THE BEHAVIOR AND CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS IN A SECOND-YEAR EXPERIENCE PROGRAM AND RELATED EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

by

BENJAMIN MICHAEL PERLMAN

(Under the Direction of Diane L. Cooper)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine what relationships exist between second-year student behaviors and characteristics in a second-year engagement (SYE) program and academic development. Research questions were developed to examine the relationship between various aspects of participation in the SYE program and the tasks of academic autonomy and educational involvement, as measured by the Student Development Task and Lifestyle Assessment (SDTLA). This would allow educators involved in SYE programs to better understand the relationship between behaviors (participation in SYE activities) and intended outcomes (academic development).

The researcher collected data via a survey questionnaire distributed to an entire college class at Southern Selective University (SSU) and included questions about SYE participation as well as the SDTLA assessment sections on academic autonomy and educational involvement. Using t-tests, correlation coefficients, and regression analysis, the researcher determined that several significant relationships existed between student characteristics, behaviors, and academic development.

Participants who had completed a resume by the end of their second year of college were more likely to have high educational involvement scores. Also, the frequency of meetings with

academic advisors was found to be positively correlated with educational involvement and academic autonomy. How often participants discussed academics with faculty was also found to have a significant relationship with both measures of academic development. Several other factors had small but significant relationships with academic development, including discussing academics with family and friends. Another important finding was that overall frequency of participation in SYE programs was not found to have any relationship with academic development scores. An examination of demographic data found that students who were the first in their family to attend college were less likely to have completed a resume, and where second-year students lived had an effect on their overall participation in the SYE program. Several findings are discussed, including the importance of academic advising integration into SYE programs, an increased focus on resume completion, and making faculty involvement a priority in programming.

INDEX WORDS: Academic Development, Sophomore, Second-Year Students, Academic Autonomy, Educational Involvement, SDTLA

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DEDICATION

To my grandparents; Stanley and Estelle Perlman and Jim and Della Moulder, for instilling in me the value of an education.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Many students, faculty, and administrators at colleges and universities are aware of the phenomenon commonly referred to as the "sophomore slump," the belief that students in the second year of college are likely to drift and feel despondent, undirected, or ineffective. While this phenomenon has long been in the educational lexicon, until recently much of the evidence to support it has been observational or anecdotal. However, an interest has emerged in the student affairs research community to study the development of second-year students.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, the majority of literature on second-year student development focuses on qualitative studies (Gansemer-Topf, Stern, & Benjamin, 2007; Schaller, 2005a). Research has shown that behaviors such as faculty/student interactions (Astin, 1993); utilization of academic advising (Stockenberg, 2007); discussions with parents and peers (Colburn, 2007); and internship, practicum, and research experiences (Flanagan, 2007) all contribute to the academic development of second-year students.

Quantitative support in the literature for these claims is limited. There have been studies of sophomore programs that identify best practices (Tobolowsky & Cox, 2007) and retention studies focused on second-year students (Flanagan, 1991). These studies, paired with the grounded theory research (Schaller, 2005a) have laid the foundation for the development of second-year student programs across the United States. These programs exist in various student affairs practice areas, ranging from residence life, to academic advising, to leadership programs,

and have a myriad of different desired outcomes for second-year students (Tobolowsky & Cox, 2007).

However, the breadth of activities surrounding second-year student interventions blurs the lines for practitioners trying to understand where they should start in helping second-year students develop. With so many different types of intended outcomes, it is challenging to figure out the overall effect on student development. The current literature (Schaller, 2005a) indicates that second-year students are focused on three areas of development: their identity, their social development, and their academic development. The purpose of this study is to determine, within the bounds of a specific second-year experience program, what second-year student behaviors and characteristics positively correlate with overall academic development.

Significance of the Study

Schaller (2005a) theorized that students in the second year of college go through stages of random exploration and focused exploration regarding their academic choices. She stated that how these students explore major options might explain their commitment to their choice once it is made. However, there is a lack of research that explains what "good" exploration, which Schaller defines as exploration leading to a high level of academic commitment, is or is not.

Academic commitment can have many positive results for students. If choosing a major is part of defining a purpose (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), then a well-thought out choice can lead to a clearer definition of purpose. Commitment to major has also been shown to have a positive effect on student retention and student persistence (Gohn, Swartz, & Donnelly, 2001). Major commitment is tied to academic integration, one of the factors for retention as outlined by Tinto (1993). Also, many of the factors affected by academic commitment positively correlate

with student satisfaction, which has many other positive implications for students, particularly student retention (Tinto, 1993).

Retention is a major concern for institutions when it comes to second-year students. While emphasis is placed on the first-year experience at many colleges and universities in order to secure high rates of student retention, many institutions have experienced retention issues with second-year students that are as serious as or even more serious than those of first-year students . There is also evidence that some institutions, particularly smaller, private schools, experience a higher attrition rate amongst their second-year students than they do their first-year students (Flanagan, 1991).

Many student affairs practitioners point to a simple explanation for these phenomena: the utilization of resources. Many institutions, especially smaller private schools, spend a disproportionate amount of staffing, time, money, and other resources to help first-year students make a successful transition to college. On many campuses, when second-year students return in the fall, they are no longer met by orientation leaders, incredibly low RA to student ratios in the residence halls, or engaging and exciting programs designed to meet their needs. This lack of focus on the part of the institution can affect the overall success of second-year students as well as their commitment to the university community (Flanagan, 1991).

Research Questions

One way that student affairs programs may pursue assisting second-year students is by establishing and promoting second-year experience (SYE) living-learning communities (LLC). This study uses the stated intended outcomes of a particular second-year student living-learning community at Southern Selective University, the behaviors targeted in the interventions focusing on these outcomes, and participants' scores on the academic autonomy and educational

involvement subtasks of the Student Development Task and Lifestyle Assessment (SDTLA) (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999) to determine what behaviors and characteristics positively correlate with academic development. Specifically, this study explores the following research questions:

1. Does student participation in behaviors related to the stated outcomes of the SYE LLC at Southern Selective University positively correlate with academic development as described in the academic autonomy and educational involvement subtasks of the SDTLA?

2. Does frequency of student participation in behaviors related to the stated outcomes of the SYE LLC at Southern Selective University positively correlate with academic development as described in the academic autonomy and educational involvement subtasks of the SDTLA?

3. What combination of behaviors in which students participate are most likely to lead to the most overall academic development as described in the academic autonomy and educational involvement subtasks of the SDTLA?

4. What student demographic characteristics are associated with the relationship between their participation and behaviors related to the outcomes of the SYE LLC at Southern Selective University, and their academic development as described in the academic autonomy and educational involvement subtasks of the SDTLA?

Delimitations

There are several limitations to the study. First and foremost, this is a study of one SYE program at a particular institution, and so the findings may have been affected by specific environmental factors that may not apply at other institutions. The research should be replicated with other SYE programs before broad generalizations are made regarding the findings. Second, the methodology of this study gives a snapshot of second-year student development at the

beginning of students' third year of college; there is no pre/post-test included in this study. There is no way to know whether individual's academic development measured in this study is the same as when he or she entered their second year of college. Lastly, the study measures students' behaviors over the course of a year as it relates to the intended outcomes of the SYE program. However, there are other behaviors going unmeasured, those that have not been identified, that may affect students' academic development.

Definition of terms

This study defines "second-year students" as students who are entering or are in their second full year of college. This term is used because this study is focused on development, and not issues such as credit hours and class standing, where terms like "sophomore" may be more appropriate. Other research on second-year students uses the term "sophomore" to indicate the same group of students. However, since at many institutions and within some practice areas such as academic advising and registrar offices the term is used to describe a certain amount of credit earned, this study avoids its use. The only time the term is used is when discussing initiatives or outcomes that are focused on developing a student's class identity (e.g. the class of 2011). In this case, the term "sophomore" is more appropriate.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

There are several areas of research that are vital to the understanding of the development of second-year students as well as SYE programs. Many institutions and student affairs practitioners have been motivated to focus on second-year students based on retention studies that show there is ground to be gained by designing interventions for second-year students (Gohn, Swartz, & Donnelly 2000/2001; Tinto, 1993; Wilder, 1993). Also, an understanding of how second-year students develop academically is important as it relates to this study (Allen & Robbins, 2006; Porter & Umbach, 2006; Terenzini & Wright, 1987; Wessel, Ryan, and Oswald, 2007). There has also been a number of studies specifically focus on second-year students (Gansemer-Topf, Stern, & Benjamin, 2007; Graunke & Woosley, 2005; Juillerat, 2000; Lemons & Richmond, 1987; Margolis, 1976; Schaller, 2005a, 2005b; Sottile, Iddings, & McDonough, 1997) and second-year engagement programs (Flanagan, 2007; National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, 2009; Stockenberg, 2007; Taylor & Bellani, 2007, Tobowolsky & Cox, 2007). Lastly, the particular environmental and institutional aspects of the research site are discussed so that the reader has an understanding of the setting of this study.

Retention

There have been several retention studies that pertain to second-year students and their academic success. Tinto (1993) focused on the first-year student and noted that "the character of one's experience in that year does much to shape subsequent persistence" (p. 14). While there is

evidence that the selectivity of an institution correlates with a reduction in first-year student attrition, Tinto explained this phenomena as having less to do with selectivity of an institution and more with the institutional climate. Selective institutions have the time and resources to insure that students integrate themselves both socially and academically. Once students have connected with resources to support themselves through college, they are likely to persist.

Tinto (1993) also cited issues of retention for second-year students. He stated that during the second year of college, "Students decide either to leave higher education altogether or to transfer to other institutions" (Tinto, 1993, p. 176). Many factors lead to student departure, including the inability to find communities within the institution to meet their social needs or the realization that the school does not provide enough academic challenges. Some students discover that pursuing higher education does not suit their goals. Also, many students are not able to keep up with the academic rigor and either withdraw or are dismissed.

However, simply using the basic retention strategies prescribed for first-year students may be ineffective in retaining second-year students. "After that time," Tinto (1993) stated "institutions have to consider a wide range of both general programs and highly differentiated ones specifically tailored to the needs of different types of students and student leavers" (p. 176).

According to Tinto (1993), there are several solutions to this problem. Academic advising and counseling programs specifically for second-year students can be effective because students' needs for those services do not cease at the end of the first year of college. In fact, many students do not even consider their post-college plans until after their first year and need those resources for that reflection process. Tinto also cited the use of learning communities for

upperclassmen and peer leadership opportunities as ways to keep second-year students feeling connected and engaged.

In a sophomore-specific study on persistence, Wilder (1993) separated a sample of sophomores into two groups: decliners, those that experienced a drop in GPA between the first and second year of college, and maintainers, those that had the same GPA or improved. The study found that factors such as class attendance, perception of faculty and staff interaction, and students' educational goals all positively correlated with students' GPA. Surprisingly, students' level of co-curricular involvement was found to negatively impact GPA, contradicting much of the research on involvement (Astin, 1993).

