age of the data may be considered a limitation of the study. The secondary data were collected during the summer of 2008 and at the time of study completion the data were six years old, consequently there may be difficulty generalizing the findings.

2. The CSXQ is comprised of self-reported data from the students who participated in the study. Participants may have answered the CSXQ with what they believed the administrators of the survey wanted them to report or what they believed to be the most socially acceptable response. Additionally, participants may not have put sufficient thought into their responses.

3. This study utilized secondary data, which can be seen as a limitation. The researcher did not have control over the data collection process because the data were collected by another organization.

4. Students who enrolled in 12 or more credit hours during the Fall Semester, and then subsequently enrolled in less than 12 credit hours in the Spring Semester, were excluded from the original data set. Therefore, students who enrolled in less than 12 credit hours in the Spring Semester were not taken into account when viewing measures of persistence. Given that these students were not included in the data set, their persistence, or lack thereof, was not taken into consideration for this study.

5. Students in the original data set who had missing responses to CSXQ questions were excluded from the study sample.
Implications for Practice

The findings from this study suggest a lack of differences between the expectations of first- and continuing-generation college students and, at most, a weak correlation between parental status and academic performance. Although not significant, when viewed as a whole, the results of this study add to the body of research on Astin’s I-E-O model, the body of research on first-generation college students, and on student expectations for faculty experiences.

In using Astin’s I-E-O model as the basis for this study’s theoretical framework, only the factors of “input” and “outcome” were taken into consideration. However, the results of the study revealed the role of “environment” to be a potentially important contributing factor to “outcomes” of success. This has the ability to impact how this study can be used to inform practice because first- and continuing-generation college students’ may have different experiences once in college than what they initially expected. It is also important to examine the expectations on a broader scale in order to determine how inputs, environments, and outcomes interact with one another. This may be done through student programming, advising, classroom activities and programming directed at parents.

Taking into consideration the lack of significant results surrounding student expectations for faculty experiences, practitioners developing programs for parents and incoming students should account for the impact of high school GPA on academic performance. This control variable proved, yet again, to be a contributing factor to academic success for both first- and continuing-generation college students. Therefore, practitioners would be wise to consider this indicator when looking at the needs and collegiate experiences of students. For instance, advisors may look more closely at incoming first-generation students’ high school GPA in order to identify and assist students who may have lower GPAs.
Working in conjunction with the faculty, academic advisors can use the results of this study to design and implement interventions for both first- and continuing-generation college students throughout their first year. Given the one-on-one dynamic inherent to the student-advisor relationship, academic advisors play a key role in addressing student expectations individually and on a qualitative level. Further, the role of the academic advisor lends itself to having insight into both the curricular and co-curricular workings of the institution, which can be critical in understanding what students expect and whether those expectations are in line with the experience they are having at the institution.

A final area in which current practice could be influenced surrounds the other risk factors that may impact first-generation college students’ expectations for faculty experiences. While it is important that institutions of higher education assess whether they are meeting the needs of their students by having an understanding of their expectations, it is also important to evaluate other potential factors that impact academic performance. Higher education administrators should work to meet students’ current expectations. For example, if students expect more interactions with faculty on a social level, the university should offer programming to increase opportunities for students and faculty to meet outside of the classroom. A continued examination of student expectations and the factors impacting these expectations can inform current programs and practices offered on campus.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The results of this study contributes to the prevailing literature that connects expectations for faculty experiences to outcomes of success, such as cumulative grade point average and persistence. Based upon this study, the following recommendations for future research are presented:
1. The CSXQ is a purely quantitative method of assessing student expectations. While students provide Likert scale type responses regarding expectations for experiences with faculty, there may be a lack of depth related to why these students’ expectations for faculty experiences exist. Future research in which student expectations are analyzed at a qualitative level could help to provide additional insight as to why students have these pre-matriculation expectations for faculty experiences.

2. For the entire cohort of students used in this study, the persistence rate from the first to the second year of college was 91%. Further, since there was no statistically significant difference between first- and continuing-generation students’ enrollment in the second year, future research should look at whether parental status was significant to degree attainment at both at the four-and six-year completion rate.

