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TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS: THE IMPACT OF LIVING ENVIRONMENT

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A DISSERTATION IN PRACTICE

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between transfer student academic success and their living environment. Transfer student populations continue to grow and be a focus of university interest with future enrollment challenges facing rising high school seniors. Previous research indicated that first-year students benefit academically and developmentally from living in a residence hall setting but little research existed investigating if the same benefit exists for transfer students living in on-campus housing. This study aimed to inform policies, programs, and recommendations that support transfer students as they choose a living environment that encourages their academic success. This quantitative study, which was conducted at a four-year university, compared transfer students in a variety of living environments including residence halls, on-campus apartments, or living off campus with their grade point average, retention, and graduation. Findings do not support that a specific type of living environment is more beneficial to a transfer students’ academic success. Proposed solutions include allocating resources towards non-housing related initiatives, conducting further research around the preparedness of transfer students, and exploring if a more tailored living environment to transfer students could benefit these students differently.

Keywords: Transfer Students, University Housing, Academic Success
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Mimi and Dick, who raised four daughters to be strong, independent, curious, and loving. You inspired us to value family above all else, to honor our commitments, and to dream big and put in the hard work. I love you and miss you both.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Background

Attending higher education as a transfer student who earned credits at a previous institution can cause unique challenges compared to a traditional student who pursued and completed their degree at the same institution. As the impending enrollment cliff looms beginning in 2025, institutions are facing a dramatic decrease in rising high school graduates, declining birth rate, and growing financial costs of attending higher education, universities are considering other avenues of enrollment including transfer students (Kelderman & Gardner, 2019). Universities are searching for resources, programs, and policies that support transfer students to be successful (Fain, 2012). Research has indicated that for first-year students and general population students, living on campus can be beneficial to graduation rates, grades, and retention from term to term (Schudde, 2011). There is not sufficient evidence to demonstrate the same causation or correlation for transfer students. By considering general population student success indicators and the benefits and challenges alongside on-campus living, relationships between where a student lives and a transfer students’ success at the university were explored.

Statement of the Problem

Only one out of every seven community college students transfer to a four-year university and graduate with a bachelor’s degree despite a majority of community college students stating their intent to complete a bachelor’s degree (Kolodner, 2016; Wyner et al., 2016). Nationally, the transfer student population is highly sought after to ease the impending enrollment decreases expected beginning in 2025 (Kelderman & Gardner, 2019). Many aspects may affect a student's likelihood of persisting at a university
including financial, education, social, and family concerns (Stillman, 2009). Numerous stakeholders invest in a student's journey at a college such as the university itself, students, parents, scholarship donors, federal financial aid programs, and in the case of public institutions, state government. Schools lose revenue from lost tuition and fees as well as suffer from reputation issues if students do not graduate (Stillman, 2009; Voight & Hundrieser, 2008). Students and their community also lose out on educated citizens when they do not reach their potential as members of society (Stillman, 2009).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if a transfer student’s living environment affects their academic success. The study, which was conducted at a four-year university, compared transfer students in a variety of living environments including residence halls, on-campus apartments, or living off campus with their grade point average, retention, and graduation.

**Research Question and Hypotheses**

Universities are seeking ways to impact and positively affect transfer student success including students’ grade point averages, retention, and graduation rates. While research exists that points to first-year students receiving some benefit from living in a residence hall setting, it is unclear if the same effect can be seen in transfer students. The following research question guided this quantitative study:

Research question: What effect does the living environment have on transfer students’ success?
The following hypotheses were investigated in this study.

Hypothesis #1: Transfer students who live in on-campus residence halls will have a higher grade point average than students who live off campus.

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in grade point average for transfer students based on their living environment.

Hypothesis #2: Retention rates will be higher for transfer students who lived in on-campus residence halls compared to students who lived off campus.

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference for transfer students’ persistence at the university based on the living environment.

Hypothesis #3: Transfer students who live in on-campus residence halls will graduate at higher rates than students who live off campus.

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in graduation rates for transfer students based on the living environment.

Hypothesis #4: There is no statistically significant impact for students who live in on-campus apartments in grade point average.

Null Hypothesis: Transfer students who live in on-campus apartments will see a statistically significant difference in grade point average.

**Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study was to inform policies, programs, and recommendations that support transfer students as they choose a living environment that encourages their academic success.
Methodology Overview

This study was a non-experimental, quantitative study consisting of existing data retrieved from a university regarding transfer students. Study participants were transfer students at a mid-size, four-year, regional university. Existing data was used from 2009 – 2016 with 1,100 to 1,400 students each year for a total of 6,436 participants. A substantial number of those participants lived in on-campus residence halls or on-campus apartments their first year as a transfer student. Three independent variables were considered: students who lived in on-campus residence halls, students who lived in on-campus apartments, and students who lived off campus. Dependent variables included grade point average, retention at the institution from fall term to fall term, and the rate of graduation. An analysis of variance was conducted for each dependent variable (Field, 2013).

Definition of Relevant Terms

The following terms were used operationally within this study related to higher education, housing, and students.

Campus housing leaders: The staff and campus administrators who implement policy and manage the campus residence halls and apartments.

First-year student: The first traditional freshman year.

Graduation rate: The rate of students graduating from the institution. This rate is based off 150% of normal completion time (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Housing professionals: description of the professional field of college and university housing administrators.
Length of time to graduation: The number of terms a student takes to graduate with a baccalaureate degree (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Off-campus: Any living option not operated by the university including renting an off campus apartment or house, commuting from out of town, or living with family locally.

On-campus apartment: Owned and operated by the university, but apartment-style units with limited staff offerings.

On-campus residence hall: Traditional residence hall “dormitory” setting owned and operated by the university, contracted by academic year, where a student resides in an individual bedroom or suite-style room that includes a meal plan and resident assistant on site.

Retention: A student’s continuous enrollment at an institution measured between terms or years. For example, many universities measure fall to spring/winter term retention or freshman to sophomore retention (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Student success: Students’ overall academic measure in Grade Point Average (grade point average), retention, and graduation rate. While grade point average and retention mark incremental successes, the ultimate goal for student success is graduation.

Transfer student: A student attending a four-year university after earning post-high school credits at a community college or other institution (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Limitations, Delimitations, and Personal Biases

Several limitations of the study exist. Retention and academic achievement of transfer students can be complex as each student has multiple variables that impact their
strength as a student. Influences outside of where they are housed likely affected their university experience. These could include life events, financial statuses, and personal concerns. Additionally, the study was limited in that it cannot control the number of students who chose to live on campus. The three categories, residence hall living, on-campus apartment, and off campus, are unequal due to the choice or availability to incoming transfer students. Outside environmental factors may also have limited the study. For instance, in the years that the study is examining, factors associated with the recession could have impacted a student’s academic outlook, where they chose to live, and how many other life events they may need to attend to.

Delimiting factors also exist. The study was only conducted at a singular regional, masters-granting access institution, within a limited timeframe. The study is also delimited when it comes to the type of transfer student included. Many students enter four-year universities with college-level credit, and even associate degrees earned while in high school. For the purposes of this study, transfer students included in the sample have earned college credit post-high school.

As this research study was chosen to collect data at one institution, the findings are delimited in their generalizability and transferability to other schools. The university studied may have unique recruitment trends, student demographics, and a geographic setting that causes a different outcome than a conclusive, multi-institutional study. Additionally, the limit of the years studied, which coincide with the recession, could factor into the type of preparedness of students extending their education to a bachelor’s level.
As a housing administrator at the institution being studied, I have an underlying bias towards on-campus options. Fifteen years as a university administrator, much of that within the housing field, has led to familiarity with research that promotes a residential college experience. As I conducted the study, I was cautious in methodology and data-driven decisions to be as inclusive of all students as possible. This included being transparent in data and examples, communicating with my dissertation in practice committee regularly about my progress, and representing all outcomes of the data analysis and findings.