Gohn, Swartz, and Donnelly (2000/2001) conducted a qualitative study of sophomore student persistence in college. In one-on-one interviews with ten students at a single university, the researchers discovered several key aspects of sophomore student retention. Many of the respondents discussed issues of academic congruence. Gohn et al. (2000/2001) stated "A number of respondents reported a great deal of frustration in defining how their abilities matched their career goals and their present major" (p. 291).

Gohn et al. (2000/2001) also commented that the first-year and the second-year of college are closely tied together, and a student's experience of these two years is also affected by their transition from high school, noting:

> Those who had not successfully negotiated the transition between high school and their freshmen year may have lower confidence about their ability to graduate from their university...lowered confidence that persists through the second year would seem to increase the likelihood of eventual attrition. (p. 291)

Academic Development

In a time period full of decisions, a college student's selection of an academic major is one of the most important. Students who choose an academic major that is congruent with their interests and skills are likely to perform well academically as well as stay in school. Major persistence, the fact that a student maintains his or her academic major choice over time, is an important indicator of a student's satisfaction with their academic environment (Allen & Robbins, 2006). Satisfaction also affects a student's academic integration and commitment to college (Tinto, 1993). Students who change majors are also more likely to take courses unnecessary for graduation (Allen & Robbins, 2006). This is not only an additional cost for students, but these courses can also take away focus from the courses that do count towards graduation, affecting students' study skills and time management.

First and second-year students' academic and social integration also directly affects their personal growth and development. In a longitudinal study conducted by Terenzini and Wright (1987), over 1,000 students were tracked across four years and surveyed about their academic and social integration. While there was a strong connection between integration and growth the first two years of the study, by the third and fourth year there was no longer such a correlation. Academic integration also had a stronger effect on second-year student development than it had on first-year student development.

In a study of over 80,000 first-year students at 25 colleges and universities, Allen and Robbins (2006) demonstrated that students are more likely to succeed in academic environments that fit their personalities. They also demonstrated that a student's interests affect both their choice of major and the likelihood that they will persist in that major. First-year academic performance, measured by GPA, was a predictor of major persistence, and the two variables,

interests and performance, did not significantly affect each other. The study was limited in that it only used research sites where students had to declare majors as they entered the institution, and not during their college career.

Porter and Umbach (2006) used Holland's (1997) career theory to analyze college major choice. While previous research studies had tied academic ability, gender, family, social issues, personality, and political orientation to the choice of a major, none had sought to tie all those together in a comprehensive model. The scholars tied Holland's six different work environments to students' personalities and attempted to control for these demographic variables. They discovered that students with higher levels of uncertainty about their major were more likely to decide on a non-science major. However, as academic self-efficacy increased, the same phenomena also occurred, indicating that self-efficacy did not have a strong effect on major choice. Once the researchers incorporated the Holland personality type in the analysis, only personality, race, and political views still significantly predicted major choice.

A student's fit with their academic major has also been found to affect major commitment according to Wessel, Ryan, and Oswald (2007). Their study differentiated between an objective measure of major fit and the participants in the study's perceptions of their fit with their major, and found interesting differences because of it. For instance, academic self-efficacy correlated with perceived fit with major, but not with the measure used for objective fit. So, a student's confidence in their academic abilities correlates with how well they think they fit their major, but not actually how well their personality and interests actually match their major. All in all, choosing a major can be a very confusing experience:

> It could be that many students do not fully understand themselves or their environment (or both) when choosing a college major. Consequently, students may believe their

> interests match certain majors, but their perceptions of those majors, or their perceptions of themselves, differ from the actual person and environment. (Wessel et al, 2007, p. 373)

Second-Year Students

Early college student development research focused little on the experiences of second-year students. However, much can be drawn from early research on first-year students as well as the college experience overall. For instance, Astin (1977) discovered that while first-year students had less contact with faculty than they did in high school and spent less time studying, students increased both behaviors as their time in college increased. Even 40 years ago, before formal SYE programs had been conceived, second-year students had more faculty contact and spent more time on academics then they had the year before.

In the follow-up to his original study, Astin (1993) discovered that as students moved through college, they became more interested in social justice issues such as activism, abortion, the environment, diversity, and feminism; that they consumed more alcohol; and that they were more likely to be committed to developing a meaningful philosophy of life. However, as students moved through college they also experienced a decline in psychological well-being and materialistic values. Most cognitive skills and abilities improved as students moved through college.

While the seven vectors developed by Chickering and Reisser (1993) do not specifically distinguish between academic classes of students, there are some vectors that particularly speak to the second-year student experience. For instance, some students may still be dealing with acquiring intellectual or interpersonal competence, as Chickering and Reisser (1993) note that intellectual competencies increase from year to year from matriculation to graduation and cite

qualitative data demonstrating the development of interpersonal skills from the first year to the second year of college. Also, concerning the vector of managing emotions, many students may have learned from the consequences of acting out on their emotions in the first year of college, and developed control and independence from their emotions in the second year. Studies have found differences in student development across college classes (Casanova, 2008) as well as difference between first-year students and the rest of the college student population (Jones & Watt, 2001).

Many of the second-year students' social relationships are related to moving through autonomy towards interdependence (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Second-year students are finally learning how to stand on their own, while appreciating the give-and-take of their social relationships. They are not as focused on the giant mixer that is the first year of college, but they have begun to identify a smaller cohort of close friends (Schaller, 2005a). This may also relate to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) next vector, developing mature interpersonal relationships, as many second-year students experience more committed, intimate relationships than first-year students.

The later vectors of establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity are likely to have just started to be part of the second-year students' awareness. As they begin to consider the rest of their college career, academic major options, careers, and other life choices, students' purpose, identity, and integrity begin to take shape.

This study's questionnaire is in part based on the Student Development Task and Lifestyle Assessment, which uses many of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) vectors as the basis for the developmental tasks and subtasks measured in the assessment (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999). The SDTLA has recently been used to measure the psychosocial development of

college students as it relates to various important variables, including boredom proneness (Watt & Vodanovich, 1999); gender and class standing (Jones & Watt, 2002); race, sex, environment, and class standing (Cooper, Dean, & Bell, 2007); and residential learning communities (Leinwall, 2006).

Lemons and Richmond (1987) were one of the first to introduce into the literature the concept of "the sophomore slump," the idea that second-year students are more likely to be anxious, frustrated, or depressed about their college experience than other college students. The scholars based their ideas on the work of Chickering (1969), stating that the slump was due to sophomore students' struggles with the achieving competence, developing autonomy, establishing identity, and developing purpose vector. For instance, freshmen achieve competence by "breaking away from home and by succeeding in school. Sophomore students are no longer satisfied with these standards of competence. Part of the sophomore student's difficulty with this vector is the lack of concrete criteria for success" (Lemons & Richmond, 1987, p. 16).

Other students struggle with the slump because their desire to be autonomous is in conflict with their needs for support. Lemons and Richmond (1987) point specifically to students' financial dependency on their parents. If students are still in need of their parents' financial support to pay for college, they may feel that they have not achieved true independence, which may make some students feel unempowered. Other students will feel guilt that they are a financial burden to their families and drop out.

These phenomena can also have a significant effect on second-year students' mental health, serving as an existential crisis for many. Second-year students are searching for meaning, both in college and in the world at large, and are struggling with building social and intellectual

competencies. Most second-year students are also able to compare this time of anxiety and lack of direction to their relatively happy first-year experience and are further stressed by their perceived regression (Margolis, 1976).

Sottile, Iddings, and McDonough (1997) conducted a quantitative study of first and second-year college students at a single university. They discovered that one of the main differences between first and second-year students was that first-year students were less likely to see classmates as friends compared to second-year students. "College is still prominently a social process during the second year of college" (Sottile, Iddings, & McDonough, p. 12). They also were able to determine that as second-year students' self-assurance and self-control increase, so does students' confidence.

There is a limited amount of in-depth theoretical research on the developmental needs of sophomores. According to Schaller (2005a), "institutions that wish to attend to sophomore students in new ways need to ground their programs in an understanding of the challenges of the sophomore year" (p. 18). Schaller conducted a grounded-theory study at a midsized, Catholic university in the Midwest in order to determine how best to serve its second-year student population. In interviews with nineteen students pursuing a diverse group of majors, Schaller was able to develop a theory matrix to better explain second-year student needs and development.

Schaller (2005a) developed a four-stage developmental model that she stated played out in three areas of second-year students' lives: their view of themselves, their relationships, and their academic decisions. The four stages are random exploration, focused exploration, tentative choice, and commitment.

Many students experience random exploration as an extension of their first year of college. While some students exit this stage by the end of freshmen year, many do not. Students in this stage struggle with setting priorities. When it came to life-changing decisions, Schaller (2005a) noted, students "made choices that allowed them to delay deciding until later" (p. 19). Because of this, Schaller stated, students in this stage can sometimes seem to lack direction.

The ability to reflect on one's decisions is what separates random exploration from focused exploration, though Schaller (2005a) mentioned that the transition between the two stages is not abrupt. In this stage, students begin to question the decisions they have made regarding their identity, their social network, and school. The author observed that this is the stage in which many students begin to experience the difficulties of being a sophomore; they feel a need to be committed but are still struggling with making commitments. Schaller also noted that the more time students spent in this stage, the more thorough their exploration seemed to be, while spending shorter amounts of time in this stage generally meant that students had allowed external forces and pressures to force them out of this stage and into tentative choice.

In the stage of tentative choice, students' choices begin to be validated. They discover whether they are comfortable with the decisions they have made such as their major, career, or romantic partner. Sophomores in this stage begin to feel more responsible and independent.

Schaller (2005a) stated that very few second-year students will reach the commitment stage in any of the growth areas identified. Most students will still have lingering indecision and anxiety that will keep them in the tentative choice stage, though once that is removed they have entered commitment. These students make plans for their future, are clear about their goals, and take responsibility for their own learning.

Schaller (2005a) made three major recommendations based on her study. First, faculty and administrators should encourage second-year students to take responsibility for their own learning. This will help students learn the process of self-reflection that moves them into focused exploration. Second, faculty should use active and collaborative learning experiences. Lastly, Schaller recommends that faculty work with sophomores on individual learning plans.

Gansemer-Topf, Stern, and Benjamin (2007) replicated Schaller's study at a small, highly-selective residential liberal arts college. Many of the students interviewed commented on the difficulty of selecting a major. Many expressed feeling pressure, like one student who had taken only introductory-level courses his first year, "I came in [and] they're like, 'When are you going to declare your major?' Well, I've taken all these classes and they're all intro, I have no idea how this is going to play out, but I have to pick one now" (p. 36). Students at the school also felt added pressure to declare because you had to have a declared major to study abroad, as many of the students wanted to do.

In some ways, the students in the study felt conflicted. One student felt there was a big difference between the first and second year expectations: "I think the whole liberal arts thing, or open curriculum, is kind of a joke. Like, that's the rhetoric. But then you get here and you realize that to complete a major there are all these different requirements" (p. 37). The researchers were able to demonstrate that campus environment matters, as the liberal arts model at the college affected how students felt about their entire sophomore academic experience.