3. Students enrolled in 12 or more credit hours during the Fall and Spring semesters were coded as full-time. Those students who did not persist from Fall to Spring semesters were excluded from the data set. Additionally, students who attempted less than 12 credit hours in Fall or Spring semesters were also excluded. Therefore, future research should take into account those students who attend less than 12 hours and/or do not persist during the first year of college.

4. This study focused on the expectations for faculty experiences section on the CSXQ. Future research should examine other areas of the CSXQ and focus on potential differences in expectations that first- and continuing-generation students may have. These additional areas of expectations may be useful in evaluation of expectations and future outcomes of academic performance.
5. Since prevailing research suggests that high school GPA is a contributing factor to academic performance, it may be necessary to more closely examine the role it plays in the formation of student expectations. A future study should evaluate this factor in the formation of first-generation college student expectations by looking at potential differences in low- versus high-achieving high school students.

6. In addition to looking at potential differences between low- and high-achieving high school students and the formation of expectations, further research should examine the role of high school GPA in academic performance at the college level. Specifically, a future study could evaluate this variable and its relationship to parental status.

7. Statistically significant differences were not found between first- and continuing generation college students’ expectations for faculty experiences. Further, no statistically significant difference was found between first- and continuing-generation college students’ academic performance after the first year of college. However, research surrounding Astin’s I-E-O model suggests that differences in outcomes may be the result of both inputs and environment. As such, further research should be conducted to investigate the impact of additional inputs (i.e., socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, familial support) and environmental factors (i.e., major, faculty interactions and course load/type) on outcomes.

8. A weak correlation was found between both first- and continuing-generation college students’ expectations for faculty experiences and academic performance, as measured by cumulative GPA after the first year of college and persistence to the second year of college. Previous research argued that the relationship between expectations and experiences matters to the academic performance of students. Therefore, further research
surrounding the correlation between expectations, experiences and, ultimately, academic performance should be explored further.

Concluding Remarks

This quantitative study was conducted to assist in understanding the expectations for faculty experiences of first-generation college students. Previous research focused on characteristics and persistence of this population of students; however, none have sought to further understand the relationship between their expectations for faculty experiences and their academic performance. This study found that there were no significant differences between first- and continuing-generation college students’ expectations for faculty experiences and academic performance. However, it is not possible to assert that the lack of significant differences is due solely to parental status. Further, the study found a weak correlation between the expectations of first- and continuing-generation students’ expectations for faculty experiences and their academic performance, as measured by cumulative college GPA and persistence to the second year.

Astin’s I-E-O model was used as the theoretical framework for this study. While this study took into account only the input (student expectations and parental status) and outcome (GPA and persistence) variables of the model, it became apparent that the variable of environment was also a potentially significant component. Although this study does not take into account experiences or environment, it may provide support for previous research, which emphasizes the importance of this connection between students’ expectations and their experiences in college.

The study also adds to the growing body of literature on first-generation college students. As the population of first-generation college students continues to grow, it becomes increasingly
important to invest time in studying their characteristics, including what they expect from their
college experiences. This additional understanding of the unique features attributed to these
students provides information that is necessary to address their needs and expectations at the pre-
matriculation and collegiate levels.
REFERENCES


Hicks, T. (2003). First generation and non-first generation pre-college students’ expectations and perceptions about attending college. *Faculty working papers from the school of education.*


Miller, T. E. (2007). Will they stay or will they go? Predicting the risk of attrition at a large public university. *College and University, 83*(2), 2-7.


APPENDICES
Appendix A: College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ)

Welcome!
You have not yet experienced life as a student here. But you have some ideas about how you will spend your time, what you will be doing and so forth. We are interested in these ideas. More specifically, what do you expect to do this year as a student? Please complete the items on the following few pages in a way that answers this question. It takes less than 15 minutes to complete this survey.
Your responses are confidential. Keep in mind that the questionnaire will be read by an electronic scanning device, so be careful in marking your responses. Please use a #2 black lead pencil. Marks made by ink pens cannot be scanned. Do not write or make any marks on the questionnaire outside the spaces for your answers. Erase cleanly any responses you want to change.
The benefits from this or any other survey depend on the thoughtful responses of those who are asked to help. Your willingness to participate is very important and very much appreciated. Thank you!