Leader’s Role and Responsibility in Relation to the Problem

This study may directly benefit leaders and decision makers at the university as they balance the needs of students with policy, financial impacts, and housing capacity. The institution studied desires to increase enrollment in transfer students as well as first-year students. Increased overall enrollment will impact the capacity to house students on campus. Many institutions prioritize first-year students for housing, and some go as far as to limit their housing to only first-year students. As leaders consider how to best support the success of transfer students, they will need to clarify their mission and focus as well as plan policies that are focused on long-term outcomes for students and the institution (Bryson, 2011).

Significance of the Dissertation in Practice Study

Studies have been conducted that demonstrate a correlation between residence hall living and student success for first-year students and the general population (Schudde, 2011); however, there has been little or no research that addresses transfer students living options as it applies to their success at the university. Studies have been
Conducted that show a correlation between residence hall living and student success for first-year students and the general population (Schudde, 2011). As a result, many institutions’ policies exist that require traditional first-year students to live in a residence hall setting for at least a year. The success of transfer students is critical to overall recruitment, retention, and the health of the university. Colleges that hope to attract and graduate students who left a previous institution must reflect critically on programs and policies that impact students.

Summary

While benefits of a campus live-on policy point to increased retention, student success, and a more financially solvent university, the impact it can have on transfer students needed further exploration. Transfer students are a unique population of students who may lack a pipeline to succeed at a four-year university setting. This dissertation in practice investigated how living on campus impacted a transfer student's success at their four-year university. By utilizing a quantitative methodology, metrics related to grade point average, retention, and graduation rate, an analysis of variances was completed to determine if there was correlation between academic success measures and a student living environment. Finally, the dissertation in practice informed policies and decision making at the institution related to transfer student housing needs.
Transfer students are a growing population at many universities and represent a unique population of underserved students. As their paths to the four-year university vary widely, research has been mixed on what barriers and supports exist to aid transfer students in completing their degree. Students who transfer to a university have varied backgrounds. Some have completed an Associates of Arts at a community college and are transferring to a four-year university to complete their bachelor's degree. Others have enrolled for a short time at one, two or three other colleges or universities before joining their current institution. In some states, dual enrollment programs allow students to complete college credits as a high school student. The needs and success of transfer students are as unique as their path to their university.

Literature supports the need for a greater focus on the growing population of transfer students and their impact on the higher education landscape for several reasons including universities’ investment, retention of students, and future success of bachelor-earning graduates. Miller (2014) found that transfer students are less likely to complete their degree than students who began their post-secondary education as a first-year freshman at the same institution as their bachelor's degree. Stakeholders of the university want to ensure their investment in the college is sound and that students are receiving the education promised to them upon enrollment. People who attain a bachelor's degree double their salaries compared to those with high school diplomas (Kraft & Furlong, 2015). The Department of Education looks closely at retention and graduation rates, as do state governments, and private entities like the US News and World Reports annual
college ranking (Stillman, 2009). Despite extensive research conducted on first-year or general population students living in campus residence halls, there is not a research-based conclusion that transfer students will benefit from on-campus living.

**History and Background of Campus Housing**

University housing was originally established in the early to mid-1400s in Europe to house college students, far from home, who were generally in their mid-teens (Blimling, 2003). European universities began housing students in large sleeping rooms and then later smaller, divided bedrooms. While the traditional and common name for campus housing is *dormitories*, meaning *to sleep*, university administrators now refer to their traditional housing as residence halls to imply the multi-purpose nature of a space for sleeping, studying, socializing, and learning (Blimling, 2003). Residence halls were established in the United States with faculty serving as the live-in adults. Student behavior was difficult to regulate with many duels, fights, and other violent events breaking out (Blimling, 2003). The Land Grant College Act of 1862 spurred additional state institutions to be formed and more dormitories to be built (Dunkel & Bauman, 2013). Post World War II and post-Vietnam War, the GI Bill led to an influx of students attending school. It also caused a shift in the type of housing provided to add more family style apartments (Blimling, 2003). Increases in the number of students caused a need for larger and more sprawling residence halls, many that are still in use today. Blimling (2003) cites cumbersome government restrictions around cost per square foot, emphasis on number of students held per structure and built in furniture as major factors in how universities chose to build residential facilities. The focus was less on a student’s learning experience and personal comfort and more about maximizing funding. Blimling (2003)
states that these ill-conceived, expansive halls may challenge universities in attracting students, developing community, and fostering academic success.

Traditional on-campus living occurs in a residence hall that may be configured as a bedroom, shared or single, with a common bath down the hallway. Most traditional style buildings also have lounge spaces, study rooms, and modest kitchens (Blimling, 2003). It is not uncommon for suite-style spaces to be also available to first-year students with a single or shared bedroom, shared bath and living space among two to four students (Dunkel & Bauman, 2013). Residence halls are staffed with student para-professionals, commonly referred to as resident advisors, as well as professional student affairs staff who live in the halls, manage the staff and administration, and respond to crises with residential students (Blimling, 2003). The purpose of student housing has changed throughout history but continues to be a vehicle to impact students’ academic success.

**Academic Student Success**

There is an abundance of research related to the general population of students at universities and their success. Many aspects may affect a student's likelihood of being retained at a university including financial, education, social, and family concerns (Stillman, 2009). The student and the college are not the only stakeholders investing in the student's education: parents, family members, scholarship donors, and federal financial aid programs fund and wager on the success of students (Miller, 2014). In the case of public institutions, state governments fund part of the post-secondary experience for in-state students. Miller (2014) reports that 25 states have outcome-based funding for universities and the National Governors’ Association has emphasized heightened importance on college completion in a competing global environment. Post-secondary
completion rates have become more scrutinized as the federal government gained focus on the perceived lower number of students graduating (Miller, 2014).

When a student does not complete their intended degree, the literature supports numerous stakeholders who suffer. Universities lose tuition and other revenue when a student stops out as well as suffer from reputation issues if students do not graduate (Stillman, 2009; Voight & Hundrieser, 2008). The student loses out when they fail to complete their degree in lost earning potential and personal development and the community loses out in not being able to gain benefits from an educated society (Stillman, 2009).

Stillman (2009) recommends student success be measured as graduation rates, the length of time to graduate, grade point average, and retention from term to term at the university. While these three criteria are cited as relevant measures, there are some inconsistencies with how universities might report their findings. Graduation rates can be an ambiguous measurement as many cohort parameters exist and many national datasets exclude categories of students who do not meet the traditional pipeline (Miller, 2014).

**Student Success Factors for Transfer Students**

For students, the way they joined the institution and their enrollment intensity affect the likelihood of student success. Miller (2014) studied non-traditional (often transfer) students using National Student Clearinghouse data to explore their rates of graduation and found students who enrolled full time were twice as likely to graduate than those who were only part-time students. College completion rates are low for these non-traditional students, with only around 40% who start receiving a degree (DeBerard et al., 2004). The first year is especially crucial with reportedly 20-30% of students not
persisting to their second year (DeBerard et al., 2004). For many students, the stress of moving away from home, living independently for the first time, and transitioning to a new schedule and school can be overwhelming.

Some student success factors for transfer students are inherent in how they chart their higher education career. Students who started at and maintained enrollment at the same four-year institution were more likely to graduate than those that transferred from a community college or other four-year university (Miller, 2014). Students who attended a school other than their first-choice school were less likely to graduate than students who indicated it was their first choice (Jones-White, Radcliffe, Huesman, & Kellogg, 2010). Many students become lost in the transfer process. Despite their intention to transfer to a four year, students with a greater number of barriers and fewer resources are more likely to not successfully transfer or persist (Wetzstein et al., 2019).