There are some phenomena that second-year students are likely to experience. First, students have to select a major, and while they might be forced to select a major when they enter college at some larger institutions, most institutions require students to declare a major by the end of their sophomore year. Also, sophomores are likely to experience less support from

administrators, programs, and policies compared to their first year college. "The practice of frontloading the first year," states Schaller (2005b), "leaves sophomore students feeling as if they are suddenly expected to negotiate college on their own" (p. 7).

The pressure to declare a major forces students to make choices, and how second-year students make these choices and commitments can affect the rest of their college career. How these students make decisions is critical. Schaller (2005b) stated, "students either know themselves better, thus have a chance to make decisions about their life direction, or they give into the pressure and rely on external forces such as parents, peers, and professors to guide their decision making" (p.8).

Parents can play a particularly influential role. In a study of second-year students at a community college, Colburn (2007) found that the students in her study consulted their parents not only about individual academic assignments and grades, but decisions about what institution to attend after their time at the community college is finished. Parents and students in the study discussed how far the school was from home, how the costs would be split up, and discussed whether or not the students would live on-campus. Some students felt that they had made their own decision about where to go next, but sought input and support from parents. Parents in the study had also influenced their students to attend the community college in which they were currently enrolled.

Other researchers describe second-year students' struggle as focused on student satisfaction. In one study, Juillerat (2000) used the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) (Schreiner & Juillerat, 1993) to study over 100,000 college undergraduates in both private and public institutions and a second study to examine over 5,000 first and second-year students at private religiously-affiliated schools. The SSI comprises 116 questions that covers a range of

college student experiences. Students are asked to rate each experience in terms of importance and satisfaction on a Likert-type scale. Subtracting the importance score from the satisfaction score creates a performance score which if negative indicates the college is not meeting the expectations of the student (Elliot & Shin, 2002). Juillerat used both a comparison of score rankings as well as statistical differences in score values to reach several conclusions (Juillerat, 2000).

First, there was very little difference between what second-year students value most (e.g., valuable course content, caring faculty, good value for tuition) and what other students value most. There was also little difference between the items ranked the least satisfying by students of all classes, for instance that billing policies were unfair or health services inadequate (Juillerat, 2000).

There were, however, differences between the private and public college school sophomores. Public college second-year students ranked faculty availability, adequate parking, and fair billing policies as very important, whereas private college second-year students ranked adequate financial aid, an enjoyable campus environment, and a commitment to academic excellence as most important. In satisfaction rankings, private school sophomores were more satisfied by caring campus staff, feeling welcome, and the commitment to academic excellence. However, public school sophomores were more satisfied with course variety, helpfulness of library staff, and adequacy of library resources. Private school students were also much less satisfied with the value of tuition (Juillerat, 2000).

When comparing the private school sophomores to the other classes at private schools, second-years had higher expectations than other classes on over half of the 73 items on the SSI, 17 of which they ranked above all other classes. These top-ranked items included feeling a sense

of belonging and pride, reasonable drop/add policies, and the fairness of student conduct procedures. Other items had a significant increase in score between the first and second-year populations, including living conditions on-campus, effectiveness of counseling and career services, financial aid, approachable administrators and faculty, and safety. Overall the students were dissatisfied compared to first-year students but satisfied compared to juniors and seniors (Juillerat, 2000).

This information led Juillerat (2000) to several different conclusions. "For private college sophomores," she stated "who have a large number of high expectations and a need to feel care and concern, colleges need to examine the quality of their programming" (p. 28). Also, sophomore dropouts in the sample actually had lower expectations than their persisting counterparts, which seems counterintuitive. Juillerat hypothesized that students' lack of expectations are tied to their failure to connect with the institution.

Graunke and Woosley (2005) found that there were many differences between first-year and second-year academic success. For instance, while student involvement has been tied to first-year academic success, it was not found to be significant for second-year students. Also, the researchers found that institutional commitment was not a predictor of second-year student success like it was for first-year students. The researchers hypothesized that the strength of a student's decision to attend a particular institution may be important enough to contribute to their success or failure the first year of school, but that since students with low levels of institutional commitment are likely to drop out, they are not often included in second-year studies. However, second-year students' success also may be attributed to having fewer connections as a class:

> First year students are provided with connections and contact to the institution through first-year programs. Juniors and seniors have connections through participation in their

> academic major and greater leadership roles in student activities. Sophomores, who have fewer opportunities in these areas, may view the university from a more global perspective than other students. As a result, commitment to the institution represents a commitment to a relatively ambiguous entity rather than a commitment to specific people, organizations, or ideas and the power of that commitment may be weakened (Graunke & Woosley, 2005, p. 374).

Interventions that focus on increasing institutional commitment among students may not be the best way to help second-year students succeed. However, Graunke and Woosley (2005) also determined that certainty in the choice of major was a significant predictor of second-year student success. The researchers hypothesized that this was due either to increased motivation for students who feel they have a direction or to increased integration into their major department. While Tinto (1993) demonstrated that faculty interaction was positively correlated to student success, Graunke and Woosley (2005) were able to replicate those findings specifically for second-year students.

Second-Year Programs

While many student affairs practitioners believe that second-year programs are relatively new phenomena, there is evidence that some interventions have been around for years. For instance, the University of Texas sponsored a workshop on identifying sources of dissatisfaction and making a plan to combat them as early as 1982 (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). William and Mary formed a sophomore board in the 1980s to program specifically to second-year students, producing such programs as a newsletter, a sophomore games day, a special class t-shirt, and a coffeehouse (Morgan & Davis, 1981).

Programs targeting sophomore students are on the rise across the country. The National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (2009) cites over 40 different institutional initiatives from a diverse array of colleges and universities. Many of the initiatives have begun in the last few years, but some are more established, such as those at Colgate University, Beloit College, and Colorado College. Tobolowsky and Cox (2007) made several different recommendations for second-year student initiatives from an institutional planning perspective, and made recommendations regarding fostering community among second-year students and engaging them in educationally purposeful activities.

First, they recommended that administrators begin by gathering institution-specific information about their second-year population, as well as conducting qualitative assessments such as interviews or focus groups in order to get a pulse on how sophomores feel. Second, they recommended institutions examine programs already occurring on-campus, as they are frequently packaged and targeted toward sophomores. The authors also noted that most second-year initiatives are collaborative partnerships amongst various departments and divisions (Tobolowsky & Cox, 2007).

Tobowolsky and Cox (2007) make five specific recommendations regarding fostering second-year communities. Faculty should consider providing second-year seminars, as well as establish living-learning communities reserved for second-year students. They also recommended that administrators sponsor retreats, and that in order to build a sense of class identity, leaders consider appointing sophomore class officers and instilling some second-year traditions for students to add to the class cohesion (Tobolowsky & Cox, 2007).

Schaller (2005b) also made several different recommendations for student affairs professionals and college administrators. First, the second year of college should be treated as

different and special, much as the first year of college is, and students should be informed of the challenges that they may face. Second, courses and co-curricular programs should focus on self-reflection, so that sophomores are better equipped to make some of the hard choices that they must face. Third, faculty and staff should assist second-year students in identifying and dealing with external forces such as parents, society, peers, and the economy, that may exert influence on the self-reflection and decision-making process.

> Also, Schaller (2005b) stated that colleges and universities should be providing ongoing opportunities for second-year students to form relationships with adults:
>
> Students in the sophomore year continue to look for new connections and new ways of seeing the world. Relationships with adults who can listen and care about the student allow the student to see that there are many options in today's world. (Schaller, 2005b, p.8)

However, universities also need to encourage sophomores to expand their peer relationships. Schaller (2005b) recommended that faculty encourage group projects, administrators fund service-learning, and student affairs staff develop leadership programs for second-year students. Second-year students are still working on developing meaningful and healthy relationships, and so it is important to provide opportunities for them to meet other students, without these opportunities feeling like freshmen orientation.

Tobolowsky and Cox (2007) also advised that administrators focus on initiatives that engage second-year students as scholars. Specifically, students should be encouraged by their institutions to pursue undergraduate research, which is typically geared toward juniors and seniors. Also, colleges should offer sophomore-specific academic advising as well as opportunities for career and academic major exploration. Second-year students should be

attending leadership seminars to learn the skills to take control of student groups, be planning their study abroad trips, and be taking part in mentoring programs both as mentors and mentees.

Second-Year Program Examples

Beloit College's Sophomore-Year Initiative (SYI) is an example of an established second-year program focused on developing second-year students into scholars. Founded in 1991, SYI differs from Beloit's first-year student program in that it allows for more independent work while allocating specific faculty and staff resources. The initiative includes a grant project that funds student initiatives that benefit themselves or the community, welcome-back social activities, a leadership retreat just for sophomores, an academic major and major declaration fair, and a program called My Academic Plan (MAP). MAP is an academic advising process that allows second-year student to plan out the rest of their college career. Students must accompany their plans with a rationale, and advisors use the MAP as a tool to ensure students do not have any regrets about missed opportunities once they graduate (Flanagan, 2007).

Faculty and administrators at Beloit have seen many positive results since the introduction of the SYI, though Flanagan (2007) acknowledged that many of the results are difficult to tie to a specific program or even SYI in general. Beloit's graduation rate has increased 6% since the start of the program, and students and faculty report that students are more aware of academic requirements. Almost 50% of juniors had not declared their academic major, now only a "handful" (p. 56) fails to do so by the end of their second year. The number of students studying abroad has also doubled, which Flanagan attributed in part to the MAP initiative, because students are able to carve time out of their academic schedules to make going abroad a priority. The results are not only just for the students; faculty members' academic

advising skills are now one of the criteria for tenure decisions, and Flanagan (2007) noted that the faculty and student affairs staff have also come closer together over the SYI program.

Colorado College initiated a second-year program, titled Sophomore Jump, after assessment efforts revealed that the number of students leaving the institution at the end of the first and second years of college were equal, a contradiction to Tinto's (1993) findings on the national scale. The Sophomore Jump program was founded in 2003 and includes a newsletter for sophomores, a second-year student-specific living-learning community, a series of career workshops and assessments, faculty dinners, welcome-back social events, departmental events for prospective majors, a one-day workshop on career development, and academic advising specifically for second-year students (Stockenberg, 2007).

The Second-Year Experience: The Arts of Democracy at Colgate University was founded in 2003 as a way for second-year students to focus on building skills to become engaged citizens (Taylor & Bellani, 2007). The student government nominated a sophomore class council to assist in programming efforts to create class unity. The SYE program also hosted weekly faculty/alumni dinners with students as well as dialogue circles on issues of democracy, diversity, and pluralism. A sophomore book club, living-learning community, sophomore-specific alternative spring break, and a sophomore-to-sophomore high school mentoring program have also emerged from the SYE program. Lastly, each Colgate student in their second year participates in the Resume Challenge, a competition focused on resume completion among residence halls for second-year students (Taylor & Bellani, 2007).