### Collegiate Activities

**Directions:** During the coming year in college, how often do you expect to do the following? Indicate your response by filling in one of the circles to the right of each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library and Information Technology</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use the library as a quiet place to read or study.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use an index or database (computer, card catalog, etc.) to find material on some topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read assigned materials other than textbooks in the library (reserves, readings, etc.).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a bibliography or set of references for a term paper or other report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use a computer or word processor to prepare reports or papers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use e-mail to communicate with an instructor or classmates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participate in class discussions using an electronic medium (e-mail, tele-serve, chat group, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Search the World Wide Web or Internet for information related to a course.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a computer to retrieve materials from a library not at this institution.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiences with Faculty (cont’d.)</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss ideas for a term paper or other class project with a faculty member.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss your career plans and ambitions with a faculty member.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socialize with a faculty member outside the classroom (have a snack or soft drink, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask your instructor for comments and criticisms about your academic performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work with a faculty member on a research project.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Course Learning**
- Complete the assigned readings before class.
- Take detailed notes during class.
- Contribute to class discussions.
- Try to see how different facts and ideas fit together.
- Apply material learned in a class to other areas (a job or internship, other courses, relationships with friends, family, co-workers, etc.).
- Summarize major points and information from your readings or class notes.
- Use information or experience from other areas of your life (job, internship, interactions with others) in class discussions or assignments.
- Explain material from a course to someone else (another student, friend, co-worker, family member).
- Prepare a paper or project where you had to integrate ideas from various sources.
### DIRECTIONS: During the coming year in college, how often do you expect to do the following? Indicate your response by filling in one of the circles to the right of each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask other people to read something you wrote to see if it is clear to them.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to a book or manual about writing style, grammar, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revise a paper or composition two or more times before you are satisfied with it.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask an instructor or staff member for advice and help to improve your writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write a major report for a class (20 pages or more).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Campus Facilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go to an art exhibit/gallery or a play, dance, or other theater performance, on or off campus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a concert or other music event.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use a campus lounge to relax or study by yourself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet other students at some campus location (campus center, etc.) for a discussion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a lecture or panel discussion.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use a learning lab or center to improve study or academic skills (reading, writing, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use recreational facilities (pool, fitness equipment, courts, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play a team sport (intramural, club, intercollegiate).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow a regular schedule of exercise or practice for some recreational or sporting activity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Clubs, Organizations, Service Projects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend a meeting of a campus club, organization, or student government group.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on a campus committee, student organization, or service project (publications, student government, special event, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on an off-campus committee, organization, or service project (civic group, church group, community event, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with a faculty member or staff advisor to discuss the activities of a group or organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage or provide leadership for an organization or service project, on or off the campus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Acquaintances**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make friends with students whose interests are different from yours.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make friends with students whose family background (economic, social) is different from yours.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Make friends with students whose race or ethnic background is different from yours.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have serious discussions with students whose philosophy of life or personal values are very different from yours.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have serious discussions with students whose religious beliefs are very different from yours.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Student Acquaintances (cont’d)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have serious discussions with students whose political opinions are very different from yours.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have serious discussions with students whose race or ethnic identification is very different from yours.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scientific and Quantitative Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memorize formulas, definitions, technical terms and concepts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express a set of relationships using mathematical terms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain your understanding of some scientific or mathematical theory, principle, or concept to someone else (classmate, co-worker, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read articles about scientific or mathematical theories or concepts in addition to those assigned for a class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete an experiment or project using scientific methods.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CONVERSATIONS

**DIRECTIONS: In conversations with others at college during the coming school year, how often do you expect to talk about each of the following?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current events in the news.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social issues such as peace, justice, human rights, equality, race relations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different lifestyles, customs, and religions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ideas and views of writers, philosophers, historians.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts (painting, poetry, theatrical productions, dance, symphony, movies, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science (theories, experiments, methods, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers and other technologies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and ethical issues related to science and technology such as energy, pollution, chemicals, genetics, military use.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The economy (employment, wealth, poverty, debt, trade, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International relations (human rights, free trade, military activities, political differences, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DIRECTIONS: In these conversations, how often do you expect to do each of the following?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refer to knowledge you acquired in your reading or classes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore different ways of thinking about a topic or issue.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to something one of your instructors said about a topic or issue.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONVERSATIONS, cont.