Transfer student success has been considered from a variety of angles, environmental, policy and operational. One area of study emerging more recently centers around the institutional partnership between a partnering community college and four-year institution. By collaborating heavily, institutional efficiency, transfer student admission recruitment, and student outcomes were improved (Yeh & Wetzstein, 2019). Successful partnerships align curriculum between the two institutions, creating pathways for students to progress directly from their associate’s degree or community college credits into a major program at the four-year university (Wetzstein et al., 2019). Other collaborations include regular faculty and administrator visits at the partnering institution and partner institutions sharing adjunct faculty and co-fund staff positions (Yeh & Wetzstein, 2019). A large, multi-institution study showed that high performing
partnerships were co-located with a higher baccalaureate graduation rate for students that transferred from the community college to the four-year partner and higher persistence after transferring (Wetzstein, Yeh, & Bragg, 2019). These partnerships support strong connections for the student between institutions, help students feel a sense of belonging at both institutions, and improve the efficiency of the transfer process for students who may otherwise be waylaid by barriers.

**Financial Need**

The financial burden of college can be significant for many students, but student success metrics appear to be adversely impacted if a student has considerable financial needs. For example, students who were Pell Grant eligible were less likely to graduate than students who came from more affluent backgrounds (Jones-White et al., 2010). When examining why students leave a university, stop-outs (taking a term off with plans to return to the school), were likely to cite financial concerns as a reason for their leave (Hoyt & Winn, 2004). Regardless of the type of leave from a university, financial concerns were the top issue cited by students to not re-enroll. Additionally, students with high financial need may feel more pressure to work to support themselves and their education. Students who dropped-out or stopped-out were more likely to work full time than transfer-out students (Hoyt & Winn, 2004).

Concerns about financial limitations also apply to student success at minority-serving institutions. Retention at a Hispanic-serving university was significantly related to financial aid, and therefore a limited number of resources exist to relieve barriers that could affect students’ retention and persistence (Tuttle & Musoba, 2013). Researchers found that student loan recipient status was a retention predictor, but grant recipient status
was not. Conversely, the amount of the grant given was a predictor to students retaining year to year, but the loan dollar amount was not related to retention (Tuttle & Musoba, 2013).

Being a transfer student can waylay some of the financial needs of a student. Transfer students who go a community college to four-year university route benefit from a more economical baccalaureate path than those who pursue their bachelor’s at a four-year institution throughout (Wetzstein et al., 2019). Overall, a student’s financial need was shown to be a predictor of persistence challenges, and in addition to standard tuition and fees, campus housing can be a source of college-related expenses.

**On-Campus Living**

On-campus living in various forms has been shown to impact students in several ways. As it pertains to student’s success in college, some research has shown that living in a residence hall setting supports students in transitioning to campus and provides access and convenience to relevant resources. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) conclude that living on campus "was the single most consistent within-college determinate of the impact of college" versus off campus living or commuting (p. 603). However, residence hall living specifically can be costly to students who may already be struggling financially.

There is limited research available to assess any difference between on-campus apartments and off campus apartments or other components of living style related to apartment living. On-campus apartments are typically more regulated, limit tenancy to those that are enrolled or working at the university, and provide a staffing model to support students in addition to property management functions. Blimling (2014) suggests
that dedicated housing for transfer students is advised in the same way universities dedicate housing areas or buildings to first-year students and returning students. He further suggests that universities may want to give priority to transfer students in a residential setting during the application timeline as their needs are unique.

**Residential Student Success**

Students who live on campus are reported to have a 66% graduation rate compared to 55% for off-campus students (Schudde, 2011). In an article examining student’s living circumstances and their likelihood of being retained at the university, Schudde (2011) analyzed multiple sets of data of on-campus and off-campus students from tested national datasets. Students who live on campus were found more likely to be integrated into campus, have better social support, and availability of resources. Schudde (2011) concluded that "initiatives enabling more first-year undergraduates to live on campus could increase the retention of first-year students" (p. 599). Living on campus for the first term of college increased the odds of graduating from the original institution as well as increased the odds of graduating from a different institution if the student transferred after living on campus (Jones-White et al., 2010). However, the research by Jones-White, et al. focuses on first year undergraduates who lived on campus, not students whose on campus experience is as an incoming transfer student.

Some research has suggested that research is mixed regarding the benefits of living on campus. Meta-analysis research does not show a significant difference in intellectual stimulation, academic performance, study habits, or values for students living on campus versus living off campus (Blimling, 2003). Blimling (2003) asserted that though some studies have shown stronger indications of residence hall living leading to
academic achievement, much of that difference could be attributed to a higher socioeconomic status of students who historically choose to live on campus. When the affluence of the student is taken into consideration, the effect of on-campus living was less noteworthy (Blimling, 2003).

Universities tout the first year live on requirement as a necessity to students’ success because of the extra support and resources offered to students by living in campus housing such as resident advisors, live-in professional staff, on-site tutoring, and academic and social programming. It is unclear from research if there is an academic impact of on-campus living for transfer students.

Residential Student Engagement

Factored into the many complexities of student success is the engagement of students within the university. Lotkowski et al. (2004) and DeBerard et al. (2004) cited a relationship between students’ social involvement and social support (both reportedly higher for those students who live on campus) and their academic success and retention. Social involvement is defined as the student’s perceptions of their connection to college, faculty, peers, and their involvement in student activities on campus (Lotkowski et al., 2004). Student support is the “level of social support a student feels that the institution provides” (Lotkowski et al., 2004, p. 6). Students who live on campus are more likely to report positive feelings and perceptions about campus life and their social opportunities than off-campus students (Blimling, 2003).

The National Survey on Student Engagement shared that residential first-year students reported more high-quality interactions with other students than students that lived off campus (Gonyea et al., 2015). The higher quality interactions may correlate with
a student's convenience factor from living in the heart of campus. Students who live on campus report having more time to study, relax, socialize, and participate in campus activities (Gonyea et al., 2015). Blimling (2003) reports that a meta-analysis concluded that residence hall living influences positive effects in “perception of campus social climate, participation in extracurricular activities, the likelihood of graduating from college, and personal growth and development” (p. 76).

While much of the literature supports the benefits of on-campus living, some find no difference in living environments. Many areas of the National Survey on Student Engagement report found little or no difference in engagement between students who live on campus and those that live in privatized housing in proximity to campus (Gonyea et al., 2015). Studies do not delve into intricacies for students with disabilities or others who may not fit the typical college student mold. These students may benefit from a different style or environment than a more traditional first-year student. Hidden disabilities, such as Attention Deficit Disorder or mental health concerns, in particular, can be challenging to a student facing the first year live-on requirement (Dunkel & Bauman, 2013). While some argue that living in a residence hall may hinder a student with mental health concerns or other hidden disability, Dunkel and Bauman (2013) argue that these students may be well served to live in an environment that is designed to assist their transition.

"Campuses have increased the awareness and training of student and professional staff in student affairs, information them of such resources as counseling services and residence life" (Dunkel & Bauman, 2013, p. 15). As the need to have wrap-around care of college students facing mental health challenges and disabilities, for most students, living on campus appears to provide a safety net of support.
Prospective students evaluate the living arrangements as they tour campus and determine a campus fit. Campuses with updated and attractive housing, especially those that have more suite-style facilities, as well as campuses with energetic residential activity, can boost the overall perceptions of the campus (Kraft & Furlong, 2015). Prospective students also may be determining what kind of campus fit will work for them if a traditional experience is not what they are seeking.

**Financial Burden for the Student**

Many university students experience financial challenges. The cost of tuition at universities is rising, and even incremental cost increases in housing can be challenging for students with financial need. Douglas-Gabriel (2015) authored an article exploring the financial ramifications of requiring on-campus living for first-year students. While many universities tout the best value in living arrangements for their local area, Douglas-Gabriel (2015) describes individual students’ experiences when they were able to find less expensive options off campus. In many cases, the cost is equal or less than what it would cost for the student to live off campus. Up nearly 50% in the last ten years, the $9,000 plus room and board price tag per year is often too steep for some students and their families (Douglas-Gabriel, 2015). Students and families can sign up for financial aid, but face loans that they may be paying off for years (Kraft & Furlong, 2015).