The Second-Year Experience Program at Southern Selective University

The Second-Year Experience program (SYE) at Southern Selective University was piloted in the spring of 2005 and began in earnest in the 2005-2006 academic year. Originally a

living-learning community of approximately 380 second-year students, the program has since expanded to a second residence hall, totaling over 500 students, as well as expanded its programming to allow non-living-learning community members to participate. The program has focus on seven areas: (a) academic life, (b) leadership, (c) involvement and service, (d) diversity and multiculturalism, (e) career development and exploration, (f) personal growth and wellness, and (g) traditions and ceremonies (Kawczynski, 2009).

In a recent qualitative study conducted at SSU, SYE participants were found to focus on several developmental tasks: academics, involvement, peer relationship-building, time management, and establishing identity. Regarding academic development, students articulated that they enjoyed their courses more because the courses were more focused on their academic interests compared to the courses students took in the first year of college. Also, students felt that the courses had become more difficult in the second year of college (Kawczynski, 2009).

Students focused more on narrowing their co-curricular involvement and developing leadership roles in those areas, as compared to their first-year of college where they felt more scattered co-curricularly. Socially, the students were focused on developing a core group of friends based on a better understanding of themselves and their values. Many of the students described their circle of friends as shrinking from the first year to the second year college. Since students were involved in more leadership roles and in more difficult courses, they also had to focus more on time management. Lastly, some students discussed an increase in understanding their own identity (Kawczynski , 2009).

Students commented that the SYE program had a major effect on their academic and social relationship tasks. The environment of the living-learning community was more conducive to studying and academic meetings with classmates and the programs and study

breaks allowed them to concentrate on their academic work. Regarding developing peer relationships, students noted that the SYE environment helped them develop a core group of friends and changed their relationship with their resident advisor. Overall, the author stated "sophomore students are experiencing a time of clarification in many different areas – particularly academics, involvement, peer relationships, time management, and identity – and are making changes in their lives to support this newfound clarity" (Kawczynski, 2009, p. 99).

Conclusion

It is clear that the establishment of second-year experience programs at institutions is on the rise and will continue to be as long as institutions are concerned about the retention and development of second-year students. However, much is still to be determined about the outcomes and effectiveness of these types of programs. With so many resources being utilized towards this effort, proper research and assessment is needed. A focus on student retention is important, but if a SYE program results in better retention, how are we to better understand the direct cause? Since many of the stated outcomes of second-year engagement programs focus on academic development, an in-depth understanding of how academic development correlates with participation in an SYE program will help us to answer that question.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine what second-year student characteristics and behaviors in an SYE program relate to academic development. A sample was identified from a specific institution that operates an SYE program. A quantitative survey questionnaire was developed using questions based on two of the subtasks of the SDTLA (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999) and the focuses of the SYE program (Kawczynski, 2009). This questionnaire was distributed to the research sample and data were collected. Several different types of statistical analysis were used to determine what relationships exist between the variables.

Sample

The target population for this study is second-year college students. Second-year college students are defined in this study as students who are in their second year of college study, regardless of credit-hour accrual. The sample was selected from the Class of 2012 at Southern Selective University (SSU), from a list provided by the university's housing office of 1,186 students who have completed their second-year of college. This method of sample identification and survey distribution was approved by the institutional research board of both SSU and the University of Georgia.

Initially, all 1,186 students were sent invitations to participate via their university e-mail address; the invitation included a link to the survey instrument. Students who did not complete the survey were contacted with a follow-up e-mail reminder. All students who completed the survey instrument were offered a $1 download credit from amazon.com, and all students who

completed the survey were entered into a drawing for a $100 Amazon gift card as incentives to complete the questionnaire. The survey instrument was administered via http://surveymonkey.com. Included in the cover page of the instrument was a statement that indicated to participants that by accessing the next page of the questionnaire, the participants agreed to the informed consent statement on the cover page. The same informed consent language was included in both the original e-mail invitation as well as the follow-up reminder.

Instrument

The questionnaire that was administered for this study is a combination of the 11 questions from the academic autonomy subtask section of the SDTLA, the 14 questions from the educational involvement subtask of the SDTLA, (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999), and five questions related to students' behaviors and involvement related to the SYE program at SSU. These questions were based on the stated focuses of the SYE program (Kawczynski, 2009) and Schaller's (2005a) sophomore student development model.

The SDTLA was developed in 1999 as an assessment tool for educational practitioners to assess traditional aged (17-24 years old) students' development of life purpose, mature interpersonal relationships, a healthy lifestyle, and academic autonomy (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999). It uses Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors of student development as part of its theoretical basis, and is preceded by two earlier versions of the instrument, the Student Development Task Inventory (SDTI) (Winston, Miller, & Prince, 1979), and the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Inventory (SDTLI) (Winston, Miller, & Prince, 1987). In earlier versions of the SDTLA, the scale and subscale reliability scores and validity data for the subtasks included in this study, educational involvement ($r = .78$) and academic autonomy ($r =$

.77), have been found to be sufficient (Hess & Winston, 1995; Winston, 1990; Winston & Miller, 1987).

The SDTLA measures whether students have completed various developmental tasks, which in the context of the assessment are defined as an "interrelated set of behaviors and attitudes that a culture specifies should be exhibited at approximately the same chronological time of life by age cohorts in a designated context" (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p. 5). A subtask is defined as a more specific component of a larger task. For this study, a portion of the survey instrument is comprised of questions from the Developing Autonomy Task of the SDTLA, specifically the Academic Autonomy subtask, as well as the Establishing and Clarifying Purpose Task, specifically the Educational Involvement subtask.

Regarding the Academic Autonomy subtask, students who have a high score on this task are able to meet their needs, structure their lives, organize their time, and study, without reassurance or direction from others, as well as able to act as responsible community members. Students who score high on this task will know how to work with ambiguity and control their behavior in way that lets them achieve their goals and responsibilities. Students with high scores in this subtask have effective study plans, are satisfied with their academic performance, are self-disciplined, and require little direction while still being able to seek help when needed (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999).

The questionnaire also uses questions from the Educational Involvement subtask, which is related to how well students have defined their educational goals. Students with high scores in this area understand the academic resources available to them, and are actively involved in the academic life of their institution. They have selected their area of academic concentration and

are well-suited for it. High scoring students in this area are active learners with regular contact with faculty and staff (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999).

The section of the questionnaire that is based on the SDTLA was scored in the same way that the SDTLA is scored. Each response corresponds with a numerical value on a scale, usually from 1 to 5. These values for each response were added up and divided by the number of items to which the participant responded. This raw score was then converted to a t-score and compared to the rest of the sample, as well as the normative sample from the SDTLA. The normative sample is comprised of responses from 1458 students from 31 institutions (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999).

Two initial tests of reliability were done to ensure that the SDTLA was a useful assessment tool. First, the instrument authors tested and re-tested three classes of students at two different institutions four weeks apart. The results were shown to indicate that the results of the SDTLA would not vary greatly over short periods of time. Second, the authors estimated internal consistency by using alpha coefficients, which ranged from .88 to .62, indicating that it is likely that the different questions in the assessment are measuring the same construct (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999).

Further research has been done to validate the SDTLA. In a longitudinal study focused on the same population over the course of four years of college, Wachs and Cooper (2002) demonstrated that the SDTLA was a useful tool to measure development in college. Some of the first-year participants in the normative sample at a single institution who were still at the same institution four years later were sent revised versions of the assessment to complete again. Students demonstrated an increase in scores in all of the subtasks and three of the four tasks, including the Developing Autonomy and Establishing and Clarifying Purpose Tasks.

The other questions within this study's questionnaire are specifically related to the intended outcomes of the SYE program, the various programs and initiatives the SYE program sponsors, and various demographic variables that may be important in understanding the overall effect on academic autonomy scores.

First, participants were asked questions about academics. Specifically, they were asked what their current major was, how often in the last year they visited an academic advisor, and how often they discussed their major selection with various social groups, including friends and family. One of the intended outcomes of the SYE program is that students will declare a major, and one of the many initiatives it uses to target this outcome is to have a live-in academic advisor on the premises to meet with students. Another intended outcome is that students will use their community to help them make decisions regarding their second year of college, and so this line of questioning is intended to determine with what groups they discuss their academic major (Emory University, 2010).

Second, students were asked about their participation in the SYE program. Specifically, they were asked how many programs they attended, whether they had completed their resume and loaded it onto the Career Center's database, and whether they attended the class of 2010 class pin ceremony. One of the variables of interest in this study was the frequency of participation and its effect on academic autonomy, and that is why participants are asked about the number of programs attended. Also, one of the intended outcomes of the program is that students complete a resume and submit it to the Career Center. Another of the SYE program's intended outcomes is to create a sense of class year identity, and the sophomore pinning ceremony is the signature event intended to address that outcome.

Lastly, students were asked for demographic information, including where they lived on campus (as all second-year students are required to live on-campus), race, and gender. One of the research questions focused on what, if any, effect these variables have on SYE participation and academic autonomy. Several questions in the residential living question were specific to second-year residence halls. However, there are also options for student serving on residence life staff, in theme houses, studying abroad, or in fraternity and sorority houses, which the university owns and operates and are considered "on-campus housing" by the institution. The race and gender questions complied with the institution's policies on inclusiveness and offered options for "transgender" and "additional identity" on the gender question as well as 13 different racial or ethnic designations, not including an "other" option that respondents can fill in themselves. To be inclusive of participants with multicultural or multigendered identities, participants were able to select as many racial/ethnic designations or gender designations as they chose.

Statistical Methods

A total of 285 participants open the survey questionnaire, for an initial response rate of 24%, however only 248 participants completed the questionnaire in full, for a response rate of 20%. While racial demographics of the sample closely matched SSU's overall demographics, several other populations were over-reported (women, residence life staff) and under-reported (men, students in Greek housing). After data collection, several different statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS for Windows. Due to the sample size, the significance level for all analyses was .05 unless otherwise specified. This means that there is a 5% chance that the findings in this study occurred by chance.

First, a reliability analysis between the different variables using Cronbach's (1951) alpha was conducted to determine whether or not individual respondents were consistent across the questionnaire items.

Second, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were determined to understand whether frequency of participation in behaviors targeted by the SYE program correlated with scores on the Academic Autonomy (AA) and Educational Involvement (EI) subtasks of the SDTLA, including (a) the number of programs attended, (b) the number of times students visited an academic advisor, and (c) how often students discussed academics with family, friends, faculty, and staff.

T- tests were performed to determine whether scores on the AA and EI subtasks correlated with various aspects of participation in the SYE program, including (a) attendance at signature programs such as the welcome-back week, the half-way to graduation celebration, and the class pinning ceremony, and (b) completion of tasks such as declaring a major or completing a resume.

A multiple linear regression was performed to determine which combination of participation and exhibited behaviors were most likely to be associated with a high level of academic development. A multiple regression allows the author to examine the nature and strength of the relationship between these variables (Urdan, 2005).

Lastly, ANOVA and t-tests were conducted to determine whether and how various demographic variables were associated with high levels of academic development; the variables specifically examined were race, gender, academic major, and whether or not participants actually live in the SYE living-learning community. These types of analysis are appropriate when comparing two groups (t-tests) or more than two groups (ANOVA) on a particular

variable, such as participants' scores on the academic autonomy and educational involvement subtasks (Urdan, 2005).