DIRECTIONS: In these conversations, how often do you expect to do each of the following?

- Never
- Occasionally
- Often
- Very Often

Subsequently read something related to the topic or issue.
Change your opinion as a result of the knowledge or arguments presented by others.
Persuade others to change their minds as a result of the knowledge or arguments you cited.

READING/Writing

During the coming school year, about how much reading and writing do you expect to do? Fill in one response for each item listed below.

- Non-assigned books
- Textbooks or assigned books
- Term papers or other written reports
- Essay exams for your courses

OPINION ABOUT COLLEGE

How well do you think you will like college?
- I will be enthusiastic about it.
- I will like it.
- I will be more or less neutral about it.
- I won’t like it.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

DIRECTIONS: Indicate your response by filling in the appropriate circle next to the correct answer.

- Age
  - 19 or younger
  - 20-23
  - 24-29
  - 30-39
  - 40-55
  - Over 55
- Sex
  - Male
  - Female

Are you beginning college here or did you transfer here from another institution?
- Starting here
- Transferred from another institution

THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

During the coming year, to what extent do you feel that each of the following will be emphasized at this institution? Fill in the circle that best represents your impression on each of the following rating scales.

- Emphasis on developing academic, scholarly, and intellectual qualities
  - Strong emphasis
  - Weak emphasis

- Emphasis on developing aesthetic, expressive, and creative qualities
  - Strong emphasis
  - Weak emphasis

- Emphasis on developing critical, evaluative, and analytical qualities
  - Strong emphasis
  - Weak emphasis

- Emphasis on developing an understanding and appreciation of human diversity
  - Strong emphasis
  - Weak emphasis

- Emphasis on developing information literacy skills (using computers, other information resources)
  - Strong emphasis
  - Weak emphasis

- Emphasis on developing vocational and occupational competence
  - Strong emphasis
  - Weak emphasis

- Emphasis on the personal relevance and practical value of your courses
  - Strong emphasis
  - Weak emphasis

The next three ratings refer to relationships among people at this college. To what extent do you feel that each of the following will be emphasized?

- Friendly, Supportive, Relationships with other students or student groups
  - Competitive, Uninvolved,
- Sense of belonging
  - Sense of alienation
- Approachable, Relationships with faculty members
  - Remote, Discouraging,
- Helpful, Understanding, Encouraging
  - Unsympathetic
- Helpful, Considerate, Relationships with administrative personnel and offices
  - Rigid, Impersonal, Bound by regulations

Continued on back page
Where will you live during this school year?
- dormitory or other campus housing (not fraternity/sorority house)
- fraternity or sorority house
- residence (house, apartment, etc.) within walking distance of the institution
- residence (house, apartment, etc.) within driving distance of the institution

What do you expect your college grade point average to be at the end of your first year?
- A
- A+, B+
- B, C+
- C, C+, or lower
- B

Did either of your parents graduate from college?
- no
- yes, both parents
- yes, mother only
- yes, father only

Do you expect to enroll for an advanced degree when, or if, you complete your undergraduate degree?
- yes
- no

How many credit hours will you take this first term?
- 6 or fewer
- 7 - 11
- 12 - 14