Students find that working during their college years helps offset some of the living costs, but are challenged with maintaining the grade point average necessary to keep financial aid with limited time to study.

Conversely, correlation trends between retention and students who live on campus demonstrate there may be a risk to students who do not live on campus. Students who are
lower income are often those who opt-out of living on campus and are most at risk (Douglas-Gabriel, 2015). Lack of resources and transition support could hinder the student’s academic success. Students who are not retained at the university see a negative financial impact (Stillman, 2009). By dropping out of the university and not completing a degree, individuals will earn much less over their lifetime (DeBerard et al., 2004). Students who plan to take a break from school or transfer elsewhere often struggle with similar transition issues as they begin a new university.

An additional element to consider in the cost of on-campus living is that of a required meal plan. Residence halls rooms lack kitchens, and therefore most residence hall contracts have a dining contract written in. While students report they can eat less expensively when they live off campus by simplifying what they eat, on campus the demand for dining options tends to be more towards variety, healthy, organic, and locally sourced. At any given lunch on one campus, there might be over fifty menu options. University officials report the expectations and satisfaction of residential dining do not always correspond to the perceived value of the required dining plans (P. Schreiber, personal communication, November 4, 2016). The cost of a university meal plan, which is most commonly contractually required when signing up for a residence hall room, matches the cost of the room or more.

**Campus Live On Requirements**

Many universities require students to live in campus housing as part of their core student policies. Some private schools boast a fully residential campus, requiring students to live in residence halls and campus apartments for at least three years (Dunkel & Bauman, 2013). The most common live-in requirement is a single year live-on
requirement for first-year students under a certain age (R. DeShields, personal communication, December 15, 2016). For many students living on campus their first year of college is assumed from the onset. Traditional views of college involve students in dormitories for at least part of their undergraduate career. Campus life and culture similarly benefit from the vibrancy of having students on campus late into the evening (Dunkel & Bauman, 2013). However, for some students, different life experiences, financial, family, or health needs cause a more complex puzzle with a live-on requirement policy.

Many universities set up policy exceptions surrounding the first year live-on requirement. Four of the five largest public universities in Washington have a stated live-on requirement per the Washington Administrative Codes, a listing of agency-specific regulations treated as primary law by the state of Washington (Washington State, 2016). Within these policies, the universities have recognized several factors that may preclude a student from living on campus. A student's age and student status are factored in all four policies: requiring students under 20 or 21 to live on campus if this is their first year of university post-high school. The policies also make allowances for students living with immediate family close to the university or those that are married or have dependent children. Several policies reference other considerations like military service, medical or disability needs, and significant financial hardship (Washington State, 2016). In most cases, the student can submit a form to the university to request to be exempted based on criteria. Religious objections to the lifestyle present in college residence halls was not a sufficient reason to be exempted according to a 1990’s court case. The court case and ensuing appeal upheld the right of Yale University to require five Jewish-Orthodox
students to live on campus as the students knew the policy when choosing to attend Yale (Davis, 1997; Muller, 2000).

Notably, most universities exclude transfer students from their live-in requirements due to space limitations or a belief that transfer students benefit differently from the residential experience than first-year students transitioning to the university (R. DeShields, personal communication, December 15, 2016).

**University Perspective: Benefits and Challenges**

One of the largest considerations to the stewardship of the university resources is the financial benefits and challenges to the university in hosting on-campus housing. One of the greatest challenges to operating a housing facility on a college campus is the cost of operation. Budget components include utilities, maintenance, bond payments, cleaning crew as well as many components unique to a university setting: residential staffing, liability insurance, conduct support, fully wired and wireless internet. Costs such as staff, utilities, and insurance rise year to year (Kraft & Furlong, 2015). Most universities do not financially supplement residential housing in any way, and in many cases, campus housing entities provide funds back to the school budget. Universities are increasingly pressed to build newer and more impressive facilities and with those facilities comes occupancy minimum requirements and annual bond payments in the millions (Kraft & Furlong, 2015).

Universities must consider the financial challenges of poor retention, not just the intrinsic want for students to succeed. Failure to retain students also comes at an economical cost to the university. "Each student that leaves before degree completion costs the college or university thousands of dollars in unrealized tuition, fees, and alumni
contributions” (DeBerard et al., 2004, para. 1). A student that stops-out their first year of school represents only 20-25% of the potential investment in addition to recruiting costs. This represents a significant financial impact to the operating costs of a university which is an additional incentive to retain students who are so expensive to recruit.

Universities with a residential style campus can see returns in student engagement, a traditional campus culture, and financial gains (Schudde, 2011). These areas can benefit retention and graduation rates; key needs for public universities looking for a positive reputation, fulfill their mission, and in some states maintain and grow legislative allotments (Stillman, 2009). If a university chooses to implement or uphold a live-in policy for students, they can suffer public relations challenges as a result. Yale University was sued for requiring students to live on campus despite religious objections (Muller, 2000). The University of Oregon also received backlash while implementing a live-on requirement for their university (Shinn, 2016). A 1974 lawsuit over a campus live-on requirement was won in the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals by the University of South Dakota in part due to the campus’s commitment for the greater good (Prostrollo v. University of South Dakota, 1974). The University argued that sufficient occupancy of housing was needed to repay construction bonds and that the educational advantages of students living in housing would support them in their academic work (Prostrollo v. University of South Dakota, 1974).
Leadership Literature

Finding means to support transfer students in their academic success through their living environment is influenced by the leadership values and mission of housing professionals and the university. The university must balance and study the policies and practices that inform a complex community on and off campus as well as the significance for their organization (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). In the spirit of the Jesuit charism of magis, as the university considers the greater good for the institution, it also needs to think of the individual student’s development and transition to create what is the best for them (Lowney, 2010; Service, 2015).

Housing administration has evolved as a professional practice over time with waves of focus on academics, research, well-being, and success (Dunkel & Bauman, 2013). Leadership of campus housing is first noted as faculty who lived and organized in residential college England in the 1860s and later translated to universities in the United States such as Harvard, Yale, and the University of Virginia (Dunkel & Bauman, 2013). The concern for the student experience shifted post American Civil War with the influence of the German higher-education model that was centered in a transactional housing arrangement and minimized campus housing offerings as a whole. Post World War II, college presidents became more vocal about the significance of students living on campus and led the reemphasis on campus housing that exists today (Dunkel & Bauman, 2013). Housing administration continues to find significance in the holistic experience a student benefits from during their time in campus housing.

Transfer students specifically have unique housing, campus involvement, and leadership needs than traditional first year students. Woosley et al. (2006) found transfer
Students were “less involved and less satisfied with involvement opportunities” than other students (p. 29). Transfer students also reported struggling to develop personally as a result of engaging in campus activities (Woosley et al., 2006)

Students who are engaged with their college experience demonstrate stronger leadership qualities and experiences. In Dugan and Komives (2007) comprehensive survey of 50,000 university students at 150 universities found that student involvement factors including participating in mentoring, being involved in student organizations, and participating in service activities as a student leads to stronger leadership growth. Universities are looked to develop leadership capacity in future workers and citizens including developing integrity, character, and problem-solving skills (Astin, 1993; King, 1997). Students’ involvement on campus, specifically in residential leadership groups, increases learning, leadership growth, and development (Hallenbeck et al., 2004). Gonyea et al. (2015) had mixed results when monitoring where a student’s engagement occurred. Their research showed that it was the distance from campus of the residence that was more impactful to engagement than if the residence was considered on campus or off campus.

**Summary**

While benefits of a campus live-on policy are increased retention, student success, and a more financially solvent university, the impact it can have on transfer students needed further exploration. The historical significance of campus housing supports a stronger emphasis on a transformational campus experience within a university. The cost of not persisting to a degree are costly for the student, school and community and
researchers note students who attain a bachelor’s degree earn double the salary than others who did not attain a degree (Kraft & Furlong, 2015).