CHAPTER 4

Results of the Study

Introduction

This chapter documents the quantitative results of the data analysis for this study. A total of 285 participants attempted to complete the online survey questionnaire. After removing the participants who did not complete more than the first page of the online survey, 248 completed surveys remained for a response rate of 20%. The data were then transferred into the SPSS 17.0 program (a statistical software package) for analysis. T-tests of independent means, one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA), chi-square tests, and multiple regressions were used to generate results. A reliability analysis between the different variables was also performed using Cronbach's (1951) alpha to determine whether or not individual respondents were consistent across the questionnaire items. When t-tests of independent means were performed, Levene's test for equality of variance was also conducted. All statistical tests were evaluated at an alpha level of .05.

Participant Demographics

Table 4.1 lists the demographic data collected from the participants. In summary, 248 participants were categorized by race, gender, residence, major, and whether or not they were the first person in their family to attend college. Participants who marked multiple racial backgrounds were labeled as multiracial. The racial demographic percentages were as follows: (a) Caucasian, 47.6%; (b) Asian-American, 17.7%; (c) Asian, 12.9%; (d) African-American, 10.5%; (e) Multiracial, 7.3%; (f) African, 1.2%; (g) Not specified, 1.2%; (h) Caribbean, 0.8%; and (i) Hispanic, 0.4%. These compare to the Class of 2012's published racial demographic

percentages of: (a) Caucasian, 46.2%; (b) Asian-American, 30.6%; (c) African-American, 8.7%; (d) Hispanic, 3.5%; and (e) Not Specified, 11.8% (Clark, 2008).

The gender demographic percentages were as follows: (a) Female, 60.8%; (b) Male, 37.1%; (c) Transgender, 0.4%; and (d) Not specified, 1.6%. These percentages show that there was a higher than proportional response rate from women and a lower than proportional response rate from men, when comparing the sample to SSU's Class of 2012 gender breakdown, which is 52% female and 48% male (Clark, 2008).

The residence hall demographics were as follows: (a) Non-SYE residence halls, 42.3%; (b) SYE community, 37.1%; (c) Greek housing, 10.9%; (d) Residence Life staff, 8.9%, and (e) Not specified, 0.8%. Looking at SSU's housing office internal documents and comparing the Class of 2012's housing demographics to the sample finds that students in the SYE community (37.1% compared to a population percentage of 29.2%) and staff in first-year halls (8.9% compared to a population percentage of 5.5%) had a higher response rate than proportional and that students living in Greek housing (11.1% compared to a population percentage of 18.3%) had a lower response rate than proportional.

Only 8.9% of the sample listed themselves as the first person in their family to attend college. Regarding student major, participants listed 38 different majors, and the top five were the following: (a) Biology, 14.9%; (b) Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology (NBB), 10.9%; (c) No answer/Undecided, 10.5%, (d) Economics, 9.3%; and (e) Chemistry, 4.4%. The other 33 majors each represented 4% or less of the sample.

Table 4.1

Demographic breakdown of research sample

Variable	Frequency

		N	%
Race			
	Caucasian	118	47.3
	Asian-American	44	17.7
	Asian	32	12.9
	African-American	26	10.5
	Multiracial	18	7.3
	African	3	1.2
	Not specified	3	1.2
	Other ethnicity	1	1.0
	Caribbean	2	0.8
	Hispanic/Latino	1	0.4
Gender			
	Female	151	60.8
	Male	92	37.1
	Not specified	4	1.6
	Transgender	1	0.4
Housing Type			
	Non-SYE	105	42.3
	SYE	92	37.1
	Greek	27	10.9
	Staff	22	8.9
	Not specified	2	0.8
	Study Abroad	0	0
	Living at home	0	0
College Major			
	Other	107	43.2
	NBB	44	17.7
	Biology	37	14.9
	None/Undecided	26	10.5
	Economics	23	9.3
	Chemistry	11	4.4
First in family to attend college			
	No	226	91.1
	Yes	22	8.9

The Survey Process and Return Rate

1,186 students who met the participant parameters were contacted via the e-mail address listed in student housing records at SSU. Of those e-mails, four were returned as undeliverable.

Included in the cover page of the instrument was a statement that indicated to participants that by accessing the next page of the questionnaire, the participants agreed to the informed consent statement on the cover page. The same informed consent language was included in both the original e-mail invitation as well as the follow-up reminders. Over the course of the month that the survey was open, 280 separate participants clicked past the informed consent page and on to the questionnaire.

However, 27 of the participants' responses did not go past the first page of the questionnaire or did not complete more than 12% of the questions regarding the academic autonomy (AA) or educational involvement (EI) subtasks. According to Winston, Miller, and Cooper (1999), these participants could not have accurate subtask scores calculated and so therefore they were removed from the data set, leaving 248 participants with complete or almost complete questionnaires. In the instances where respondents failed to answer questions related to academic autonomy or educational involvement, the average of all respondents' scores on that question were used, as per the SDTLA manual (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999). Where a participant did not respond to an independent variable, that data cell was left as blank and not included in statistical analysis.

Research Question 1

Does student participation in behaviors related to the stated outcomes of the SYE LLC at Southern Selective University positively correlate with academic development as described in the academic autonomy and educational involvement subtasks of the SDTLA?

Several of the participation behaviors related to the outcomes of the SYE program were found to have significant differences in mean scores of the EI subtask between the students who did and did not participate in specific behaviors. Students who had completed their resume by

the end of their second-year of college were found to have a significantly higher score (t = -3.029, p = .003) on the EI subtask than those who did not, with a mean difference of 5.02 and a moderate effect size (d = .484). However, students who attended the "Half-way to graduation" ceremony at the end of the year were found to have a lower score on the EI subtask, with a mean difference of 2.73, than their counterparts who did not attend, though the effect size was small (d = .379). This phenomenon was also the only significant difference of means for any of the behaviors and the AA subtask scores. Students who did not attend the ceremony had a mean difference of 2.73 on their AA score compared to the students who attended, with a small effect size (d = .261).

Table 4.2

The relationship between resume completion and subtask scores

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
AA score	Equal variances assumed	-1.565	243	.119
EI score	Equal variances assumed	-3.029	243	.003

Table 4.3

The relationship between half-way to graduation attendance and subtask scores

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
AA score	Equal variances assumed	2.873	243	.004
EI score	Equal variances assumed	1.971	243	.050

Research Question 2

Does frequency of student participation in behaviors related to the stated outcomes of the SYE LLC at Southern Selective University positively correlate with academic development as described in the academic autonomy and educational involvement subtasks of the SDTLA?

Several of the measures of frequency of participation in activities related to the outcomes of the SYE program were found to be positively correlated with EI subtask scores. There was a moderate correlation between the number of times participants had visited an academic advisor and EI score (r = .472) as well as how strongly participants agreed that they often discussed issues surrounding their choice of major with faculty (r = .472). These correlations were both significant at the p<.01 level. How strongly participants agreed that they often discussed issues surrounding choice of major with staff was also found to have a moderate correlation (r = .382) with EI scores. Other measures, including discussions with parents, siblings, other family, and friends inside and outside of college were found to have a small (r<.3) but significant correlation with EI scores.

Table 4.4

Correlation between educational involvement and various SYE behaviors

							C[1]	O[2]		
		Programs	Advising	Parent	Sibling	Family	Friend	Friend	Faculty	Staff
EI	r	.070	.472	.195	.210	.173	.253	.140	.472	.382
Score	p	.272	.000	.002	.001	.007	.000	.029	.000	.000
	n	248	235	243	244	243	244	244	243	242

[1] Friends from college
[2] Friends from outside of college

Several of the measures of frequency of participation in activities related to the outcomes of the SYE program were found to be positively correlated with AA subtask scores as well, although of the significant correlations (p<.05) all were found to be small, including the number of meetings with an academic advisor (r= .145), discussing majors with parents (r=.143), other family members (r= .161), friends from college (r=.229), and faculty members (r=.213). Several

measures were found to be insignificant, including discussing major choice with siblings, college staff, or friends outside of college. The number of SYE programs that participants attended did not correlate either with AA or EI subtask scores.

Table 4.5

Correlation between academic autonomy and various SYE-related behaviors

							C[3]	O[4]		
		Programs	Advising	Parent	Sibling	Family	Friend	Friend	Faculty	Staff
AA	r	-.040	.145	.143	.023	.161	.229	.036	.213	.115
Score	p	.529	.026	.026	.723	.012	.000	.574	.001	.075
	n	248	235	243	244	243	244	244	243	242

[3]Friends from college
[4]Friends from outside of college

Research Question 3

What combination of behaviors do students participate in that are most likely to lead to the most overall academic development as described in the academic autonomy and educational involvement subtasks of the SDTLA?

Several multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the relationships between the predictor variables and both AA and EI scores. Initially, a multiple regression was conducted using all predictor variables compared to AA and EI scores. A multiple regression analysis of these variables in relation to the AA scores found a small ($R^2 = .18$, adjusted $R^2 = .12$, $F(14, 207) = 3.216$, $p<.001$) relationship between the variables and AA scores. However, when looking at the standardized coefficient β, only resume completion (β = .197), conversations with family members (β = .170), conversations with friends from college (β = .266), conversations

with friends from outside of college (β = -.205), and conversations with faculty (β = .162) were found to be significant at the p<.05 level.

After observing the findings from the second research question as well as the first multiple regression analysis with all variables included, a second multiple regression analysis was conducted that included only the variables that were found to be individually significant through correlation analysis and t-tests. In the case of AA scores, that means an analysis which included number of academic advising visits, discussions with parents, other family, college friends, and faculty, as well as whether or not the participants attended the half-way to graduation event. However, this analysis was found to be less significant (R^2=.11, adjusted R^2=.09, F(6, 222) =4.657, p<.001) than the previous analysis with all the variables included, and only the β for half-way to graduation event attendance (β=-.140) and discussions with college friends (β=.163) were found to be a significant at the p<.05 level.

A multiple regression analysis of all variables in relation to the EI scores found a moderate (R^2 = .416., adjusted R^2= .377, F(14, 207) = 10.535, p<.001) relationship between the variables and AA scores. However, when looking at the standardized coefficient β, only resume completion (β = .172), attendance at the half-way to graduation event (β = -.139), academic advisor visits (β = .337), conversations with friends from college (β = -.151), and conversations with faculty (β = .217) were found to be significant at the p<.05 level.

After observing the findings from the second research question as well as the first multiple regression analysis with all variables included, a second multiple regression analysis was conducted that included only the variables that were found to be individually significant through correlation analysis and t-tests. In the case of EI scores, that means an analysis which included number of academic advising visits, resume completion, discussions with parents, other

family, siblings, college friends, friends from outside college, staff and faculty, as well as whether or not the participants attended the half-way to graduation event. This analysis was found to be moderate but slightly less significant (R^2 = .405, adjusted R^2 = .377, F(10, 214) =14.546, p<.001) than the previous analysis with all the variables included, and only the β for resume completion (β = .186), academic advising visits (β = .329), discussions with college friends (β = .158), and faculty (β = .227) were found to be a significant at the p<.05 level.