Which of the following comes closest to describing the field you expect to major in?
- Agriculture
- Biological/life sciences (biology, biochemistry, botany, zoology, etc.)
- Business (accounting, business administration, marketing, management, etc.)
- Communication (speech, journalism, television/radio, etc.)
- Computer and information sciences
- Education
- Engineering
- Ethnic, cultural studies, and area studies
- Foreign languages and literature (French, Spanish, etc.)
- Health-related fields (nursing, physical therapy, health technology, etc.)
- History
- Humanities (English, literature, philosophy, religion, etc.)
- Liberal/general studies
- Mathematics
- Multidisciplinary studies (international relations, ecology, environmental studies, etc.)
- Parks, recreation, leisure studies, sports management
- Physical sciences (physics, chemistry, astronomy, earth science, etc.)
- Pre-professional (pre-dental, pre-medical, pre-veterinary)
- Public administration (city management, law enforcement, etc.)
- Social sciences (anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, sociology, etc.)
- Visual and performing arts (art, music, theater, etc.)
- Undecided
- Other: What?

During the time school is in session this coming year, about how many hours a week do you plan to work on a job? Fill in one oval in each column.
- none; I won’t have a job
- 1 - 10 hours a week
- 11 - 20 hours
- 21 - 30 hours
- 31 - 40 hours
- more than 40 hours

About how much of your college expenses this year will be provided by your parents or family (including your own contribution)?
- all or nearly all
- less than half
- more than half
- none or very little

What is your racial or ethnic identification?
- American Indian or other Native American
- Caucasian (other than Hispanic)
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Mexican-American
- Puerto Rican
- Other Hispanic
- Other: What?

[ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS]

1. [ ] 2. [ ] 3. [ ]
4. [ ] 5. [ ] 6. [ ]
7. [ ] 8. [ ] 9. [ ]
10. [ ]

[Please fill in your student ID number below.]

During the time school is in session this coming year, about how many hours a week do you expect to spend outside of class on activities related to your academic program, such as studying, writing, reading, lab work, rehearsals, etc.?
- 5 or fewer hours a week
- 6 - 10 hours a week
- 11 - 15 hours a week
- 16 - 20 hours a week

THANK YOU

This questionnaire is available from the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research
1906 East Tenth Street
Ewing Hall, Suite 419
Bloomington, IN 47406-7512
E-mail: casey@indiana.edu

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Authors: George D. Kuh and C. Robert Pascel

College Students Expectations Questionnaire (2nd ed.), Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.

122
Hi Christina,

Thank you for jogging my memory. I do remember our correspondence. Since the data is owned by your institution, you do not need an usage agreement.

I’ve discussed your request to include a copy of the CSXQ as an appendix in your dissertation with the Project Director. Your request has been approved. You have permission to reprint the CSXQ in your dissertation.
I’ve attached a .pdf copy of the survey.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

-John

John Zilvinsky
Project Coordinator
CSEQ Assessment Program
Center for Postsecondary Research
Indiana University School of Education
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Appendix C: IRB Letter

1/9/2014

Christina Nelson
Adult, Career and Higher Education
4202 East Fowler Avenue, CHE 205
Tampa, FL 33620

RE: NOT Human Research Activities Determination
IRB#: Pro00015262
Title: Relationship Between First-Generation College Students’ Expectations for Experiences with Faculty Members and Students’ Success after the First Year

Dear Ms. Nelson:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed the information you provided regarding the above referenced project and has determined the activities do not meet the definition of human subjects research. Therefore, IRB approval is not required. If, in the future, you change this activity such that it becomes human subjects research, IRB approval will be required. If you wish to obtain a determination about whether the activity, with the proposed changes, will be human subjects research, please contact the IRB for further guidance.

All research activities, regardless of the level of IRB oversight, must be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the ethical principles of your profession and the ethical guidelines for the protection of human subjects. As principal investigator, it is your responsibility to ensure subjects’ rights and welfare are protected during the execution of this project.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Vice Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christina D. Nelson received a Bachelor of Science in Communication Arts and Sciences from Cornell University in 2000. Christina went on to earn a Master of Education in College Student Affairs at the University of South Florida in 2005.

Christina has over a decade of administrative, faculty and student affairs experience including academic advising in both the University of South Florida Transitional Advising Center, Department of Chemistry and Honors College as well as Assistant Director for Career Development Services at St. Leo University. Currently, Christina serves as the Director for Undergraduate Programs and Coordinator for Graduate Student Affairs in the Department of Chemistry at the University of South Florida.