Further themes in literature emerged within academic student success, many related to transfer student’s educational experiences. It is clear that how a student joins the university and the level of enrollment while attending can affect a student's persistence. A student’s financial need continues to be a predictor of challenges as students who enter the university with fewer financial resources feel stretched to pay for tuition, fees, books, housing, and food. Other barriers to student academic success include part-time enrollment, working full time while enrolled, family concerns and pressure, and transitioning to a new geographical location.

Students living on campus can expect benefits to overall student success and engagement at the university. Some research shows significant impacts on student success, especially in graduation rates. Social connections and perceptions of connection are also improved from on-campus living. Other research highlights that research is still mixed in academic success correlation and causation. However, some students struggle financially to foot the bill of residence hall living which traditionally includes a meal plan.

Literature on the leadership implications focus on university leaders needing to balance competing and complex needs to develop students, be financially solvent, and commitments to stakeholders. Housing professionals have shouldered those responsibilities in different ways over the last one hundred and fifty years. Leadership development in students is also an important component of considering the literature around college student development, persistence, and success. Some research
demonstrated that students’ involvement, especially in residential leadership opportunities, benefits the students’ personal and academic development. Research was still mixed on a consensus of what is contributing to engagement and involvement benefits of students. Further research was needed to investigate how these factors can affect transfer students’ retention rates, academic success, and graduation rates.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if a transfer student’s living environment affects their academic success. The study, which was conducted at a mid-size four-year university in the Pacific Northwest, compared transfer students in a variety of living environments including residence halls, on-campus apartments, or living off campus with the transfer student’s grade point average, retention, and successful graduation. A quantitative research approach was appropriate to answer the research question as it allows the data to create meaning through statistical analysis (Creswell, 2014). As significant research has been conducted showing correlation between student success and first year freshman living in a residence hall, a quantitative approach supported testing the theory that transfer students also benefit from living in a residence hall setting (Creswell, 2014).

Research Question and Hypotheses

Research question: What effect does the living environment have on transfer students’ success?

The following hypotheses will be investigated in this study:

Hypothesis #1: Transfer students who live in on-campus residence halls will have a higher grade point average than students who live off campus.

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in grade point average for transfer students based on their living environment.

Hypothesis #2: Retention rates will be higher for transfer students who lived in on-campus residence halls compared to students who lived off campus.
Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference for transfer students’ persistence at the university based on the living environment.

Hypothesis #3: Transfer students who live in on-campus residence halls will graduate at higher rates than students who live off campus.

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in graduation rates for transfer students based on the living environment.

Hypothesis #4: There is no statistically significant impact for students who live in on-campus apartments in grade point average.

Null Hypothesis: Transfer students who live in on-campus apartments will see a statistically significant difference in grade point average.

**Research Design**

The research design for this dissertation in practice is a quantitative, non-experimental research using a correlational approach. Descriptive statistical analyses were performed on the sample groups to understand the population. The research used historical data that exists at the campus in the university’s data warehouse. As the research question asked what effect does the living environment have on transfer students’ success, this study was able to suggest findings that confirm there is a relationship with living on campus for student success or that there is no correlation between on-campus living and success measures (Creswell, 2014).

The independent variables were the students' living environment (on-campus residence hall, on-campus apartment, off campus) their first fall term at the university after transferring in. The dependent variables included the measures of student success: grade point average, the graduation rate in three, four, and five years, and fall-to-fall
retention rates. Moderating and mediating variables included gender, financial resources of students, and age at time of admission.

**Participants, Data Sources, and Recruitment**

Archival data was used in this quantitative study. The study population was transfer students at a mid-sized, regional, access university. The sample consisted of five years of transfer student incoming cohorts from 2009 – 2013 with 1,100 to 1,400 students each year for a total of 6,436 participants. Approximately 1,500 of those participants lived on campus their first year as a transfer student. The sample is an appropriate size as it incorporates over 6,000 students which allows for a higher confidence variable (Field, 2013). By incorporating multiple years, there was less possible variation in outcomes based on the number of students living on campus. Some years, there is a greater number of transfer students living in residence halls and campus apartments, and other years there are far less depending on the size of the freshman class who receive priority for housing.

**Data Collection Tools and Procedures**

Data was collected from the university’s data warehouse. A pipeline of data exists spanning decades regarding students’ key demographics, enrollment, grades, and financial aid. The data warehouse at the university is the central location for all data related to students and is the central hub of confidential data retrieved on student populations. Housing classifications for these years are listed primarily in a database used by the housing office.

Before the data was requested, I sought institutional review board (IRB) exempt study approval from Creighton University. IRB forms “Creighton-IRB Application Form” and “202 Application for Determination of Exempt Status: Observation, Survey,
Interview” were completed and submitted. Additionally, study site permission was confirmed and a letter of agreement giving permission for the research to take place at the subject university was submitted. All IRB related items were submitted via IRBNet for approval.

After the Creighton University IRB approval was given, a second IRB request was initiated with the study site’s institutional research office. Once approved, a data warehouse request for student information was completed to retrieve student information related to demographics, transfer and registration information, graduation rate and timing, retention, and grade point average tied to the student ID from the data warehouse. Additionally, housing data was requested in three categories of on-campus residence hall, on-campus apartment and off campus living for the fall quarter of each year studied. This information is not currently stored accurately in the data warehouse for the years needed and will be more accurate coming from the housing department at the university (M. Andrin, personal communication, September 26, 2017).

The overall data collected was placed into a Microsoft Excel document and a university data steward cross-referenced and merged the two data sets using student identification numbers. The student identification numbers were then assigned a unique key to allow for confidentiality in the study by a university data steward before I received it for analysis. The combined data was then uploaded into SPSS, a statistical software package, for data analysis. All electronic documents were protected including password protecting the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and any other sensitive files and stored on a secure network drive.
Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns were minimized in several areas. All IRB applications and formal approvals were met before data collection began (Creswell, 2014). To protect the privacy of students, aggregates used non-identifiable information in reporting. When the data were retrieved, a third party from the study site, a data steward from Information Services, merged the two spreadsheets and created a unique key that de-identified the students by student identification number. As mentioned previously, data sets were kept secure and followed all data storage guidelines. Also, any results of the study will be disclosed publicly at professional conferences, in publication, or campus-based workshops with aggregate information presented according to Creighton University IRB requirements.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the study site was placed in Microsoft Excel tables and then imported into SPSS. Data included the academic success measures as well as demographic factors and other information that may be pertinent. The three groups of living environments were based on the student’s housing specification fall quarter of their first year at the university.

Data was inputted into SPSS and tests were run based on each hypothesis:

- Hypothesis #1: Transfer students who live in on-campus residence halls will have a higher grade point average than students who live off campus. The dependent variable is the student’s grade point average and the independent variable is the type of living environment. A one-way ANOVA measured the difference between
the groups and is an appropriate test to measure if there are statistically significant
differences between the means of three or more unrelated groups (Field, 2013).

- **Hypothesis #2**: Retention rates will be higher for transfer students who lived in
on-campus residence halls compared to students who lived off campus. The
dependent variable is the student’s fall to fall retention and the independent
variable is the type of living environment. A Pearson’s Chi square test was
conducted to measure the relationship and strength and direction of a relationship
between two quantifiable variables (Field, 2013).

- **Hypothesis #3**: Transfer students who live in on-campus residence halls will
graduate at higher rates than students who live off campus. The dependent
variable is if the student graduated within three, four, and five years and the
independent variable is the type of living environment. Like Hypothesis 2, a
Pearson’s Chi square test was conducted to measure the relationship between two
categorical variables (Field, 2013).

- **Hypothesis #4**: There is not statistically significant impact on grade point average
for students who live in on-campus apartments. The dependent variable is the
student’s grade point average and the independent variable is the type of living
environment. Similar to the first hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA measured the
difference between the groups (Field, 2013).

The one-way ANOVA tests were followed by post-hoc tests to determine which group
differed from each other. Field (2013) recommended Hochberg’s GT2 to be used as a
post-hoc for ANOVA studies where sample size varies between the independent
variables. Analysis of the test will include a summary narrative of the statistics as well as relevant charts.

**Reflections of the Researcher**

This study on transfer student retention and success is critical to my university as it grapples how to serve an increasing percentage of transfer students when resources and policies tend to be focused on traditional, first-year students. The topic emerged as an option for my dissertation in practice after I completed a paper on first-year live-on requirements for the ILD Administration and Policy course. After fifteen years of working in campus housing, it was refreshing to be reminded of ways in which students can benefit from residence hall living. It also was eye-opening that a first year live-on requirement is often a financial decision for a university and can negatively impact students who are not traditional in their route to the university. I became interested in how housing options impacted other groups of students on campus and if the same generally positive outcomes of first-year students was true for first-year transfer students.

While the topic is compelling to me as a housing officer, I am also interested in this study serving as a foundation of tools and methods I can apply to future research. I have previously attempted to leverage assessment data to substantiate marketing, funding requests, and staffing needs but did so with bias and an agenda. Working through the dissertation in practice transformational process has pushed me to consider the role of a researcher and of an administrator to balance the needs of the university with those of the individual student.
Summary

This dissertation in practice examined the differences in key student success measures in transfer students at a university. The population considered was transfer students at a mid-size, regional, access university. The study’s sample was four years of incoming transfer students with roughly 6,000 participants. Existing historical data included students' demographic information, registration, and enrollment, grade point averages, retention and graduation rates. The researcher used merged data warehouse information with housing assignments that show residence hall and on-campus apartment designations.

The independent variable is the student’s living environment in three categories: on campus residence hall, on campus apartment and off campus. The dependent variables are grade point average, graduation rate, and fall-to-fall retention. Several ANOVA tests and Pearson Chi-Square tests were run for each academic metric to compare the means and test for relationship for student groups of on-campus residence hall, on-campus apartment, and off campus housing.

Ethical considerations have been considered related to the Institutional Research Board (IRB) review. Privacy and security of the data was paramount with plans that include secure data storage and proper destruction. Aggregates were used when disseminating the findings of the research.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if transfer students’ living environment affects their academic success. The study conducted at a mid-size four-year university in the Pacific Northwest, examined transfer students in a variety of living environments including residence halls, on-campus apartments, or living off campus with the transfer student’s grade point average, retention, and graduation.

The research question for this study was “What effect does the living environment have on transfer students’ success?” The following hypotheses were investigated in this study:

Hypothesis #1: Transfer students who live in on-campus residence halls will have a higher grade point average than students who live off campus.

Hypothesis #2: Retention rates will be higher for transfer students who lived in on-campus residence halls compared to students who lived off campus.

Hypothesis #3: Transfer students who live in on-campus residence halls will graduate at higher rates than students who live off campus.

Hypothesis #4: There is no statistically significant impact for students who live in on-campus apartments in grade point average

In chapter three, the research design and methods were discussed, while in this chapter, the study results and findings will be discussed. This includes how the data was collected, the organization of the data and the analysis. The data was compiled, categorized, and inputted into SPSS. The research is a non-experimental research using a
correlational approach. Descriptive statistics analysis was performed on the sample groups to understand the population.

**Data Collection**

The researcher worked with institutional effectiveness at the four-year university in the Pacific Northwest to gather data for this study. Several instances of clarification occurred from the staff member preparing the data to be certain only information was provided for students who were first year, main campus, transfer students with forty-five credits earned post high school. These data were then sent to an information services staff person who merged the data from institutional effectiveness with specific housing assignments for their first term and de-identified.

**Data Compilation**

After the data was collected and transferred for analysis, several layers of data organization occurred using a Microsoft Excel workbook. Each data year, 2009-2013, represented different transfer student fall admit terms resulting in five distinct cohort groups. Then the researcher worked with housing personnel to distinguish which hall classifications were residence halls or apartments for a particular year. The study institution categorizes campus housing into on-campus apartments or residence halls based on meal plans, resident assistants, and programmatic intensity.
Table 1

Transfer Student Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfer Cohorts</th>
<th>Campus Apartments</th>
<th>Off Campus</th>
<th>Residence Hall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009 (N = 1196)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010 (N = 1345)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 (N = 1301)</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012 (N = 1308)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013 (N = 1286)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals (N = 6436)</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>4681</td>
<td>1296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of the first and fourth hypothesis the dependent variable was grade point average of the first term of enrollment and required only basic number clean up. For the second hypothesis, the dependent variable is fall to fall retention rates. For this hypothesis, each admit term cohort was sorted and then assigned a retained or not retained category based on their consecutive fall enrollment. Hypothesis four required the most complicated data organization as it considers three, four, and five-year graduation rates. Each admit year’s cohort was sorted and then assigned categories of graduated or not graduated for each graduation set, three, four, and five. The data was then uploaded into SPSS based on hypothesis grouping.

Presentation of Findings and Analysis

Hypothesis One

The first research hypothesis states that transfer students who live in on-campus residence halls will have a higher grade point average than students who live off campus.
The null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between grade point average for transfer students and living environment.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics of Grade Point Average Variables by Living Arrangement (N = 6436)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Apartments</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Halls</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the grade point average of transfer students their first term who lived in on-campus apartments, off campus, and residence halls. The ANOVA results revealed that there was not a significant mean difference in grade point average between the groups, F(2, 6433) = .55, p = .58.
Table 3

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Grades for the First Term of Transfer Students by Living Arrangement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>6433</td>
<td>5896.48</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6435</td>
<td>5897.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table above demonstrates, the hypothesis that students living in residence hall settings earn higher grades was not supported.

Hypothesis Two

The second research hypothesis stated that retention rates will be higher for transfer students who lived in on-campus residence halls compared to students who lived off campus. The null hypothesis is there will be no relationship between transfer students’ persistence at the university based on the living environment. First year retention was measured fall to fall. If a student was initially enrolled in Fall 2009 and returned in Fall 2010 they were retained.

Table 4

Chi Square Test of Transfer Students Retention (N = 6436)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pearson’s chi-square test was performed to examine if transfer students were more likely to be retained by living environment: campus apartment, residence hall, or off campus. There was not a statistically significant relationship between living environment and if the student was retained, $X^2 (2) = 1.66, p = .44$.

**Table 5**

*Cross tabulation of Housing Types Comparing Retention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Not retained</th>
<th>Retained</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Retention</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>3777</td>
<td>4681</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Retention</td>
<td></td>
<td>74.2%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Hall</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>1061</td>
<td>1296</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Retention</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1219</td>
<td>5217</td>
<td>6436</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Retention</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The hypothesis that residence hall students would be more likely to be retained is not supported as there is no statistically significant difference between students’ retention across the three living options.

**Figure 1**
Retention count by living environment

![Retention count by living environment](image)

**Hypothesis Three**

The third research hypothesis stated that transfer students who live in on-campus residence halls will graduate at higher rates than students who live off campus. The null hypothesis is there will be no significant difference in graduation rates for transfer students based on the living environment. Data were compiled to examine living arrangements variables within analysis of three, four, and five-year graduation rate.
3 Year Graduation Rates

A Pearson’s chi-square test was performed to examine if transfer students were more likely to graduate in three years amongst the three living arrangements: campus apartment, residence hall, or off campus. The analysis found a very significant relationship between housing type and graduating in three years, $X^2 (2) = 21.41, p = .00$.

Table 6

| Chi Square Test of Transfer Students Graduation Rate in Three Years (N = 6436) |
|----------------------------------|--------|-----|
|                                  | Value  | df  | p   |
| Pearson Chi-Square               | 21.41  | 2    | .00 |
| Likelihood Ratio                 | 21.33  | 2    | .00 |

While the test found a very statistically significant relationship, it was in the opposite direction of hypothesis three. Therefore, hypothesis three is not supported in the three-year graduation measurement.
### Table 7

*Cross Tabulation of Housing Types with Transfer Students Three Year Graduation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Campus Apartment</th>
<th>Graduation in 3 Years</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Graduated</td>
<td>Not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Graduated</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>233</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within 3 Year Group</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2711</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within 3 Year Group</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Hall</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within 3 Year Group</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3615</td>
<td>2821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within 3 Year Group</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Year Graduation Rate

Unlike the statistically significant findings of the three-year graduation rate, the four-year graduation rate \( p \) was greater than .05 and did not meet the threshold. The Pearson’s chi-square test analysis found no statistically significant relationship between housing type and graduating in four years, \( X^2 (2) = .91, p = .64 \).

Table 8

*Chi Square Test of Transfer Students Graduation Rate in Four Years (N = 6436)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduation rates range from 64.3% to 66.2% for four-year graduating transfer students, demonstrating a non-significant difference.
Table 9

*Cross Tabulation of Housing Types with Transfer Students Four Year Graduation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Campus Apartment</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Graduated</th>
<th>Not Graduated</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>295</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>459</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td></td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within 4 Year Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>3099</td>
<td>1582</td>
<td>4681</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td></td>
<td>66.2%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within 4 Year Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>73.1%</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td>847</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>1296</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td></td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within 4 Year Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>4241</td>
<td>2195</td>
<td>6436</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td></td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within 4 Year Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Year Graduation

A final Pearson’s chi-square test was performed to examine if transfer students were more likely to graduate in five years amongst the three living arrangements: campus apartment, residence hall, or off campus.

Table 10

**Chi Square Test of Transfer Students Graduation Rate in Five Years (N = 6436)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis found no statistically significant relationship between housing type and graduating in three years, $X^2 (2) = .20, p = .90$. The graduation rate ranged from 69.3% to 70.4%. Additionally, as of August 2019, 1,733 transfer students included in the study had not graduated with their bachelor’s degree.
Table 11

*Cross Tabulation of Housing Types with Transfer Students Five Year Graduation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Campus Apartment</th>
<th>Off Campus</th>
<th>Residence Hall</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>3274</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>4504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Type</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within 4 Year Group</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduation in 5 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Graduated</th>
<th>Not Graduated</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Apartment</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus</td>
<td>1407</td>
<td>1407</td>
<td>4681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Hall</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>1296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>6436</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Hypothesis Four**

The fourth hypothesis suggested that while there may be differences between off-campus and residence hall living, that on-campus apartments will not show the same benefits as a residence hall. It stated that there will be no statistically significant impact for students who live in on-campus apartments in G.P.A and the null hypothesis is that transfer students who live in on-campus apartments will see a statistically significant difference in grade point average.

To test this hypothesis, the same analysis was conducted as hypothesis one. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the grade point average of transfer students their first term who lived in on-campus apartments, off campus, and residence halls. The ANOVA revealed that there was not a significant mean difference in grade point average between the groups, $F(2, 6433) = .55, p = .58$, supporting the hypothesis that transfer students living in on-campus apartments do not experience any special benefit academically.

**Table 12**

*Descriptive Statistics of Grade Point Average Variables by Living Arrangement (N = 6436)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Apartments</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Halls</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Grades the First Term of Transfer Students by Living Arrangement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>6433</td>
<td>5896.48</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6435</td>
<td>5897.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Synthesis and Summary**

In summary, the research question asked what impact does living on campus have on a transfer students’ success? Analysis of the four hypotheses suggests that living on campus does not positively impact transfer students. In retention and grade point average related hypotheses and analysis, there was no statistically difference between living in a residence hall, apartment, or off campus. In the case of graduation rates, transfer students who lived off campus were much more likely to graduate in three years. Graduation rates for four and five years showed no difference between living arrangements. The next chapter of this dissertation in practice reviews the findings of this study and discusses opportunities to apply the findings within higher education.
FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The primary focus of this study was to determine if there is a connection between where a transfer student to a university lives and their academic success. Literature suggests that traditional first year students benefit from a residence hall experience but research does not show the same benefit exists for students transferring to the institution (Schudde, 2011). Transfer students are identified as a group of students with academic and developmental needs unique from a student who begins their higher education as a freshman. Kelderman and Gardner (2019) contend that recruiting and retaining transfer students is vital to institutions’ financial health as campuses face a nation-wide issue of dipping enrollment in the latter half of the 2020’s. This study suggests that simply providing campus housing options for transfer students is not enough to impact a transfer student’s academic success. More targeted programming, policies, and research is needed to explore how to best support this critical population of students.

This chapter includes an overview of the basis of the study and delves into proposed solutions based on the findings. The chapter suggests that simply providing campus housing options for transfer students is not enough to impact a transfer student’s academic success. More targeted programming, policies, and research is needed to explore how to best support this critical population of students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if a transfer student’s living environment affects their academic success. The study, which was conducted at a four-year university, compared transfer students in a variety of living environments
including residence halls, on-campus apartments, or living off campus with their grade point average, retention, and graduation.

**Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study was to inform policies, programs, and recommendations that support transfer students as they choose a living environment that encourages their academic success.

**Proposed Solution and Response to Research**

While a common prescription for traditional first year student retention and academic success is living in a residence hall setting, the data analysis shows that living on campus is not a one-size fits all solution for transfer students. In most measures of academic success, there was no statistically significant difference for transfer students between living in a residence hall, on-campus apartment, or off campus. Additionally, in comparison of three year-graduation rates, it was more beneficial for students to live in an off-campus environment than on campus in a residence hall or apartment.

Many universities have first year living requirement policies, mandating that first-year students live in a residence hall setting their first year on campus if not further into their academic careers in the form of two-, three-, or a four-year live on requirement. For most campuses, this living requirement satisfies academic and retention goals, develops student involvement, and is a solid business decision to financially stabilize the university. Based on the data analysis, it appears the university should not implement any policies dictating which living environment students should choose. A transfer student live-in requirement would not be productive in increasing student success.
This research supports that the cause of student challenges to academic success is more complex than simply the location of their living. While first year students benefit from living on campus in academic and developmental needs, the data demonstrates this is not true for the university studied. Transfer student programs centered around student living such as living learning communities, common interest groups, and dedicated housing could certainly have other benefits beyond retention, grades, and graduation rates. Benefits of these programs could include a recruiting tool to attract students to the university, opportunities for students to connect and develop holistically, and finding a sense of home amongst a new setting of their transfer institutions. However, living on campus as a sole solution does not indicate a benefit on its own.

With the exception of the three-year graduation rates, there was no difference between living options for the other metrics. This does not necessarily warrant a policy or programmatic change to de-prioritize transfer students against other living arrangements but does suggest universities strive to retain first time, full-time freshmen continue to leverage housing resources towards those groups instead of towards transfer students. Finite resources would suggest that transfer student retention efforts should focus on best practices outside of housing.

Factors and Stakeholders Related to the Solution

Proposing solutions based around not acting or innovating is counter-intuitive to most areas of higher education which normally is searching for solutions, policies, and programmatic responses to problems. However, based on the research findings, a university should reallocate resources towards more high-impact practices than transfer student housing such as orientation, mentoring, and intrusive advising (Wetzstein et al.,
Additionally, it would benefit transfer students to live in settings they feel best supports their development and needs rather than promoting, discouraging, or excluding transfer students from certain types of living arrangements. The findings support that transfer students have unique and varied needs that may be best served through following their lead.

**Policies Influenced/Influencing the Proposed Solution**

The university studied has a first year live-on requirement in practice and a state-wide administrative code that allows for the university to require first and second year students to live on campus. This policy is limited to students who have not completed a full year (or two) of university course work post high school graduation. Based on the findings of this study, it would be advised to not modify this policy at this time. Policies related to housing options for transfer students should remain. For instance, while some types of students are not eligible for campus apartments, this option should still exist for transfer students.

**Potential Barriers and Obstacles to Proposed Solution**

Higher education institutions often plan for a magic wand approach to translate best practice solutions towards related problems. While research has shown a strong correlation between first year residence hall living, the solution of prioritizing transfer student live-on requirement policies or create transfer student living learning communities does not appear to be indicated (Schudde, 2011). As the university in this research forms the first transfer student center, it may appear to be a simple solution to promote housing arrangements as a solution to retention and academic success but doing so does not appear to be beneficial to the student.
Financial/Budget Issues Related to Proposed Solution

Strengthening student retention and decreasing time to graduate for students both have significant benefits to the university’s financial health. Often, requiring students to live on campus can also have a financial benefit, increasing the consistency of revenue streams from campus housing. However, based on the research findings, the financial benefit of retention and academic success of students will not be realized if students are not more likely to succeed by living on campus. Additionally, while the financial solvency from mandating transfer students live in residence halls would be beneficial, the current housing capacity at the studied university would require building several halls to accommodate the number of transfer students.

Implications

Practical Implications

The implications of this study are broad as most bachelor’s granting universities also admit transfer students who have unique needs and developmental prerequisites than traditional freshman. No previous research has been published on transfer students’ academic success related to their housing arrangements and leaders may extrapolate the findings from first time, full time freshman to first time transfer students related to housing. The findings of this study suggest that the same academic success benefit that exists for freshman students does not exist for incoming transfer students. In grade point average in their first term and fall to fall retention, there was no significant difference between residence hall living, on-campus apartments and off campus. In three-year graduation rates it was more beneficial to live off campus than in on campus settings, however with the four- and five-year graduation rates the rates go back to being not
statistically different. The implications for campus leadership, including housing professionals, is direction in policy and programmatic priorities that did not exist before.

**Implications for Future Research**

There are many opportunities for future research into transfer student housing needs and benefits. While this study answers the question of what impact does living arrangements have on transfer student academic success at the studied institution, there are other considerations and studies that could further explore how to support transfer students’ unique needs. The study focused on living environments at the study institution that were not tailored specially to the needs of transfer students but rather to first year students and continuing students. Several universities have implemented targeted living learning communities with staffing and programmatic functions aimed at this population of students. Future research could investigate the benefits of living in a themed housing environment such as transfer student floor or hall.

The research found an unexpected opposite relationship with three-year graduation rates and transfer students. Students who lived off campus were considerably more likely to graduate in three years than students who lived in residence halls or on-campus apartments. A post-hoc examination of the data may provide an explanation to this unexpected outcome. It may be that these off-campus students were more prepared for a four-year university including age, admission date, experience living independently prior to transferring, or participating in the voluntary transfer student orientation. Further research could investigate this finding including examining the academic experiences of students choosing to more independently live off campus versus those that seek a traditional residential experience. One explanation could be that students who are
transferring with more complete university experiences and greater credits, may desire an independent experience off campus while those who are transferring after only a year of college may seek the transitional help of a residence hall. The students who had transferred in fewer credits would need more time to graduate and thus explain the leveling off in the four and five-year graduation rates.

**Implications for Leadership Theory and Practice**

University leaders must balance the needs of the students with policy, financial impacts, and enrollment needs. This study supports campus leaders in determining resource allocation and future policy as they seek to be a premier transfer student accepting university for their region. This includes higher education policy makers beyond just those focused on housing. Administrators focused on enrollment management, transfer student center, financial aid, and business officers may find clarity around transfer student housing to be helpful in recruiting, retaining, and graduating transfer students. Student Affairs leaders such as recreation center staff, advisors, and campus activities staff will continue to need to provide targeted services, programming, and development to this growing population.

**Summary of the Study**

This study sought to answer the question what impact does living environment have on student success for transfer students. As transfer students become a focus of enrollment to stabilize waning traditional first year freshman admission, a more thoughtful understanding was needed to plan for transfer student needs. Through examining the literature, there was ample research demonstrating that traditional first year students at universities benefit academically from living in a residence hall setting.
Previous research also demonstrated that transfer students’ experiences were complex, dynamic, and did not replicate a traditional first-time, full-time freshman’s experience. There was no literature found that examined transfer students within a living environment.

The study consisted of historical data retrieved from a regional, access four-year university in the Pacific Northwest in a non-experimental correlational analysis. The data represented five years of incoming transfer student fall cohorts and followed them through their first term’s grade point average, their retention from their first year to second year, and their graduation within three, four, or five years. The hypotheses of positive impacts of living in a residence hall setting for transfer students was largely not supported and in almost all cases, living environment did not appear to influence as transfer students’ academic success.

While a transfer students’ needs and experiences are highly differentiated from traditional four-year students, this study supports the university as well as higher education leadership in a foundation of research into this question. Further research and examination are needed to determine if certain types of transfer students should be offered programming and/or a specific transfer living experience or if there are other areas more relevant to transfer students’ academic success than their living arrangements.
References


*Prostrollo v. University of South Dakota*, 507 F.2d 775 (8th Cir. 1974).


access, Retention, and Graduation-Definitions, Theories, Practices, Patterns, and Trends.pdf


Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval of Exempt Status, Creighton University

Institutional Review Board
2500 California Plaza • Omaha, Nebraska 68178
phone: 402.280.2126 • fax: 402.280.4766 • email: irb@creighton.edu

DATE: August 5, 2019
TO: Tricia Rabel
FROM: Creighton University IRB-02 Social Behavioral
PROJECT TITLE: [1466355-1] Transfer Student Success: The Impact of Living Environment
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project
ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: August 5, 2019
REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The following items were reviewed in this submission:

- Application Form - 405b Application for Determination of Exempt Status Record Review Social Behavioral (delayed version).doc (UPDATED: 07/19/2019)
- Creighton - IRB Application Form - Creighton - IRB Application Form (UPDATED: 08/1/2019)
- Data Collection - Rabel Data Set Sheet.xlsx (UPDATED: 07/19/2019)
- Proposal - TRabel_DIRProposal_Ch1-3_07162019Rabel.docx (UPDATED: 07/19/2019)

This project has been determined to be exempt from Federal Policy for Protection of Human Subjects as per 45CFR46.101 (b) 2.

All protocol amendments and changes are to be submitted to the IRB and may not be implemented until approved by the IRB. Please use the modification form when submitting changes.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Stibos at (402) 280-2126 or kathleenstbos@creighton.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Creighton University IRB-02 Social Behavioral's records.
Appendix B

Human Subjects Review Approval of Exempt Status, Central Washington University

07/31/2019

Dear Tricia Rabel:

Thank you for submitting an exemption request for your study, Transfer Student Success: The Impact of Living Environment. The application as submitted was screened for exemption status according to the policies of CWU and the provisions of the applicable federal regulations. Your research was found to be subject to CWU oversight but exempt because it involves the use of existing archival data which are recorded so that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects [see 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4)]. This certification is valid for 12 months through 07/30/2020, as long as the approved procedures are followed.

Your responsibilities with respect to keeping this office apprised of your progress include the following:

1. Submit a Project Modification Request form for approval before modifying your study in any way (e.g., any change in recruitment, subjects, co-investigators, consent forms, any procedures), except formatting of documents. If there is a major change in purpose or protocol, you may be asked to submit a new application.
2. Submit a Termination Report form upon completion of your study.
3. Immediately contact the HSRC for further guidance should you encounter unanticipated problems with your research. Follow up with an Unanticipated Problems report may be required.

All of the HSRC forms are available on our website. Please refer to your HSRC study number (2019-089) in all related future correspondence with this office. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the office.

I have appreciated working with you; may you have a productive research experience.

Sincerely,

Sandra M. Martinez, M.A.
Human Protections Administrator

cc: HSRC File
Matthew Altman, HSRC Chair

Human Subjects Review Council
400 E University Way • Ellensburg WA 98926-4701 • Office: 509-963-3115
Black Hall, 225-17 • Email: hsrc@cwu.edu • Web: cwu.edu/hsrc
This is an electronic communication from Central Washington University.