Research Question 4

What student demographic characteristics are associated with the relationship between their participation and behaviors related to the outcomes of the SYC LLC at Southern Selective University, and their academic development as described in the academic autonomy and educational involvement subtasks of the SDTLA?

Several statistical analyses were conducted to determine how the various demographic data collected affected the different variables measured by the instrument. First, chi-square tests were conducted to determine if there were significant relationships between any of the demographic data and the categorical variables measured in the study. While many of the variables were not affected by demographic differences, there were some significant relationships at the p<.05 level, including attendance at the half-way to graduation ceremony and which residence hall students lived in, race and whether students had submitted their resume to the career center's database, or had attended either the welcome-back or halfway to graduation celebration. Also, whether the student was the first person in their family to attend college was significantly related to whether they had submitted their resume to the career center's database, as well as whether or not they attended the class pinning ceremony.

Next, ANOVA was used to determine if any of the sample's demographics were significantly related to the interval and ratio variables measured by the instrument, including the scores on the AA and IE subtasks of the SDTLA, number of programs attended, the number of visits to academic advisors, and the frequency that students discussed academics with various people in their support network.

In regards to race, both subtask scores were found to have a significant f-value. The test for AA subtask scores ($F(9, 238) = 5.034$, $p<.001$) was found to be significant and to have a large effect size ($R^2 = .16$). For racial groups with more than 5 respondents, Caucasian students had the highest mean score (45.36), followed by multiracial students (42.76), African-American students (42.58), Asian-American students (40.69), and Asian students (38.59). Only Caucasian students has a mean above the overall mean on the subtask score (43.12).

The test for EI scores ($F(9, 238) = 5.034$, $p = .05$) was also found to be significant with a moderate effect size ($R^2 = .05$). For racial groups with more than 5 respondents, Caucasian students had the highest mean score (52.89), followed by multiracial students (50.80), African-American students (50.63), Asian students (49.13), and Asian-American students (47.80). Only Caucasian students had a mean above the overall average on the subtask score (50.90).

Of the interval variables in the study, only conversations with friends from college on academics had significant F-values when analyzed with racial demographics. It was found to have a significant relationship to race ($F(8, 235) = 2.289$, $p = .02$) with a moderate effect size ($R^2 = .07$). For racial groups with more than 5 respondents, multiracial students had the highest score (6.59), followed by Caucasian students (6.25), Asian students (6.29), African-American students (6.15), and Asian-American students (5.73). Only multiracial and Caucasian students scored higher than the overall average (6.12).

Turning to housing status, there were several significant findings. First, housing status and number of programs attended had a significant relationship ($F(7,235) = 10.415$, $p<.001$) and a strong effect size ($R^2 = .24$). Students in the two buildings in the SYE community had the highest scores, averaging a 2.99 and a 2.00 on the scale, followed by students in various non-SYE halls (scores of 1.95 and 1.39), housing staff in first-year halls (1.18), and students in Greek housing (.67). Only students in the SYE community scored higher than the overall average (1.99). Housing status was also significantly related to conversations with siblings about academics ($f(7,235) = 2.099$, $p = .04$), with a moderate effect size ($R^2 = .06$), however the various residence hall scores were not grouped in any way so it is difficult to determine any effect on the results.

Regarding gender, there was one significant finding; gender and AA subtask scores had a significant relationship ($F(3, 244) = 3.051$, $p = .029$) with a moderate effect size ($R^2 = .04$). Women scored higher than men, with an average of 43.58 to 42.34. This was the only interval or ratio variable found to have a significant relationship to gender.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

There are many aspects of this study that warrant further discussion. First, there were several significant findings based on the statistical analyses conducted on the data in order to answer the four research questions. Second, a lack of significant findings in some cases is also worthy of discussion. How these findings relate to previous research on second-year students and SYE programs as well as the implications for future research are also important. Lastly, there are both methodological implications as well as limitations to this study that must be disclosed.

Student behaviors and academic development

In comparing participants' behaviors with their SDTLA subtask scores, several significant findings were established. First, students who had completed their resume by the end of the second-year of college were also more likely to have a higher score on the Educational Involvement Subtask. This relationship is logical, because while there is nothing that specifically speaks to career exploration in the questions of the EI subtask, it is focused on students becoming immersed in the educational community, clarifying their academic major or concentration, and becoming involved in student organization and leadership activities (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999). According to the data, students who participate more in these types of activities are more likely to have resumes. However, that is not to say that either phenomenon causes the other. Student affairs practitioners should focus on encouraging student involvement in these areas, not only for their intrinsic value but also because these types of activities may influence students to consider completing a resume.

What is more disheartening is the discovery that students who did attend the "Halfway to graduation" ceremony at the end of the year were more likely to score lower on both academic autonomy and educational involvement. It is challenging to understand the reason for this relationship. It is possible that students who are likely to attend a large event at the very end of classes, only days away from their finals, might be less invested in their studies than students who skipped the ceremony in order to study. However, since this is a peer-planned event it is surprising that the students who plan and attend do not score well on involvement. Educators may want to consider the time between this event and the final exam period, repeat the data collection with the next class to see if the same relationship exists, or examine the relationship further in a qualitative way to try to determine what lies behind this statistical relationship.

Another important finding is that none of the other behaviors examined, including attending other programs (the Welcome-Back Celebration and Class Pinning Ceremony) or uploading the resume to the SSU's Career Center databanks were related to students' scores on either the AA or EI subtasks. This is interesting because the administrators and staff that work with the SYE program at SSU spend an equal amount of effort getting students to both build their resumes and submit them to the Career Center. Students who complete both steps are rewarded with things like logoed pens and t-shirts, and it is the commonly held belief that the students who complete these steps are "on the right track." The same is understood by the administration to be the case for these "signature" programs like the Class Pinning Ceremony and the Welcome Back Celebration. Administrators encourage attendance because students who attend are perceived to have a more strongly developed class identity, which has been shown to be related to satisfaction and retention (Tinto, 1993). However, the lack of relationship between

attendance and subtask scores may indicate that there is no relationship between attendance at these types of events and either class identity or academic development.

Frequency of participation and academic development

Another statistic touted by student affairs professionals in regards to SYE programs is frequency of participation in the associated programs and events whose learning outcomes are focused on second-year student development. For the purposes of this study, students were asked how many SYE programs they had attended over the course of their second year as well as how often they had attended a meeting with an academic advisor. One of the other goals of the SYE program at SSU was to encourage student discussion around academics and major selection, and so students were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement that they often discussed issues related to their major with various groups of people who comprised their social support network. There were several significant relationships between the frequency of these behaviors and subtask scores.

The frequency of meetings with an academic advisor positively correlated with both educational involvement scores at a moderate level and academic autonomy at a small level. This is an encouraging relationship because the administrators of the SYE program at SSU have put significant time and expense into improving the visibility and accessibility of academic advisors to second-year students, including building offices in second-year only residence halls, holding more night and weekend office hours, and having academic advisors actively participate in planning aspects of the SYE program. However, both subtasks questionnaires include questions regarding academic advising (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999), so it is hard to extrapolate too much from this statistical relationship. However, administrators should consider continuing to integrate academic advising into campus life, and possibly consider mandating

advising meetings for certain milestones, such as meeting with an advisor to declare a major, or meeting with an advisor once a semester. At the same time, administrators should consider the relationship between advising and institutional involvement, possibly comparing a population of students who sought out advising to a control group that has never met with an advisor.

How strongly students agreed that they often discussed issues surrounding their majors with both faculty and staff was also found to have a moderate positive relationship with educational involvement scores. This is encouraging for the SYE program, as many of the individual program outcomes are focused on fostering such discussion. While discussions with peers and various members of students' families were found to have a small but significant positive correlation with both academic autonomy and educational involvement, it's challenging to figure out what implications can be determined from those findings. This may have something to do with the questions on the EI and AA subtask questionnaires, as there are not any questions specifically focused on those aspects of students' social support network.

What may be the most significant discussion point regarding this research question is what was found to be statistically insignificant for relationships to both educational involvement and academic autonomy scores; frequency of participation in individual SYE programs. While frequency of participation in various aspects of college activities has been found in the past to have a positive relationship with outcomes like student success and retention (Astin, 1993), when it comes to this SYE program and academic development, there is no relationship. What is interesting is that, in the last year, the administrators of the SYE program at SSU have invested a considerable amount of capital in a rewards program that encourages attendance at individual SYE programs. Administrators may want to rethink the proportion of time and money they give

a rewards program compared to increasing the amount of faculty or staff's interaction with students, particularly that of academic advisors.

Combination of factors and academic development

The multiple regression analyses conducted as part of this study demonstrate the need for SYE programs to be multi-faceted. In both the case of educational involvement and academic autonomy scores, a broad combination of behavior variables was most likely to correspond to high scores.

Regarding academic autonomy, conversations with faculty, friends, and resume completion were all found to combine to correlate with significantly higher scores on the AA subtask. Students who are having conversations about their major with their faculty and peers, and who are self-directed enough to have finished a resume, are more academically autonomous than the rest of their peers. Student affairs staff should be creating programs and interventions that create a safe space for peer-to-peer discussions on academics as well as student/faculty conversations about academics. While the SYE program is already strongly promoting the importance of resume completion in partnership with the career services office, academic administrators should consider folding resume completion into the advisement process in some way, as this would reach students in a way that the data show already works.

All of these variables were also pertinent regarding how they related to EI subtask scores, as well as to the number of academic advising visits the students had made. The significance of academic advising demonstrates that students who are engaged with their advisors have better ties to the academic community at SSU. Again, administrators should consider mandating contact with academic advisors, something that is currently not the case at SSU. A student can go through their entire undergraduate career without ever meeting an academic advisor.

Viewing these findings together, the need for SYE programs to take a multi-disciplinary approach to serving second-year students is clearly demonstrated. Instead of focusing just on advising, programs, or faculty involvement, an effective program needs to offer all of these things to students so they can become involved with faculty on a personal level, have academic-related conversations with their peers, and be plugged-in to the academic advising infrastructure at their institution.

Demographics and their effects on behaviors, participation, and academic development

Of the differences between demographic groups that were found to be statistically significant, two warrant discussion as they relate to SYE programs, while several may identify areas of future study as they relate to second-year student development or the SDTLA.

Of the several demographic categories for which data were collected, both students' housing status and whether or not they were the first in their family to attend college had significant differences that may have some effect on the SYE's program effectiveness. First, the students who lived in the two SYE communities were far more likely to attend SYE programs, and students in Greek housing were much less likely to attend SYE programs overall. For future practice, the SYE program administrators may want to consider reaching out to fraternity and sorority communities if they want them to become involved. However, student affairs professionals may want to think critically about putting extra effort to reach Greek students, as their Greek housing status did not seem to have any direct effect on their academic development scores. This may be related to the fact that the number of programs attended was not found to significantly correlate with academic development or that Greek students may be getting similar engagement through their Greek involvement, resulting in similar levels of academic development.

Also, students who were the first person in their family to attend college were less likely to submit their resume to the career center's resume banks, one of the major intended outcomes of the SYE program. SYE program administrators should consider why this might be the case, and try to target marketing and programming towards this population to help them understand the importance of career center involvement on their future career plans. For instance, they might use promotional materials that have testimonials from alumni who found an internship or a job after college from using the resume bank, or messages from employers about how important these electronic resources are for recruitment. SSU does not currently have any mentoring or orientation programs specifically for this population, but may want to consider that in the future, as it would provide an opportunity for educators to explain the purpose of the resume bank and the value it offers to the students.

The significant differences in racial groups in this study did not necessarily indicate that changes were necessary to the SYE programs in order to reach students more effectively, but may indicate that future research is necessary on the use of SDTLA and race. The finding that Caucasian students scored significantly better on both subtasks is an interesting phenomenon that may warrant further study on how individual SDTLA subtask scores may be mitigated by race, which has not been found to be the case for the overall instrument (Cooper, Dean, & Bell, 2007). However, the other significant findings between race and other variables did not seem to indicate a particular effect on the SYE program itself.

The only statistically significant relationship between gender and the variables was AA subtask scores. Women were more likely to score higher than men on the subtask. However, this is consistent with previous research on the SDTLA instrument (Cooper, Dean, & Bell, 2007). This could be because men lag in overall development, and so are still working on

developing autonomy, but student affairs practitioners should consider ways to improve male participation in activities such as academic advising, independent research, and academic lectures not related to coursework.

Research findings and their relation to previous research

The findings of this study support previous research that has been conducted on college student retention, academic development, and second-year college students. First, the relationship between how often students discuss issues surrounding their major with friends, faculty, and staff and academic development supports Tinto's (1993) assertion that students who are less socially isolated and more engaged at their institution and with the university community are more likely to stay in school. In fact, it seems that the three variables of social integration, academic development, and retention are all interrelated as Tinto also stated that academic development affects retention, as this study supports.

These same findings might also help explain the phenomenon observed by Gohn, Swartz, and Donnelly (2000/2001) where they found that academic congruence affected second-year student persistence. If students are having more conversations with various aspects of their support network, it is possible that they would end up feeling more comfortable about the major they have declared or are considering, which would increase their academic congruence.

The fact that students who discuss their major more frequently correlate with higher scores on the AA and EI subtasks might also explain previous findings related to academic development. Major persistence (Allen & Robbins, 2006) and major fit (Wessel, Ryan, & Oswald, 2007) have both been found to relate to overall academic development, and measuring student conversations may also be illustrative of that finding. However, there needs to be further

research on the motivations and reasoning for students to discuss issues around their major in order for the relationship to become clear.

The study's findings also support Schaller's (2005a) research on second-year student development, particularly in the area she defines as academic decision-making. This is illustrated in two aspects of this study: that both frequency of academic advisor visits and conversations focusing on major are related to academic development. Schaller stated that students move through four stages of exploration around academic decision-making, and the fact that students who meet with advisors and discuss major issues more often are more likely to score highly on academic development measures reinforces the concept that students who participate in exploration activities like meetings with advisors and academic conversations, are more likely to end up as highly academically developed.

The results also support Graunke and Woosley's (2005) assertion that institutional commitment is not a strong predictor of student success like it is for first-year students. The fact that attendance at the SYE events intended to build class identity and thus increase institutional commitment was found to be totally unrelated to academic development shows that SYE programs should consider backing away from focusing on activities geared toward that outcome. This study also supports their findings that faculty interaction correlates with student success, as students who agreed that they often discussed their major with faculty were more likely to have high academic development scores.

Methodological implications

This study highlights two interesting methodological implications for future research and study. First, researchers involved in studying second-year students should consider the use of the SDTLA or several of its subtasks as a way to quantify development and to use to compare to

different types of variables. In a relatively small study such as this, there were several different interesting and significant findings, and the detail involved in the SDTLA played a significant role in those conclusions. Future second-year student research could also incorporate the entire SDTLA assessment or some of the other subtask questionnaires, particularly the Career Planning Subtask (CP) and Developing Autonomy Task (AUT), as those outcomes appear to correlate with the stated outcomes of many SYE programs. The SDTLA can also be used to examine SYE programs with different research designs than what is included in this study, including pre/post designs and longitudinal studies.

Second, the use of amazon.com e-gift certificate codes as an incentive for participation in the study may also help researchers in the future. Originally, the incentives for the study were to include a free fountain drink from an SSU dining location, but after the logistics could not be worked out, the researcher turned to asking participants for an e-mail address to send an amazon gift certificate. This required some additional disclosures to the IRB board regarding how the e-mails would be separated from the data set to insure anonymity. Georgia law required that students also had an opportunity to send in a postcard and receive the incentive without participating in the study. Overall the incentive appeared to be successful, with almost 25% of the second-year class participating in the study over the course of three weeks. While the incentive may have played a role in the motivation of participants, another interesting outcome of the study is that many of the students who had received the gift certificates did not actually make use of them. These gift certificates do not expire but are refundable, so in the future researchers should consider setting a self-imposed expiration date in the notification information at the beginning of the questionnaire.

Limitations

Several different types of limitations exist in this study. There are some limitations regarding the research sample. First, there are several questions surrounding the generalizability of the sample to the general college student population as well as to the population of second-year students at SSU.

SSU is an extremely selective university with an undergraduate population of approximately 5,500. The Class of 2012, which was the basis for this study, had an average unweighted high school GPA of 3.76 and their median SAT scores range from 1330 to 1470 combined on the reading and math assessments (Clark, 2008). The academic aptitude and ambitious nature of the student body may differ from other institutions, and the size of the institution may limit the diversity of responses compared to what would be found at a large institution. Also, SSU is very expensive, and the cost of attendance and the academically-focused nature of the student body result in a vast majority (>93%) graduating within four years. Thus, retention is less an issue for administrators at SSU than other places, and students at SSU may have a stronger class identity than at other larger institutions where students may take extra time to complete their degrees. Both of these phenomena may affect responses to the questionnaire in this study.

Also, the students at SSU are part of an SYE program that is housed in the university's residence life office and involves partnerships with academic advising and the career center, among other offices on campus. There may be environmental factors that stem from where the program is administered that may affect the experiences and thus the responses of the research participants. Students at institutions that have SYE programs housed in an academic office or

elsewhere in a student affairs division may have access to different resources that affect their responses.

Within the second-year student population at SSU, the greatest limitation was that much of the demographic data collected resulted in small sub-samples that were not statistically significant when analyzed. This includes information about academic major, some racial demographics (e.g. Hispanic/Latino, Native American), transgender students, and being the first in their family to attend college. A larger sample of participants from these areas might have led to more statistically significant findings related to demographic data that could be generalizable to the SSU second-year student population.

A second limitation is the size of the overall sample. After removing insufficiently complete samples, only 248 useful responses remained for a population of 1,181. This puts the margin of error at somewhere between 5% and 6% with a confidence interval of 95%. The researcher would have a stronger basis for conclusions if the margin of error was less than 5%.

There are also several limitations regarding the survey instrument used for this study. The questionnaire only provides self-reported data by the participants and thus may not be as reliable as objective measures obtained through records analysis, observation, performance measures or some other method of data collection. Participants may have over or under-reported various characteristics or behaviors in order to appear like "good" students or to try to make the SYE program look good or bad, depending on their opinions about the program (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

Also, while the validity and reliability of the questions in the survey instrument that are based on the SDTLA have been tested and shown to be reliable and valid (Wachs & Cooper, 2002; Winston, 1990), the questions that are directed towards engagement in the SYE program

as well as demographic information have not been tested for validity or reliability. Steps were taken to try to mitigate these limitations, including providing a few students with a sample questionnaire for feedback as well as receiving feedback from the researcher's dissertation committee.

Procedurally, there is also a limitation to the study in that there were a large number of questionnaires (37) that were not filled out enough to be included in the analysis for this study. Had those participants completed more of the questionnaire it would have also alleviated some of limitations regarding research power that were previously discussed. It is unclear why this occurred, though the researcher did take some steps to try to insure completeness, including giving participants an accurate time commitment approximation at the beginning of the questionnaire, keeping the number of pages participants had to click through as low as possible, and giving participants a status bar on the questionnaire showing them their progress. It is possible that any of these measures could have served as a disincentive for questionnaire completion rather than incentive as it was intended.

Implications for future research

A number of possible avenues for future research have emerged based on the findings in this study. First, as this study is simply a snapshot of a class of students at the end of their second-year of college, it is impossible to link correlation of any of the variables in a causal relationship. Future research is needed to illustrate how the use of the SDTLA given before and after the second-year of college, paired with feedback about participation in the SYE program and its intended outcomes, would increase the utility of the research methods described in this study. While a year is still a long period of time to link two variables in a causal relationship when so many other unknown factors come into play, it would be more useful to get an

understanding of where a research sample was starting developmentally and then over the course of a year measure the developmental change and compare that change to the different characteristics and behaviors that are of interest to the SYE program.

A second focus of future research based on this study would be to replicate the research methods at a diverse group of institutions that have SYE programs to see if various environmental and institutional factors play a role in the results or if the research methods in this study are generalizable to a majority of institutions. If the research methods in this study were found to be generalizable, it would be a step towards developing a national SYE program assessment instrument that would allow student affairs professionals to benchmark their programs in order to better understand their strengths and weaknesses.

There is also value in pursuing research that is longitudinal in nature, possibly using SDTLA scores as a "dashboard" descriptor of where students are in their development. As an example, researchers could follow students for their entire college career and administer the SDTLA at the same point each year, or administer the assessment three times; before college, at the end of the second year, and after graduation. This would both examine the developmental implications for a student's class year as well as create a comparison data set to which the SDTLA could compare future students. It would also assist SYE programs understand how students' participation in an SYE program affects future development.

Lastly, this quantitative study illustrates the existence of several relationships between variables, but further qualitative study is needed to better understand why these relationships exist. For instance, further study is needed to better understand why there is a positive relationship between the frequency of academic advising and academic development. In some ways that relationship would seem elementary to student affairs practitioners, as students who go

to see academic advisors are using their resources wisely and clearly involved in their own education. However, many students who are repeat visitors to academic advisors are doing so because they are experiencing poor grades, academic-related stress, or are unsure of the direction to take their education. If that is the case, why do students who seek out academic advisors more often score higher on the SDTLA subtasks?

While there have been studies that have shown that faculty involvement is tied to several positive outcomes (Astin, 1993; Tinto, 1993; Wilder, 1993), as this study also illustrates, it would be pedagogically useful to college faculty to study why and how faculty conversations with students are so successful in a qualitative way. For instance, researchers could identify faculty at an institution who meet with many of their students regularly and observe those interactions and interview the students to tie researchers' observations to the opinions of the students to determine what themes emerge in those conversations.

Conclusion

The second year of college can be challenging, as students sometimes feel forgotten, ignored, or underserved by their institution and they transition their focus from adjusting to college to beginning to consider what choices to make in their college career and beyond. Dynamic and forward-looking colleges and universities are attempting to draw the focus to second-year students by initiating second-year engagement programs. This study shows that when considering an SYE program, or evaluating an existing program, there are several factors that should be considered.

This study demonstrates a way to assess and evaluate these new SYE initiatives so that administrators can demonstrate their effectiveness, evaluate individual outcomes of a program, and secure continued institutional support. Student affairs administrators should also reconsider

focusing on frequency of participation in SYE programs as an indicator of program effectiveness or success. From a programming perspective, SYE offices should focus on creating events that foster peer-to-peer academic discussions as well as those between faculty and students. At the same time, SYE programs should include aspects of career planning and development, such as resume writing. Most importantly, educators should focus on integrating academic advising into the second year of college in order to further students' academic development. These actions will help second-year students feel less forgotten and marginalized and more recognized and valued.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire

Dear Student:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Diane Cooper in the Department of Counseling and Human Development at The University of Georgia. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled The Behavior and Characteristics of Students in a Second-Year Engagement Program and their Effects on Academic Development that is being conducted under the auspices of the College of Education. The purpose of this study is to determine what second-year student behaviors and characteristics correlate with academic development.

Students must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study.

Your participation will involve completing the following questionnaire and should only take 5-10 minutes. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate, not answer individual questions, or stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. All results are kept strictly confidential. The results of the research study may be published, but your name will not be used. In fact, the published results will be presented in summary form only. Your identity will not be associated with your responses in any published format.

While there are no direct benefits to participation in this study, the findings from this project may provide information on college student development and educators will better better understand the outcomes of SYE programs. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. Students who complete the questionnaire will receive A $1 song download from amazon.com as well as be entered into a drawing for a $100 Amazon.com gift card. Students will be required to supply an e-mail address in order to receive the download code and be eligible for the gift card drawing.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call me, Ben Perlman, at (404)727-5870 or send an e-mail to bperlman@uga.edu. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to The Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, 612 Boyd GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; telephone (706) 542-3199; email address irb@uga.edu. Also, please be aware that internet communications are insecure and there is a limit to confidentiality than can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. However, the once the materials are received by the researcher, standard confidentiality procedures will be employed, including mechanisms to strip the IP addresses of respondents and remove e-mail addresses from the data set.

By clicking the button below, continuing on to the questionnaire, and completing it, you are agreeing to participate in the above described research project.

Thank you for your consideration! Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,
Benjamin M. Perlman

Participation in the study is not required to enter the drawing, if you wish to enter the drawing, please send a postcard to SYE study, 2107 North Decatur Rd. #356, Decatur, GA, 30033, with your contact information and you will be entered into the study.

Last year, approximately how many SYE programs did you attend?

- ◯ I did not attend any SYE programs
- ◯ 1 to 3 programs
- ◯ 4 to 6 programs
- ◯ 7 to 9 programs
- ◯ 10 to 12 programs
- ◯ 13 to 15 programs
- ◯ 16 to 18 programs
- ◯ 19 or more programs

Please indicate whether you...

	Yes	No
Have a completed personal resume	◯	◯
Have uploaded your resume to the Eagle Opportunity network at the Career Center	◯	◯
Attended the Class Pinning Ceremony for the Class of 2012	◯	◯
Attended the SYE Welcome-Back Celebration	◯	◯
Attended the SYE Half-way to Graduation Event	◯	◯

Respond to the following by selecting the appropriate bubble:

	Never or Almost Never	Seldom	Usually	Always or Almost Always
1 get bored and quit studying after working on an assignment for a short time.	◯	◯	◯	◯
1 have difficulty disciplining myself to study when I should.	◯	◯	◯	◯
1 use library materials, resources, and facilities effectively.	◯	◯	◯	◯
Even when I am not particularly interested in a subject, I am able to complete course requirements satisfactorily.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I don't perform as well in class as I could because I fall short of requirements.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have a difficult time in courses when the instructor doesn't regularly check up on completion of assignments.	◯	◯	◯	◯
It's hard for me to work intensely on assignments for more than a short time.	◯	◯	◯	◯
It's important to me that I achieve to the limits of my abilities.	◯	◯	◯	◯
It's very important to me that I am successful both inside and outside the classroom.	◯	◯	◯	◯
My study time seems rushed because I fail to realistically estimate the amount of time required.	◯	◯	◯	◯

During the academic year,:

◯ I have tended to put off most school work, and assignments to the last minute and, as a result, don't do as well as I could.

◯ I have often forgotten about assignments or put them off so long that I was unable to tum them in on time.

◯ I have established a study routine that has enabled me to get most school work and assignments completed on time and to my own satisfaction.

◯ I have established a study routine that has enabled me to get all work and assignments completed on time and to my own satisfaction.

In terms of an academic major or concentration,:

- ◯ I am uncertain about possible majors and am a long way from a decision.
- ◯ I have thought about several majors, but haven't done anything about it yet.
- ◯ I have made a tentative decision about what I will major in.
- ◯ I have made a firm decision about a major, but I still have doubts about whether I have made the right decision.
- ◯ I have made a firm decision about a major in which I am confident that I will be successful.

In terms of the array of possible academic majors at this college I have:

- ◯ not spent much time investigating the possibilities.
- ◯ talked to some students about their majors, but have not done any systematic investigation.
- ◯ read the catalog and talked to some students and/or faculty/staff members about possible majors.
- ◯ made a systematic effort to learn about possible majors and what they entail.
- ◯ made a systematic effort to learn about possible majors and have carefully looked at my abilities and interests and how they fit different majors.

In terms of an academic major/concentration, I have:

- ◯ determined what all the requirements are and the deadlines by which things must be done, for the major I have chosen.
- ◯ investigated the basic requirements for graduating with a degree in my academic major
- ◯ not paid much attention to the requirements for my major
- ◯ depend of my advisor or others to tell me what to take
- ◯ yet to decide on an academic major

Over the past twelve months at this college, I have:

- ◯ taken the initiative to set up conferences with an academic advisor.
- ◯ kept appointments with an academic advisor when she/he scheduled them.
- ◯ avoided dealing with my academic advisor.
- ◯ not investigated how to obtain academic advising.
- ◯ not been at this college long enough to get involved in academic advising.

I have a mature working relationship with one or more members of the academic community (faculty member, student affairs/services staff member, administrator).

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No, I don't like dealing with them.
- ◯ No, I have tried to form relationships, but haven't been successful yet.
- ◯ No, I don't know any.
- ◯ No, I don't have time for that kind of thing.

Within the past twelve months:

- ◯ I haven't attended any non-required lectures, programs, or activities dealing with serious intellectual subjects.
- ◯ I have attended one or two non-required lectures or programs dealing with serious intellectual subjects.
- ◯ I have attended three or four lectures or programs dealing with a serious intellectual subjects that were not required for any of my courses.
- ◯ I have attended five or more lectures on programs dealing with serious intellectual subject which were not required for any of my courses.

In addition to my academic studies:

- ◯ I spend much of my free time involved in organized activities on campus or in my community.
- ◯ I spend most of my time "goofing off" or watching TV.
- ◯ I spend most of my free time with friends doing things we enjoy.
- ◯ I spend most of my time working to support myself and/or caring for my family

I have formed a personal relationship (friendly acquaintanceship) with one or more professors:

- ◯ Yes, but I find it difficult to talk to him/her (them).
- ◯ Yes, we often enjoy interacting with each other.
- ◯ No, I would like to but haven't taken any action.
- ◯ No, I would like to and have tried unsuccessfully.
- ◯ No, because that isn't important to me.

I have been actively engaged in a student organization or college committee in the past 6 months:

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No, I don't have time because of my job(s) and/or family responsibilities
- ◯ No, I am not interested.
- ◯ No, I haven't been in college long enough.
- ◯ No, but I plan to do so soon.

Within the past three months, I have had a serious discussion with a faculty member concerning something of importance to me.

- ◯ No, I don't like talking to faculty members.
- ◯ No, I have tried, but was unsuccessful.
- ◯ No, I haven't found one who seemed willing to interact in that way.
- ◯ Yes, I initiated such a discussion.
- ◯ Yes, I responded to a faculty member's initiative.

While in college I have participated in practical experience directly related to my educational goals through an internship, part-time work, summer job, or similar employment.

- ◯ No, I haven't been enrolled long eonugh.
- ◯ No, I haven't though about it very much.
- ◯ No, I haven't yet to establish any specific educational goals.
- ◯ Yes, I did it to satisfy program requirements.
- ◯ Yes, I did it on my own initiative.

I carefully investigated the intellectual abilities and necessary academic background needed to be successful in my chosen academic major.

- ◯ No, I have yet to make a definite decision about an academic major/concentration.
- ◯ No, I chose my major/concentration solely on the basis of what I enjoyed most.
- ◯ No, I have narrowed the choice down to a few areas, but I haven't really investigated majors in that way.
- ◯ No, I never thought about it in that way.
- ◯ Yes

Within the past three months I have read a non-required publication related to my major field of study.

- ◯ No, I have yet to decide on an academic major/field of study.
- ◯ No, I don't have time to read such things.
- ◯ No, that would be too boring.
- ◯ Yes

Within the past twelve months I have had a serious conversation about my long-term educational objective with an academic advisor or other college official.

- ◯ No, I don't know whom to talk to.
- ◯ No, I have tried but no one will help me.
- ◯ No, I but I want to do that.
- ◯ No, I don't want my options limited.
- ◯ Yes

Please indicate your current major. If double-majoring, please select the major you intend to appear on your college diploma.

6

Please indicate how many times in the last year you've visited an academic adviser.

6

For the next few questions, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

In the past year, I've often discussed issues related to my college major selection with my:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Other Family Members	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Siblings	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Friends from College	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Parents	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Friends outside of College	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
College Staff	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
College Faculty	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Where did you live during the 2009-2010 academic year (select all the places that apply)?

- [ ] Alabama Hall
- [ ] Clairmont Tower
- [ ] Clifton Tower
- [ ] Greek Housing
- [ ] I lived at home
- [ ] I was a staff member in a first-year residence hall
- [ ] I was studying abroad last year
- [ ] Theme Housing
- [ ] Trimble Hall
- [ ] Woodruff Residential Center

Please indicate your gender:

- [ ] Female
- [ ] Male
- [ ] Transgender
- [ ] Additional Identity (please specify)

Please indicate your racial and/or ethnic backgrounds (select as many as apply):

- [ ] African
- [ ] African-American
- [ ] Asian
- [ ] Asian-American
- [ ] Caribbean
- [ ] Caucasian
- [ ] Chicano
- [ ] First Nations
- [ ] Hispanic
- [ ] Indigenous Australian
- [ ] Latino
- [ ] Native American
- [ ] Pacific Islander
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Are you the first person in your immediate family to attend college?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE YOUR DOWNLOAD CODE AND ENTER THE DRAWING FOR THE $100 AMAZON GIFT CARD, PLEASE ENTER YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS BELOW. ALL E-MAIL ADDRESSES WILL BE KEPT SEPARATE FROM INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY.