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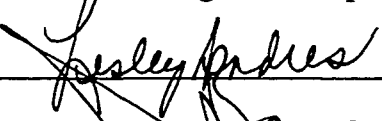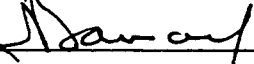
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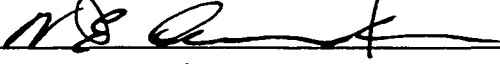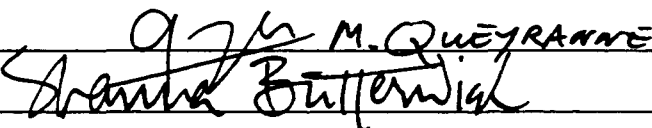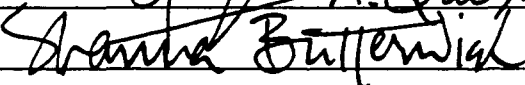
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COLLEEN L. HAWKEY

BA, Simon Fraser University, 1990

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Department of Educational Studies

The University of British Columbia
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to come to an understanding of the meaning and experience of community for undergraduate students at a research-intensive university. It was assumed that exploring community bounded by disciplinary affiliation would be a valuable approach to understanding this phenomenon within the context of the research-intensive university. In-depth interviews were conducted with 23 third year Psychology students pursuing either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree, and a survey designed to explore key aspects of interviewees' experiences was administered to a larger cohort of such students. Students' experiences were examined through the lens of constitutive and individualistic community frameworks, and ideal and actual experiences were compared. The results of this study show that a focus on disciplinary affiliation was a useful approach to understanding the meaning of community. Results document the significant influences of disciplinary affiliation on community membership and belonging. This exploration revealed that issues of community membership, involvement, and belonging were longitudinal processes that entailed complex patterns of participation and modes of exclusion that were influenced by students' aspirations and obligations as well as structural characteristics of the Psychology department and of the research-intensive university.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

v

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

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ix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Problem

This study examines the meaning and experience of community for undergraduate students attending a research-intensive university. The concept of community is a complex abstraction frequently invoked but seldom confronted directly. It is a concept that often informs empirical investigation in higher education and is not infrequently heard in the context of presidential speeches and convocation addresses. The use of the word evokes romanticized images of the university and university life. Wolff's (1992) view of the ideal university community as a "sanctuary of scholarship" which is home to an intimate and removed congregation of teachers and learners concerned primarily with a life of scholarship is a familiar characterisation.

Equally familiar in the context of the contemporary university are lamentations of the loss of community and calls for its renewal. Changes from a time when higher education was an activity of a relatively few privileged students, to the expanded and diversified higher education opportunities of today, have contributed to a sense of loss. Reflecting on his undergraduate experiences in the 1920s, Sanford (1982) noted that "to have talked about community at that time ... would have been like talking to a fish about water" (p. xiv). Changes to higher education and higher education institutions, however, have resulted in calls to rethink the meaning of community. As Weingartner (1992) notes, traditional structures of community, including "homogeneity of interest

1

and beliefs and a willingness to submit to a highly regulated life," (p. 158) are difficult to develop in today's universities and are options for only select institutions.

Much current literature in higher education is characterized by the view that there is a lack of community in academe (Spitzberg & Thorndike, 1992; Carnegie, 1990; Neatby, 1985) and by calls to rebuild community in higher education (Barnett, 1994; Carnegie, 1990; Gilley & Hawkes, 1989; Solomon & Solomon, 1993; Tierney, 1993). Solomon & Solomon (1993) identify a sense of community as a fundamental quality of the university that must be cultivated first above all else. The Carnegie Commission report (1990) on campus community recognized that a "ringing call for renewal" may seem impractical for today's universities, but it nonetheless called for the development of communities based on principles of purposefulness, justice, discipline, caring, and celebration of institutional tradition. Tierney (1993) also saw the need for renewal and argued for the promotion of "communities of difference" that recognized and included those on the borders who typically were absent from institutions of higher education. Similarly, Gilley & Hawkes (1989) noted that the consequences of changed student demographics needed to be recognized and incorporated into a new and stronger academic community.

The importance of community to the education of undergraduate students has long been recognized. Bresler (1989) noted that establishing a sense of community is an integral aspect of improved quality of student experience, an assertion supported by Roberts & Clifton (1991, 1992) who identify a supportive learning community as integral to the quality of student life. Likewise, Astin (1993) has linked a "lack" of

2

student community with low levels of overall student satisfaction. Astin (1984, 1993) presented a theory of student development in which he argued that the greater students' involvement with the university community, the greater the impact on a variety of outcomes including student satisfaction, emotional health, growth in general knowledge, and intention to re-enrol.

The importance of integration into social and academic communities for student persistence is articulated by Tinto (1975, 1993) who drew on the work of Spady (1970) to develop a theory of student withdrawal based on rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960) and community membership (Durkheim, 1897). Tinto (1993) proposed that students who were more fully integrated socially and academically would be less likely to withdraw from university. Successful integration involved movement through a series of stages (separation, transition and incorporation) from one community or set of communities (*e.g.*, home or work) to the communities of the university. The failure or unwillingness to "become integrated as competent members" (Tinto, 1993, p. 104) of the social and intellectual communities of the university would increase the likelihood of voluntary withdrawal. The initial utility of Tinto's community integration model for traditional age undergraduate students has been confirmed by the work of Pascarella & Terenzini (1977, 1980), Terenzini & Pascarella (1978) and Bean (1982).

Perry (1970) identified a link between moral development and the importance of involvement with a learning community, and Chickering & Reisser (1993) established that strong student communities contributed to student development along seven vectors (achieving intellectual, physical, manual and interpersonal competence; managing

3

emotions; developing autonomy; establishing identity; tolerant and respectful interpersonal relationships; developing purpose, priorities and aspirations; and finally, developing a personally meaningful set of beliefs). The value of involvement in the university community to the democratic nation was recognized by Boyer (1987) in his lengthy study of undergraduate student life.

Limitations of Past Research

Although few educators would disagree that community is valued and valuable to the educational success of universities and their students, an examination of the literature on students and community suggests a number of deficiencies that, if addressed, would contribute greatly to our understanding of the undergraduate student experience.

To begin, the notion of community is seldom explored directly even though it informs the dominant models of student retention, attrition and development. Many who use the term are distressingly vague (Damrosch, 1995) in articulating its meaning, leaving the task of interpretation to the reader. In part this is because community is an open textured[1] concept (Waismann, 1968) and as such there are no specifications for its use and, further, no recipe detailing its key ingredients (Taylor, 1982). Bauman (1990)

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[1] Waissman (1968) defines an open textured concept as one that is not "delimited in all possible directions" (p. 42) resulting in the inability to "achieve anything like an exhaustive definition" (p. 42). "In short, it is not possible to define [an open textured concept] with absolute precision, i.e. [sic] in such a way that every nook and cranny is blocked against entry of doubt. That is what is meant by the open texture of a concept. ... We cannot foresee completely all possible conditions in which [it is] to be used; there will always remain a possibility, however faint, that we have not taken into account something or other that may be relevant to [its] usage" (p. 42-43).

4

suggests that a reluctance to specify clearly the parameters and meaning of community can in part be attributed to an assumption of its "naturalness." That is, he argues that by not explaining precisely what is meant (for example, what is shared, by whom and for what purposes), it is possible to appeal to community bonds without questioning their appropriateness. For example, Astin (1993) talks about the consequences resulting from a "lack of student community" and Chickering & Reisser (1993) and Tinto (1993) demonstrate the positive results accruing from involvement in campus communities. However, these researchers downplay or even ignore the negative side of community such as the propensity to identify those who belong in relation to those who do not (Cohen, 1985; Tierney, 1993).

Second among the deficiencies, the process of community membership has been little explored. One exception is the work of Brown (1994). Using a grounded theory approach she looked at the process of community building among first-year ethnic minority students attending a predominantly white university. Brown defined community as a "sense of belonging" and explored how minority students come to "feel affirmed" and supported on campus.

Third, there is far more work on the experiences of first year undergraduate students than on students in higher year levels. Recent qualitative research has focused on the transition to university (Andres, Andruske & Hawkey, 1996; Attinasi, 1989; London, 1989) while other work has looked specifically at the issues of retention and attrition in relation to classroom community (Tinto, 1998, 1997). Berger (1997) investigated first year students' sense of community in residence halls. However, the

5

experiences of community among students who have been retained successfully beyond first year have not been studied. The value of examining the experiences of senior level students lies in the very fact of their success. What does community mean for students who have had substantially more time to engage in community building activities? And what can we learn about community by studying such a group?

Fourth, a typical approach to exploring the notion of community for undergraduate students has been to study a particular program within a university structured in such a way as to encourage deliberately the development of a strong learning community. A program of this nature involving first year students was recently examined by Russo (1995) who confirmed the value of learning communities for student success. Her findings echoed the work of Dumaresq (1995) which also involved a first year student learning community. Studies such as these, however, provide little insight into the meaning of community for the majority of students who are not enrolled in such programs.

In particular, an examination of community in the context of the large research-intensive university has yet to be undertaken. A review of the literature failed to locate empirical research that revealed elements of community important within the context of a research-intensive university or that revealed the dynamic experience of community membership for students enrolled in it.

More generally, much of the research on students has been driven by the need for management information in the wake of the rapid expansion of higher education following the Second World War. Such research is on students in so far as it counts

6

how many there are, who they are (sex, age, ethnicity), and where they come from (socio-economic status) but is not about their experiences as students. Silver & Silver (1997) identify research into student success as one exception. They argue that in North America and the United Kingdom student focused research has centered predominantly on identifying and measuring academic failure and success.

However, even this student focused research has been directed by pragmatic concerns (for example, to reduce dropout, to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of student services), or aimed at outcomes measurement (such as skills development, shifting values, changes in standard of living) (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), rather than at understanding the undergraduate student experience from the point of view of students. Although research on human communities is complex, time consuming and difficult, the emerging voice in the higher education literature speaks to a need to refocus research on "students as real people" (Silver & Silver, 1997, p. 2).

Andres, Andruske, & Hawkey (1996) take this criticism one step further and demonstrate that a weakness of previous research has been the failure to address "the dynamic relationship between students as agents within societal institutions and institutions as living structures which [have an] impact on the lives of students" (p. 5). Thus, while much research has focused on structural barriers and determinants shaping the undergraduate student experience (*e.g.*, Astin, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Tinto, 1978, 1993), and more recent study has recognized the need to ground research in an understanding of the meanings students attribute to their day-to-day activities

7

(Atinassi, 1989; McKeown, MacDonell & Bowman, 1993), less frequently have researchers explored the interactions between the two.

In Canada, a Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education identified the paucity of research about undergraduate students as a serious concern. Commissioner Smith (1991) noted the "disappearingly small amount of research into ... higher education" (p. 88) undertaken by the universities themselves. This sentiment has been echoed by other scholars who noted the lack of student focused Canadian higher education research (Gomme, Hall & Murphy, 1993). Practice in the past had been to draw on the massive body of research generated in the United States. Although there are many similarities between students and universities in the US compared with those in Canada, scholars such as Corman, Bar & Caputo (1992) warn against importing research from the US without attention to the implications of studies intended to inform policy and practice in similar but essentially different higher education systems. Accordingly, Canadian scholars have identified a need for studies that are both on Canadian students and reflect the structures, policies and practices of Canadian institutions (Guppy & Bednarsky, 1993).

Purpose and Assumptions

There are, then, limitations of past research that relate generally to research into undergraduate student education within the context of Canadian higher education, and specifically to the topic of community and the undergraduate student experience within a research-intensive university. This study addresses some of the identified weaknesses

8

in both areas by contributing to the small but growing body of work on the notion of community. Focusing on the time students spend on campus, this study examines community as experienced by undergraduate students attending a research-intensive university located in a western Canadian province. It addresses issues of community membership, integration, and involvement, and questions the meaning and boundaries of community for undergraduate students.

In order to achieve the aims of this study, a case study of a group of students from a single department within a research-intensive university was conducted. In-depth interviews were held with 23 third year, full-time, traditional age Psychology students who had been on campus a minimum of two years. A questionnaire informed by the interviews was developed and administered to the entire population of such students within the same department and institution. Individualistic and constitutive conceptions of community as presented by Sandell (1982/1998) and Corlett (1989) and utilized by Howard (1997) are used as analytical frameworks to guide the examination of students' experiences of community. Three key concepts – membership, identity and belonging – were used to inform understanding of social interaction and integration within each framework.

This project began with the assumption that experiences of community are both historically and socially constructed and that an examination of experiences and behaviors of students is also an examination of higher education practices. The purpose of the study is to portray with honesty and accuracy the experiences of students and to

9

provide an analysis that relates their experiences to larger social contexts within which they occur.

Third year students who had been on campus a minimum of two years were selected to participate in this study for several reasons. First, students have declared a major by third year. Second, the questions asked in this study presuppose a "working knowledge" of the institution. Students in third year have been on campus long enough to have the opportunity to establish social networks and community ties and be knowledgeable about aspects of community at the research site. Third, developing a sense of community is a longitudinal process (Dunne, 1986; Tinto, 1993) of integration, involvement, and acceptance. A focus on third year students who have had the opportunity to develop social relationships and learn about the culture and values of their discipline will better enable identification of the boundaries and meaning of community. And finally, it is assumed that students in third year are more "stable" given that they have survived the first year transition period (the period of greatest withdrawal) and are not yet entering the transition period in fourth year, which signals movement out of university to the work force, including domestic work, or into another education program.

Although some have argued that the possibility for community lies primarily within the classroom or within a small and elite program within the university, it is assumed in this study that another possibility is a learning community bounded by disciplinary affiliation. This option is rarely explored in the research literature even though evidence of the strength of disciplinary ties is reported by Kolb (1981) and

10

disciplinary influences on the undergraduate student learning environment have been reported on by a number of researchers (Donald, 1995; Hativa & Marincovich, 1995). Further, disciplinary ties are rooted in the established approach to knowledge production and dissemination, and in the structural organization of universities (Becher, 1992). It is assumed in this study that exploring the experience of community for a group of students who share a disciplinary affiliation will be a valuable first step in understanding the meaning of community in the contemporary research-intensive university.

The Psychology department at the research site (called Research-Intensive University, or RIU) was selected for this study because it enrolls a large number of undergraduate students, and provides the opportunity to examine the experiences of third year students pursuing both a Bachelor of Science degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree while still allowing for the in-depth study of one disciplinary community.

<div align="center">Significance</div>

In addressing the above issues, this study fills a gap in previous research on community and undergraduate students. Although some research that directly addresses the issue of exploring community in higher education has been conducted, the paucity of study makes it clear that this work has just begun. As Rue (1988) notes, the concept of community has rarely received a "level of attention commensurate with its stated importance in the higher education literature" (p. 7). This study will contribute to our understanding of this phenomenon and begin to fill gaps in the literature by examining

11

the meaning and boundaries of community from the point of view of undergraduate students studying at an advanced year level. The lack of research that directly addresses community experiences of students from a specific discipline ensures that there was a strong exploratory element to this study.

Community is a key concept in dominant retention and attrition models, which, for traditional age undergraduate students (Bean, 1982; Spady, 1970; Tinto, 1978, 1993), have been unable to account for more than modest variance in attrition rates (Corman, Barr, & Caputo, 1992). Despite variability in measures, it is acknowledged that attrition rates[2] have changed little since the 1970s (Pascal & Kanowich, 1979). McKeown, Macdonell & Bowman (1993) suggest that the inability to account for greater amounts of variability is in part because the key indicators and underlying concepts of the models are inadequately developed. They write that meaning has been "imposed on the world of the student instead of arising from a careful study of that world" (p. 75). A similar criticism was raised by Murguia, Padilla & Pavel (1991) who suggest that central constructs in Tinto's (1993) model have been incompletely understood and thus not adequately operationalized. This study explores the experience of community from the point of view of students and in so doing grounds understanding of it in the day-to-day lives of students. Such a "grounded" understanding may lead to improved conceptualizations of the meaning of community that may then be used to inform retention and attrition models.

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[2] Guppy & Bednarsky (1993) report that between 40 to 50% of students who enroll in university programs will not graduate.

Calls for "community building" initiatives have, as mentioned previously, been numerous in recent years. This study will be of value to practitioners (such as student service workers and academic and personal counselors whose mandate includes building inclusive campus communities) by identifying both barriers to community and those elements of the students' experience within the university that contribute to positive community membership.

Finally, this study is significant in that it extends understanding of the complex phenomenon of student experience through the development of an understanding of community based on the assumption of students as knowledgeable human actors contributing to and being shaped by larger social structures. Thus students are not seen as entirely willful individuals or as powerless victims, but as actors both enabled and constrained by the larger social forces within and beyond the university.

Overview of Chapters

In order to understand these "larger social forces" that have an impact on the undergraduate student experience, Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the challenges facing the contemporary research-intensive university and the implications of these challenges for the nature and quality of undergraduate student education. This chapter begins with a discussion of the university as "traditional" community, and then sketches the shift from elite to mass higher education followed by review of the growth and development of the research-intensive university. This section ends with a discussion of

the undergraduate student experience within the context of the research-intensive university.

In Chapter 3, attention is turned directly toward the concept of community beginning with an overview of conceptualizations of community and moving on to outline the conceptual frameworks that guided the exploration of the meaning and boundaries of community in this study. At the end of Chapter 3 are the research questions to be addressed and so it follows that the means of answering those questions should be the contents of Chapter 4, which, in addition to outlining the method used in this study, provides a detailed description of the site and students under investigation.

Chapters 5 to 7 are concerned with the results of the case study. In order to understand how students perceived community at the research site, interviewees were asked to describe what community meant to them, to reflect on what an ideal university community would "look" like, and to discuss the extent to which the ideal was realized at their university. The ideas that emerged from the interviews were translated into statements about the ideal and actual aspects of a university community and survey respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they were ideally important and actually experienced. These data are the contents of Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 explore in detail the lived experiences of students within a disciplinary community. Chapter 6 is concerned primarily with viewing the experiences of students through the lens of the constitutive community, and Chapter 7 through the lens of the individualistic community. As evidenced in Chapter 8, which summarizes the conclusions to the thesis, including policy and practice implications,

14

and makes suggestions for further research, these conceptions of community are complementary and serve to highlight the interactions between membership, identity and belonging in the empowerment of students within their disciplinary community.

15

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Introduction

Higher education in Canada and in almost all industrialized countries (Schuetze, 1995) has experienced dramatic change, particularly during the last half century. This change is marked by rapid expansion and increased diversity and complexity. Canadian higher education systems reflect English and German influences, but have also developed in unique ways, responding to Canadian social policies and economic exigencies. As noted in Chapter 1, the larger social forces that have shaped the contemporary research-intensive university in Canada, influence the experiences of undergraduate students within it. Understanding the historical and social context[3] of university education is integral to understanding undergraduate students' experiences as members of a disciplinary community within the research-intensive university.

Universities in industrialized countries have grown and developed and discussions of the meaning of community in academe have also evolved. Universities of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were seen as "exemplars" of university communities (Silver & Silver, 1997), but a number of scholars have noted that "community" in the contemporary university is an elusive, if important, concept (Barnett, 1990; Damrosch, 1995). Silver & Silver (1997), writing about North America and the United Kingdom, argue that the growth of higher education can be seen as

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[3] The more immediate context of the study – the research participants, the department and the university – is considered in Chapter 4.

16

"damaging traditional understandings" (p. 155) of community, and Gadamer (1992),

argues that forces of change affecting the contemporary university have resulted in a

"three fold alienation that has afflicted the community of teachers and learners" (p. 52).

First, he argues, expansion of the university campus has made it difficult for students to

achieve a close relationship with professors. The second type of alienation is

symptomatic of the "fragmentation and departmentalization which has become

unavoidable due to the large size of institutions" (p. 53) and third, is the alienation of

student from student as the purpose of attending university no longer rests on the

importance of "living with ideas so much as attending lectures, completing

assignments, and obtaining a credential" (p. 53). In the mid-1970s Ross (1976)

identified "community" as a fundamental policy question facing Canadian universities

and it continues to be a focus of concern for the contemporary university (Readings,

1996). Tracing the development of university education in Canada and incorporating a

discussion of the evolving nature of community in the contemporary university is the

purpose for this chapter. Specifically, this chapter reviews the origins of Canadian

universities, the shift toward mass higher education, and emergence of the research

university.

17

The University as a "Traditional" Community

The origins of universities can be traced to medieval times (Cobban, 1975) and Perkin (1991) argues the autonomous, permanent institutions recognizable as universities today were direct descendents of the cathedral and municipal schools of twelfth century Europe. Earliest universities were characterized as guilds of students and masters, much like other craft or merchant guilds of the medieval period (Perkin, 1991). Unlike the Italian universities (*e.g.*, Bologna) which originated as student-controlled and placed greater emphasis on practical education for theology, law and medicine (Ross, 1976), the master-controlled guilds of the Paris model were more strongly focused on logic and theology (Cobban, 1975). It was this latter, master-dominated, model with an emphasis on the "seven liberal arts" of grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and music, that would most strongly influence the English Oxford and Cambridge, and later Canadian, universities.

The period from about 1500 to the 1850s marked a decline - "complacent somnolence" (Perkin, 1991, p. 179) and even "stagnation and retreat" (Ross, 1976, p. 14) according to some - in university development. This decline coincided with a period of great intellectual creativity in such areas as science, medicine, art, economics and political philosophy, which occurred outside the scope of universities. For English universities, limited involvement in intellectual advances during this time was a consequence of the strong theological foundations of universities that were essentially conservative "quasi-monastic institutions" (Perkin, 1991), and a "philosophy" of higher education that nourished the "containment" rather than the "expansion" of knowledge

18

(Ross, 1976). Although not the location of unfettered intellectual adventure, the legacy of English universities from this period was the development of a distinct perspective of undergraduate student education (Ross, 1976).

The writing of John Henry Newman (1976/1852) offers a coherent, ideal articulation of that perspective. Newman's ideal portrays the university as a community of learners, both tutors and students, brought together for the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. The most important aspect of education was the cultivation of the intellect and the molding of a strong moral character. In addition to close student-faculty interaction, ideally students would be

> sure to learn from one another even if there be no-one to
> teach them: the conversation of all is a series of lectures to
> each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views,
> fresh matter of thought and distinct principles for judging
> and acting day by day (p. 26).

The overall purpose of the English university was the transmission of cultural heritage and the training of a ruling elite, and the belief that the university should be organized to achieve this end persisted even as external pressures forced the introduction of modern subjects into the curriculum, broader undergraduate admissions, and the recruitment of quality faculty (Ross, 1976). Although inheritors of this undergraduate tradition, Canadian universities would reflect a more broadly conceived

19

purpose for their fledgling universities, one that also reflected the more egalitarian and utilitarian models emerging in the United States.

Colleges in what would become the United States were started by religious groups, and even the state universities of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were highly influenced by religious doctrine. As in Canada, the universities of this period imported the English model with its limited classical curriculum and general irrelevance to life in North America (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). As Ross (1976) noted, "Oxford and Cambridge represented for the colonies what a university was supposed to be, and this model was supported as a symbol of status" (p. 25). But it did not provide the practical skills and professional training that would contribute to the growth and development of a new nation (Ross, 1976). Following the American Revolution, three key building blocks of university education in the United States were identified in this rapidly industrializing country (Perkin, 1991): the emergence and public support of secular, state universities; the Morril Act of 1862 that provided funding for practically oriented institutions which would offer higher education to the "agriculturist, the manufacturer, the mechanic, or the merchant" (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976); and the adaptation of a German model of the research university with its focus on advancement as well as preservation of knowledge, a concern for academic freedom and involvement of undergraduate students in research, and freedom of students to choose their own program of study and to move between universities (Ross, 1976). The emphasis on research and provision for graduate study lured American scholars, "some ten thousand of them before the outbreak of World War I" (Cude, 1987, p, 14), to Germany (Cude,

1987). The German influence on American universities was realized in the creation of new universities in the US that, in addition to undergraduate education, emphasized research and graduate study. The liberal arts traditions of Oxford and Cambridge, vocational programs, and increasingly strong research activities were supported by the size and diversity of higher education in the US.

In 1900, there were 977 universities in the US compared to 11 in Britain and 20 in Canada (Ross, 1976, p. 52). The new sparsely populated Canadian nation lacked the resources necessary for the rapid development of its universities in the manner of its southern neighbour. University based research and graduate education would be weak and neglected until after the World War II and tension between competing American and English traditions was increasingly evident. Canadian universities continued to focus on undergraduate education in the English tradition, while also responding to the influences of the more pragmatic American focus on professional training. Ross writes that "the first half of the twentieth century in Canadian universities is the story ... of the gradual erosion of the concept of a 'good university' in British terms to a gradual acceptance of the advantages of the American university" (pp. 42-43). Nonetheless, Canadian universities continued to be elitist in so far as they admitted a small group of (predominantly male) students who were expected to assume future leadership roles; students were typically enrolled in the limited areas of arts and sciences, medicine or engineering (Ross, 1976). The social sciences had yet to develop a strong foothold alongside "classical" and "practical" subjects and the "limited curricula" of the early institutions contributed to a homogenous academic experience for students (Axelrod,

1990) which was enhanced by the "total immersion" of students in a "single university community" (Ross, 1976, p. 70). The student-university relationship was characterized by the principle of "*in loco parentis* by which the university assumed responsibility for the care, discipline, and full development of each student" (Ross, 1976, p. 19), a responsibility which in practice fell primarily to individual professors, thereby contributing to an intimate student-faculty relationship. The erosion of this power structure signaled a different type of relationship between students and faculty, a new role for students to play in university governance, but prior to the expansion of higher education following WWII, the university was perceived as "a small community of intellectually talented people separated from the larger society and united internally by a respect for knowledge and a love of learning" (Ross, 1976, p. 140). Despite variations on the English theme that resulted from the American influence on Canadian universities, "traditional" structures of community, such as a shared core curriculum, homogeneity and intimate physical size, remained intact.

Prior to the WWII, Canadian universities were small, enrolments typically were under 2,000 (Ross, 1976), and higher education was very much the province of a select group of people in Canadian society. Initially university students were exclusively male. Women were barred from enrolment until late in the nineteenth century. In 1901, women represented 12% of full-time undergraduate and professional enrolments and 30% of full-time graduate enrolments (Andres & Guppy, 1991) but before 1940 still comprised fewer than one quarter of all enrolments (Axelrod, 1990). There is limited empirical evidence of the ethnic composition of the student body but Axelrod (1990)

reports on the active discrimination against Jewish students and students of colour. Jewish students were subject to admission quotas in the 1930s to curtail their climbing enrolment in merchandising, law, and medicine. Limited numbers of "coloured" and Japanese students were admitted to universities, but suffered unequal and discriminatory treatment, in some instances preventing them from completing their degrees (Axelrod, 1990). In the 1930s student bodies in Canada's universities were primarily comprised of the middle classes. The upper class comprised such a small proportion of the Canadian population as to make it impossible for them to dominate university enrolments, and the working class was vastly under-represented as a proportion of its overall population (Axelrod, 1990). The "traditional" university community was not a lasting feature of Canadian universities. The impact of change was already being felt in the early part of the nineteenth century, and the Second World War marked the accelerated transition to a system of mass higher education, inalterably changing the nature of the university as a community.

The Altered University Community

Changes in the nature of the university as a "homogeneous" community following WWII stem from social and economic forces that had dramatic impact on universities. Twentieth century confidence in social and private benefits of education contributed to the expansion of higher education. Governments were awakening to the reality that a competitive nation was one that possessed a skilled workforce. To be

23

competitive Canada could no longer rely on immigrants for skilled labour and many were convinced of the direct link between economic prosperity and education. The Final Report of the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects (Economic Council of Canada, 1957) noted that universities "are the source of the most highly skilled workers whose knowledge is essential to all branches of industry" (p. 452). In addition to national prosperity, there was mounting evidence of the private benefits of a post-secondary education. Bertram (1966) was able to show that "better education appears to have raised labour earnings per man [sic] by about 30 per cent from 1911 - 1961" (p. 61-62). Faith in higher education as a path to personal and social prosperity was justified by the arguments of human capital theory (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961). As was evidenced by a number of reports such as the Parent report (Parent, 1963/1966), the Bladen Commission report (1965) or the Economic Council of Canada, First Annual Review (1964), both the federal and provincial governments made education a top priority.[4] In addition to a rationale of productivity and economic growth, social justice and a philosophy of equality of opportunity for access contributed to the growth of post-secondary education (Anisef, 1985). Faith in human capital theory, the connection between national prosperity and an educated labour force, and a

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[4] The Parent Commission Report, emphasized equality of educational opportunity and the promotion of education at all levels. These aims would be addressed by creating a Minister of Education, the recommendation considered central to the report (Dennison and Gallagher, 1986). The Bladen Commission Report (1965) on financing higher education in Canada made strong recommendations for expansion, an increase in federal per capital grants to the provinces, and the continuation and expansion of the Canada Student Loan program. The Economic Council's First Annual Review (1964) highlighted the relationship between economic prosperity and higher education. According to the Council, "it [had] become increasingly apparent that the future prosperity of a nation will depend in large measure on its success in creating and maintaining an adequate supply of professional, technical, managerial and other highly skilled manpower" (p. 160).

climate of public support for post-secondary education and public spending in general, were all important factors contributing to the expansion of higher education (Axelrod, 1982; Fortin, 1987; Julien, 1989; Schuetze, 1995), as was the baby boom phenomenon, a product in part of delayed marriages and a sense of optimism for the future (Axelrod, 1982).

Utilizing demographic evidence of rapid population growth, Sheffield (1955) projected a doubling of post-secondary enrolments between 1954-55 and 1964-65, signaling to governments, educators and the public that the "hordes" of baby boom children accessing universities in the 1960s (Axelrod, 1982) would continue a trend of rapidly increased enrolments begun by the demands of returning veterans at the end of WWII (Cameron, 1991). The War provided the source of a first wave of expanded enrolments and was the impetus for enhancing the role of the federal government in financing higher education,[5] a significant factor in the growth and development of higher education in Canada.

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[5] The role of the federal government in financing the public systems of higher education in Canada was an essential factor contributing to their expansion. Early (denominational) universities were supported by private benefactors and minimal tuition fees with very little government assistance (Stager, 1989). This pattern of financing began to change, shifting a greater burden onto local and provincial governments, as more universities and colleges abandoned their religious affiliations. The precise patterns of finance differed from province to province, but overall, adequate endowments or government support was an exception. There was a move toward involvement of the federal government in financing, first in support of returning WWII veterans, and later, by virtue of the 1951 Massey Commission recommendations, in the form of grants to universities (Cutt & Dobell, 1992). Concern over federal interference in provincial jurisdiction over education (AUCC, 1992) resulted in the development of a system of transfer grants from the federal to provincial governments. Federal-provincial funding arrangements have evolved considerably since the federal government assumed responsibility (via the provinces) for funding higher education, and it has been argued (e.g., Cameron, 1991) that more recent reductions in federal transfer payments and a reluctance of provincial governments to spend payments on higher education (rather than health) (Johnson, 1985), signals the erosion of federal responsibility for higher education funding. Nonetheless, the key role of federal financial support in the expansion of higher education in Canada is without dispute.

25

By the end of 1965, it was evident that Sheffield's (1955) prediction was a substantial underestimate. National undergraduate university enrolments alone during these ten years more than doubled. When graduate students are included in the calculation, enrolment increases during the decade between 1955 and 1965 were over 170%, representing approximately 47,000 more students than anticipated. (See Appendix A for detailed enrolment figures.) In 1951-52, national full-time university enrolments (graduate and undergraduate) equaled approximately 6% of the 18-24 year age group (Statistics Canada, 1978). By 1970 this figure had increased to 18% and throughout the 1990s has been a stable 20% (Statistics Canada, 1999). To accommodate rising demand for enrolment, the absolute size of the university sector had to expand. In addition to the physical enlargement of existing universities and the transformation of denominational colleges into public universities, there was pressure from urban centres without a university to have one built (Cameron, 1991). By the beginning of the 1970s the number of institutions at the university level doubled to sixty (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986) and currently there are over 70 public university level institutions in Canada. As measured by size (rate of growth, physical expansion, and proportion of the 18-24 year old cohort attending university), it is clear that, overall, the post-war university was a much altered institution in so far as access to it was greatly expanding. Vast sections of the Canadian population which had previously been excluded from participating in the university were beginning to take advantage of its enhanced accessibility.

26

Women represent one segment of the population that "seized opportunities to participate ... in higher education" (Andres & Guppy, 1991, p. 188). In 1940 women comprised 23% of the full-time undergraduate population. Dramatic increases of women student enrolments occurred after 1960. As illustrated in Figure 1, unlike male full-time undergraduate enrolments which increased 83% between 1940-41 and 1945-46, female enrolments increased 59%. Figure 1 shows that the rapid expansion for women occurred in the 1960s, and by 1985 full-time undergraduate female enrolments had surpassed those of males. The steady increase in enrolments and the sizable advances made by women between 1945 and 1997 are dramatically portrayed by the 363% increase for men compared to 2034% increase for women[6] during that period (Statistics Canada 1978, 1999).

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[6] The same analysis was done by Andres and Guppy (1991) who, using data ending in 1989, showed that "in the last 35 years, the number of male students ... increased by 294%, while female enrollments [rose] by an astounding 1420%" (p. 169).

27
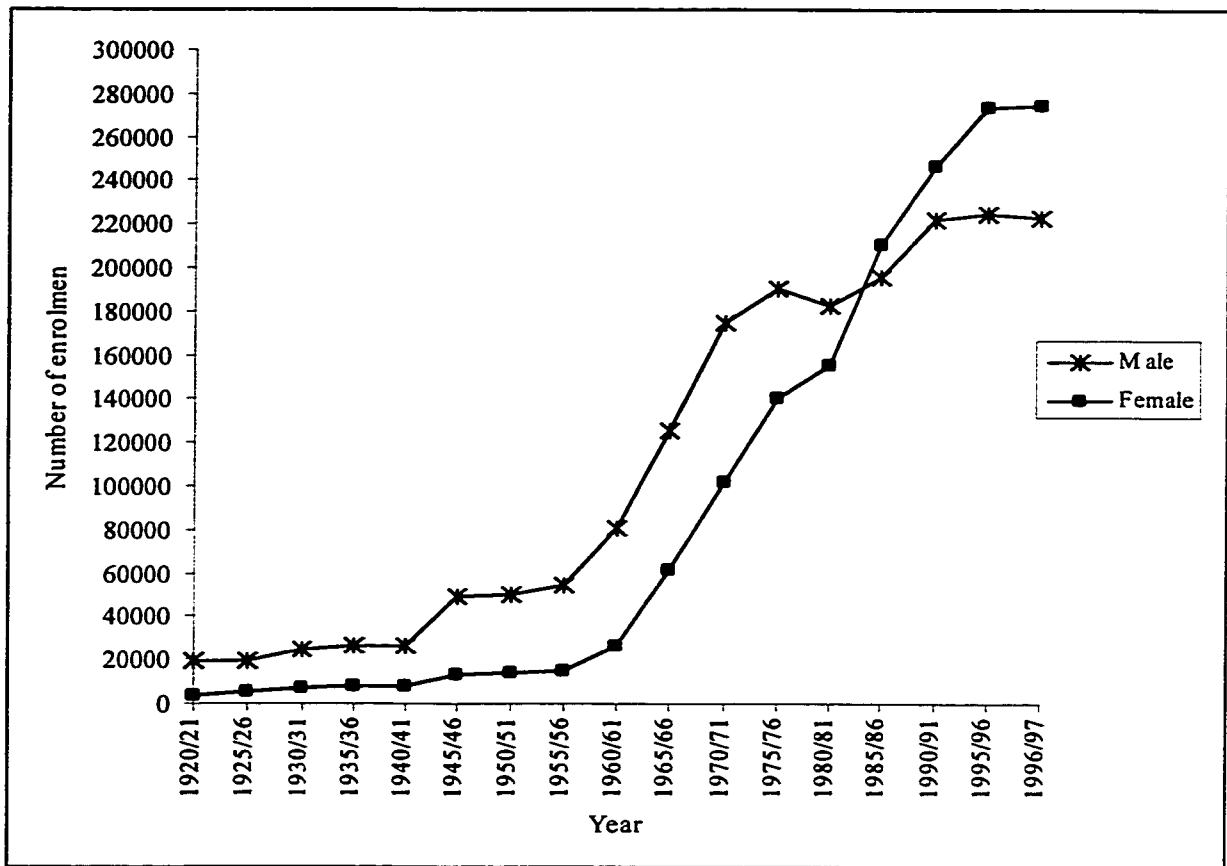
Figure 1. Full-time undergraduate student enrolment, by sex, Canada, 1920-1996.

Figure 2 shows that at the graduate level a similar pattern of growth occurred, though on a smaller scale. Women comprised 22% of graduate student enrolments in 1945, a percentage that had declined to 13% a decade later. Rapid expansion of male graduate enrolments began after 1941, and with the exception of a notable drop in 1955, continued to increase until 1995. The most recent (1996) data show a slight decline in male enrolments (Statistics Canada, 1999). Women graduate student

28

enrolments remained relatively stable after 1941 until 1961 when they increased steadily, reaching 46% of graduate level enrolments in 1996. The overall percentage increase between 1945 and 1996 was 1722% for men and 5421% for women. (See Appendix A for detailed graduate student enrolment data.)
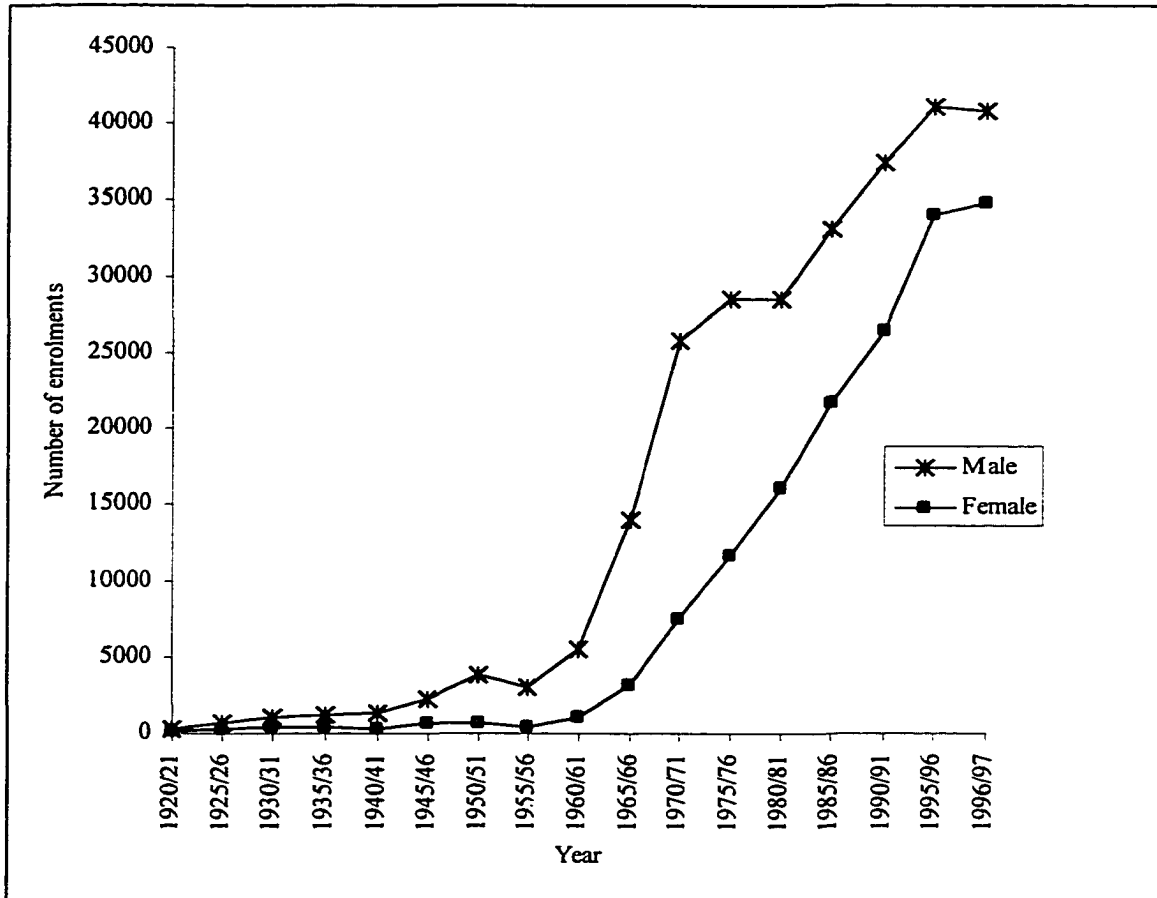
Figure 2. Full-time graduate student enrolment, by sex, Canada, 1920-1996.

Women were not the only ones to take advantage of opportunities for higher education; other previously under-represented groups are accessing university education in greater numbers, though in less dramatic fashion than did women.

29

Typically referred to as "non-traditional" students, they have been defined as older than 24 years of age, commuters, or part time attendees, or "some combination of these three factors" (Bean & Metzner, 1987, p. 489). As Andres and Carpenter (1997) point out, little consensus exists on what constitutes a non-traditional learner; "categorizations create false dichotomies" (p. 1) that tend to relegate all but "traditional" – "white, affluent, healthy, primarily male youth, aged 18 to 24" (p. 1) – to the realm of "other." Traditional versions of the concept of the university as a community tended to exclude "others." For some, the transition to a system of mass higher education has ameliorated their exclusion (e.g., women, as shown above) while for others, it has done little to alter it.

Part-time and older students have an increased presence as members of the university community. Part-time undergraduate enrolments for both men and women increased substantially between 1962 and 1970 (a 260% increase for men and 280% for women). But after 1970 undergraduate women's part-time participation continued to rise, surpassing male enrolments by 1975, and reaching 172 thousand at its peak in 1990, after which they began steadily to decline. Part-time enrolments for men declined slightly after 1970, then slowly grew to under 97 thousand in 1990 before also beginning to decline. Part-time graduate student enrolments revealed a similar pattern of growth and decline, but on a much smaller scale. Unlike undergraduate women, part-time graduate women represented fewer than 50% of enrolments until pulling slightly ahead male part-time students in 1990.

30

Part-time learners tend to be older than full-time learners. In 1971, 44% of part-time undergraduate students were 30 years of age or over and in 1984, 64% were over 30 (Anisef, 1989). Statistics Canada (1995) data reveal that 36% of part-time undergraduate students were 30 years or older in 1993; by comparison, 2.3% of full-time undergraduate students fall within that age category. Although older learners have made an impact on the university, they have done so while also focusing on paid employment and personal or family commitments (Anisef, 1989; Campbell, 1984; Thompson & Devlin, 1992).

Two groups that have been identified as barred from participating fully in the university community are students with disabilities (Wilchesky, 1986) and Aboriginal students (Baker, 1996). Little data are available on the numbers of students with persistent physical or other disabilities or on the nature of such disabilities, but there is evidence that, although in very small numbers, more people with disabilities are enrolling in universities across Canada. Wilchesky (1986) reported a rise in "handicapped" students attending York University from 19 in 1977 to 114 in 1984. Likewise, Hill (1992) reported an increase in Quebec universities from 174 to 224 between 1980 and 1989. More recent survey data from a consortium of 10 universities across Canada showed that 6% of undergraduate survey respondents indicated they had some form of disability (Walker, 1996). Asking the question somewhat differently, a similar study involving 23 universities in 1999 revealed that 4% of undergraduate students surveyed indicated they considered themselves to be persons with a disability (Walker, 1999). Physical accessibility and specialized services to enable full

31

participation continue to be basic obstacles faced by students with disabilities, who, despite increases over the past two decades, remain under-represented (Hill, 1992; Council of Ministers of Education, 1987).

This is also the case for First Nations learners. Aboriginal peoples comprise 2.8% of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 1996) and are under-represented in our universities. Very little data is available, but the University of British Columbia reports that just under 2% of undergraduate students surveyed in 1996 indicated they were members of an Aboriginal group in Canada. According to 1996 Census data, 17.5% of all persons who identified themselves as Aboriginal reside in British Columbia and represent 3.8% of the total BC population. Baker (1995) reported an increase of 30% in "adult aboriginal participation in post-secondary education" (p. 209) between 1986 and 1992.

As Andres and Anisef (1994) point out, "trends in immigration patterns by visible and non-visible minorities signal dramatic changes to the fabric of Canadian society" (p. 1-2). The 1971 and 1996 Census data highlight immigration patterns that in recent decades have shifted from a European focus to a greater proportion of Middle Eastern, African, and Asian/Pacific immigrants. According to the 1996 Census Data, anglophones account for nearly 60% of the Canadian population and francophones for approximately 24%. The proportion of people whose first learned language was one other than English or French increased 13% between 1971 and 1996. In 1971 the most frequently identified non-official language was German, followed by Italian and then Ukrainian. In 1996, Chinese was reported most frequently, followed by Italian and then

32

German. Participation patterns and experiences of ethnic minorities in Canada is limited (Andres, 1998; Andres & Anisef, 1994; Pineo & Goyder, 1988) but what little evidence that is available on the ethnic diversity of universities supports the assumption that this new national diversity is reflected in all aspects of Canadian society including its universities. For example, British Columbia has high levels of Asian immigrants, most of whom settled in the lower mainland (Budget & Planning, UBC, 1997). This trend is reflected at The University of British Columbia where the language first learned at home is markedly different for BC students compared with those at other universities across Canada (Walker, 1999).

Although there has been a general democratization of access to higher education in Canada, class divisions at the university level persist. Guppy (1984) found that in terms of socioeconomic status, there was a "constant gap" between classes of university level students. When examining overall post-secondary participation by class, he reports a "steady decline" in the gap between lower and middle to upper class student participation rates. Guppy concludes that "the democratization of post-secondary education, which clearly did occur, resulted mainly from the expansion of opportunities presented by the opening of numerous non-university colleges and institutes" (p. 89) which was part of the overall institutional expansion of the late 1960s and 1970s. Guppy argues that the creation of a dual system of higher education is consistent with the view of community colleges as an "alternative for lower social and economic strata" (Porter, 1979, 329). It has been argued that in this respect, colleges perform a "cooling out" function (Goffman, 1952; Clark, 1960) that divert inadequate students from

33

universities while offering a "second chance" to those who "did poorly in high school or who have overcome socioeconomic handicaps" (Clark, 1960, p, 575) by drawing them into higher education and offering a transfer route to university degree completion.

Transfer students represent a significant group attending universities who were not members of the community prior to the introduction of colleges into three of the provincial higher education systems in Canada (Quebec, Alberta, British Columbia). There were over 103,000 transfer students enrolled in undergraduate programs at Canadian universities in 1997 (Statistics Canada, 1998) representing approximately 13% of all full- and part-time undergraduate enrolments for that year. In their review of the literature, Andres & Carpenter (1997) showed that transfer students tend to be older, married and working while studying, are more likely to study part-time and to be commuters.

As the review of literature on the changing face of university campuses across Canada illustrates, the university is a vastly different institution at the end of the twentieth century than at its beginning. Diversity rather than sameness among student populations and patterns of participation prevail. As noted in Chapter 1, lamentations of the "loss" of community have been numerous in recent years, but loss for whom? Tierney (1993) points out that the "breakdown of community" reflected in much of the rhetoric of loss "is not necessarily a bad thing if the definition of community we employ is a romantic notion of 'the good old days'" (p. 77), for as this review has demonstrated, they were "good" for an elite few.

Forces of change have resulted in a dramatically altered student body, and as will be shown in the next section of this chapter, in a much altered learning environment.

Research Function of the University

A development that would have a substantial impact on the nature of the university as a community for undergraduate students was the emergence of the Canadian research university. Drawing on the example of the German universities, linking research with teaching and learning has become a fundamental activity of universities in many countries (Clark, 1993) including Canada (OCUA, 1994). As the data in Figure 2 showed, graduate student enrolments entered a period of rapid expansion following WWII. According to Clark (1993), the focus on research in the university has "caused disciplines and specialties to grow and multiply, thereby enlarging the cognitive territories and material claims of academic groups" (p. xv). Disciplinary influence on the undergraduate experience has been significant in terms of the breadth of study options available to students and the organization of the curriculum (Donald, 1997). By the late nineteenth century religion and the classics could "no longer provide the basis for a core curriculum" (Axelrod, 1990, p, 50), and by the 1930s students could enroll in an unprecedented twenty-five or thirty programs of study (Axelrod, 1990). Axelrod (1990) writes that "the goal of a coherent, balanced liberal

35

education with universally high standards remained entrenched in theory and elusive in practice" (p. 50). The increases in students numbers, new knowledge, and new technologies fueled the development of new programs of study and the multiplication of the existing programs in newly forming institutions across Canada. For students the consequence of this diversification was a greater choice among program offerings and elective courses. Students were beginning to have more control over the content of their education, but the consequence was the breakdown in the unity of the curriculum and the shared academic experience among students (Axelrod, 1990).

Prior to the First World War little research was conducted in universities and as a nation Canada was "colonial and parasitic in relation to scientific accomplishment" (Bonneau & Corry 1972, p. 7). The tendency was to import ideas and people rather than produce them. During the First World War the National Research Council (NRC) was established in order to expand research facilities, but little happened for fifteen years following its creation. The opportunity for graduate level study in the United States drew the "choicest" Canadian students away, causing one university president, J.M. Tory, of the University of Alberta, to remark in 1928 that graduate work was the "weakest part of our whole system" (Ross, 1976, p. 41). The Second World War saw a burgeoning interest in scientific and technological research but it was not until the 1960s, when the federal government began to provide consistent substantial funding, that research in universities really took hold. The demands of post-war society for advanced knowledge and skilled labour were a powerful impetus for the growth of the research university. At a time when money for universities was abundant and growth

rapid, change was inevitable. Smith & Webster (1997) point out that there was a "relentless trend towards subject specialization" (p. 3) as universities responded to social and economic demands for greater professional expertise. "Demands of society, and especially government agencies, for highly trained scientists and social scientists, for expert consultants, and for researchers spurred the growth of graduate work" (Ross, 1976 p. 58) and the "companion" development of research programs within universities. The university, historically a training institution for the professions (priesthood, law and medicine initially), was called on to provide more specialized education in a greater variety of disciplines. It was practical and inevitable that the diversification of subjects would entail the creation of new departments and divisions between knowledge areas (Shils, 1992). Clark (1994) writes that the contemporary university is characterized by "enormous self-amplifying growth" (p. 12) such that there continues a steady proliferation of cognitive domains, disciplines, and specialties.

Tussman (1969) argues that the success of the university in its pursuit of knowledge resulted in the evolution of an institution that was more a collection of highly trained specialists than a community of scholars. He writes:

> the individual specialized scholar may find that, as with Oedipus, the pursuit of knowledge leads to impairment of vision; and, the community of scholars, speaking its special tongues, has suffered the fate of Babel (p. xiii).

37

The success of the university in its pursuit of knowledge has resulted in the consequence of an institution that is more a collection of highly trained specialists than a community of scholars.

At the level of the undergraduate, programs became more and more specialized during the 1960s and 1970s and although attempts to retain some semblance of the unity of knowledge by imposing language, arts and science requirements in the first and second years, specialization continued virtually uninhibited. Curricular changes were inevitable (Ross, 1976) and consistent with the expansion of knowledge and emergence of new fields of study (Neatby, 1985). The proliferation of disciplinary based information is evidenced in what Becher (1989) calls disciplinary territories, or sub-cultures. The connections between faculty from within the same disciplines is stronger than connections between faculty across disciplines, even when these boundaries extend to the "invisible college." Faculty may have a greater sense of community with colleagues in the same discipline but at other institutions than they do with those from the same institution but different disciplines. Even though the academic community as a whole is distinguished by its "elaborated discourse" (Gouldner, 1976), "it is more the point that each disciplinary community has developed its own elaborated discourse" (Barnett, 1990, p. 98). A new community based on the discipline rather than the institution was developing and the idea of a shared culture transmitted to the next generation was being challenged (Neatby, 1985). For undergraduate students, disciplinary divisions have been shown to have an impact on students' perceptions of teaching and learning (Cashin & Downey, 1995), selection of academic discipline

38

(Kolb, 1981), approaches to studying (Entwistle & Tait, 1995) and perceptions of academic success (Menec & Perry, 1995).

These developments raised questions about the role of undergraduate education, the balance of teaching and research and notions of the university as a community. The rise in importance of research in the universities ignited debate that drew on the writings of German thinker Wilhelm von Humboldt (1809/10) whose conception of the role of the university as a centre for "cultural transmission" was consistent with that of Newman's, although the key distinction was in the role each conceived for research. For Newman, the primary purpose of the university was teaching. The university was a place for the "diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than its advancement" (1852, p. 3) and Newman insisted that if the object of the university was scientific and philosophical discovery, he could see no need for students. Research and teaching were seen as distinct functions and the ability to undertake the one or the other of these "gifts" was rarely combined in one person; those who taught had neither the time nor the disposition for research and those inclined to research sought seclusion and "shunned the lecture room" (p. 7).

Humboldt's conception of the university was one of a close association between teacher and student and the common pursuit and advancement of knowledge. Indeed, the ability of the teacher to engage in scholarly activities depended on the "presence and interest" of students. Humboldt conceived of a dynamic interaction between the more mature, dispassionate and one sided disposition of the teacher, and the minds less able and committed but more open and responsive to possibilities of students. The

39

coming together of the two resulted in the advancement of science and scholarship, made "more rapid and more lively in a university where ... problems are discussed back and forth by a large number of forceful, vigorous, youthful intelligences" (p. 247). For Humboldt, "it [was] inconceivable that discoveries should not be frequently made in such a situation" (pp. 247-248).

The notion of *Bildung,* a word intended to convey the "personal transcendence" (Barnett, 1990) that results from the acquisition of knowledge, development of character and formulation of independent thought, was an integral aspect of this ideal learning community, and not inconsistent with Newman's notion of the "cultivation of the intellect". It was reflective of the cultural and moral character of university education. But for Humboldt the "effective accomplishment" of the intellectual and moral component of higher education depended on the principle that there are no "closed bodies of permanently settled truths" (p. 244). In other words, higher learning could not be achieved through the collecting and classifying of facts; rather the ongoing process of collaborative inquiry and the cultivation of science and scholarship for their own sake.

The Humboltian ideal learning community with its focus on the close integration of teaching and learning and the engagement of students with the research process, and Newman's focus on the undivided attention of professors on the teaching and cultivation of students, highlights contemporary tensions and debates about the relationship between teaching and research. Neatby (1985) suggests that the emergence of research as a significant function of the university was coupled with its continued differentiation

40

from teaching. Some have argued that strengthening research priorities has contributed to the decline of undergraduate education because of a lack of incentive for teaching in its broadest and most inclusive sense of mentorship within and outside the classroom as compared with the rewards and benefits of research (Von Blum, 1986). Tension between teaching and research and the impact of an apparent overemphasis of research at the expense of undergraduate education has been central to recent debates about higher education in Canada. Smith (1991) argues that "scholarship has come to mean little more than research publications and ... [that] such publications are more important than teaching excellence" (p. 34). He offers the following as evidence:

- at many universities, teaching excellence is not accorded the same importance as research publication with respect to decisions concerning hiring, tenure and promotion;
- new challenges with respect to the organization and delivery of teaching services are being responded to sluggishly;
- actual teaching hours of full-time permanent faculty remained stable or have declined, even in the face of the challenge of dealing with larger student to faculty ratios;
- few steps are taken to ensure the acquisition and improvement of teaching skills among new and existing members of the academic profession. (Smith, 1991, p. 34).

41

The conclusions of the Commission report are supported by other empirical research. The view that research takes precedence over teaching was the key finding of a case study of Ontario universities. The author concluded that "academics and academic administrators in Ontario value research and believe it is an academic's preeminent work; teaching is secondary" (Elrick, 1990). The division between teaching and research is emphasized by Feldman's (1987) examination of twenty-nine studies on the relationship between research productivity and teaching effectiveness which revealed that "scholarly accomplishment or research productivity of ... university faculty members [was] only slightly associated with teaching proficiency" as measured by student evaluations (p. 275).

In their study of research and teaching climates on the growth and satisfaction of undergraduate students, Volkwein and Carbone (1994) found "little evidence to support the argument ... that research enhances teaching; but ... found even less evidence to support the opposite argument that research [was] harmful to teaching" (p. 162). Current debates about the relationship between teaching and research emphasize the distance between conceptions of students as participants in the research process versus recipients of the outcomes of faculty research. The Ontario Council on University Affairs (1994) identified four views on possible interactions between research and teaching: research and teaching were coupled; research and teaching were independent functions; conflict and competition defined the relationship between research and teaching; teaching was subordinate to or incompatible with research. There is some evidence that in the contemporary university, the central role played by students is such

that they are not contributors to new knowledge, but rather are recipients or beneficiaries of it (OCUA, 1994). The OCUA (1994) report that the combination of research and teaching in which students were directly involved with research projects was limited to a few students and disciplines. Further, the greatest evidence was in support of the conclusion that research and teaching were independent, conflicting or incompatible.

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (1992) responded to the findings of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry (Smith, 1991) with "deep concern" that it left the impression that "teaching and research [were] separate functions rather than a marriage of equal partners" (p. 1). The Association authors recognized that Canadian universities needed more directly and explicitly to demonstrate for students and the public the connections between the two functions, but were of the view that each one informed the other.

Keohane (1994) argued that the intimate relationship between the discovery and sharing of knowledge is obscured when the tensions between research and teaching are emphasized over their complementary interconnections. Not only does sharing knowledge in the classroom with students "protect undergraduates from yellowing pages of brilliant lectures increasingly out of touch with development in the field" (Keohane, 1994, p. 157), but the discovery of knowledge is enhanced when it is participatory. Echoing Humboldt's ideas about the ideal university community, Keohane thought that intellectual exchange between people of different ages and levels of intellectual sophistication can contribute to knowledge discovery. Jamieson & Polsby

43

(1994) report on the success of such an approach to undergraduate education and confirm that involvement of undergraduate students in research activities and projects enriches the content of lectures and promotes the "incorporation of undergraduates into the scholarly community" (p. 229). The interconnections between the development and transmission of knowledge by enabling students to participate in research activities was identified as a strength of the research university (Sedra & Tuohy, 1994).

These debates about the relationship between undergraduate education and research are symptomatic of a larger concern about the changing role and nature of higher education. In his analysis of the research university, Kerr (1963) argued that the university was no longer a community of scholars, but a conglomeration of multiple communities: the undergraduate, or graduate student community, the community of the social scientists or the natural scientist, of academic or non-academic personnel, the community of the administrators (pp. 18-19). Kerr saw the absorption of faculty in the many tasks of the university including graduate student supervision, research, and service to the outside community, meant there was little time or energy left for undergraduate instruction. As a consequence the university was a "confusing" place for undergraduates and the challenges facing the universities were formidable:

> How to give adequate recognition to the teaching skill as
> well as to the research performance of the faculty; how to
> create a curriculum that serves the needs of the students as
> well as research interests of the teacher; ... how to treat
> the individual student as a unique human being in the mass

44

student body; how to make the university seem smaller even as it grows larger; how to establish a range of contact between faculty and students broader than the one-way route across the lectern" (pp. 118-119).

It has been argued that the multiplicity of functions demanded and provided by the research university, the diversified and expanded student population, and the myriad of disciplines has served to undermine the university as a community and that the emergent dominance of research over teaching has inalterably damaged the research-teaching nexus. (Anderson, 1992; Bok, 1990; Kerr, 1963). Boyer (1990) suggested that an overemphasis on research has impaired teaching quality and Rosovsky (1992) has argued that faculty have focused on their own needs and careers with the result that there is an imbalance between research and teaching functions, a lack of accountability among faculty, and a move away from a sense of community.

However, as has been shown here, empirical studies of the relationship between undergraduate teaching and research, though few, have yielded ambiguous results. Quantitative studies in particular (Feldman, 1987; Fox, 1992; Jensen, 1988; Ramsden & Moses, 1992) have been inconclusive. Qualitative research has focused on the associations between teaching and research (Clark, 1987; Neumann, 1992) and work that complements quantitative studies by "teasing apart" associations between these functions of the research university have proved fruitful. Neumann's (1992) study of the relationship between an academic's teaching and research roles demonstrated that there were tangible, intangible and global connections between the two functions,

45

suggesting that how one conceives of research and the relationship between research and students is an important element in the discussion. The teaching-research nexus at the undergraduate level is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that is influenced by discipline, type of course, and intellectual ability of the students (Neumann, 1992). Reconceptualizing the nature of students' interaction with the university community and developing an understanding of the parameters for involvement within it is imperative.

Conclusion

As shown in the above review, there have been significant developments in the nature of higher education in Canada since the Second World War. Building community for undergraduate students necessitates taking into consideration structural features of the contemporary university. There are two typical approaches to community building that do so.

A typical approach to building community among undergraduate students attending large universities is to create a small program within the university. For example, Pawluch, Hornosty, Richardson and Shaffir (1994) describe an arts and science program at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario through which students advanced over the course of their four years as a cohort. The program, designed as a community of learners, was intended to foster a sense of community by encouraging academic and social integration through promoting an ideology of social responsibility,

46

by delivering a core curriculum, and by providing physical space designated as belonging to program students exclusively. Programs such as the McMaster program have proven to be a successful community building strategy for small groups of students (Dumaresq, 1995; Russo, 1998; Tinto, 1997).

Small universities (here defined as those with fewer than 5,000 students) (Belanger, 1989) are also typical locations for community building strategies. For example, Mount Allison University in New Brunswick with enrolments of just over 2,000 undergraduates (Statistics Canada, 1997) focuses on a liberal arts and science foundation curriculum, offers a limited number of programs, and enhances a sense of intimacy by limiting enrolments. This university provides on campus residence spaces for almost half of its students, and has a low student-faculty ratio (On-line profile, WWW site). It is primarily an undergraduate university.

Thus, in exploring the notion of community for undergraduate students, the dominant approach has been to study a program or institution structured in such a way as to encourage deliberately the development of a sense of community, as was the case in the above two examples. However, there are fewer than a dozen such programs in Canadian universities, and those that do exist are limited by the numbers of students who may enroll and tend to be highly selective. The McMaster program, for example, enrolled a fraction of the possible 3,000 first year arts and science students, and the cut-off point for admission was a grade average of ninety per cent.

Similarly, attending a small university is not always an option or a first choice among students. The large research-intensive university typically enrolls over 15,000

47

full-time undergraduate students and supports significant numbers of graduate students. There are eleven universities of such size in Canada, accounting for approximately 42% of all undergraduate enrolment nationally. Although developing a successful learning community program within the large research-intensive university is possible, the difficulty of developing such a community for more than a comparative handful of students remains the challenge of such institutions. In light of the educational value of enhancing a sense of community among undergraduates, the proportionately large numbers and diversity of students enrolled in research-intensive universities, the fact that only a minority of students have the option to enroll in programs or universities such as those described above, the importance of exploring the possibility for community, understanding the meaning it has for students and identifying strategies that foster a sense of community within the context of the large research-intensive university is apparent.

48

CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNITY

Introduction

Clarification of the concept "community" is a prerequisite to any investigation into its meaning. As indicated in Chapter 1, the notion of community pervades higher education literature, but little scholarship exists delineating its meaning in the context of undergraduate student education. Drawing on a wide body of literature generally outside of the field of education and higher education (relying primarily on sociological and psychological work), this chapter begins with a review the concept of community. Informed by this discussion, a presentation of definitions to be used in this study follows. Specifically, academic community, campus communities, disciplinary community and sense of community, terms encountered frequently in the higher education literature, are clarified and defined.

In the second section of this chapter, two conceptualizations of community, each with different implications for individual agency are presented. The first, the individualistic conceptualization, assumes individual motivation for participation in the community stems from self interest, whereas the constitutive conceptualization assumes involvement is a consequence of one's "location" within the community. Each provides unique insight into the nature and quality of students' experiences within a particular disciplinary community.

Finally, key concepts – membership, identity, and belonging – are reviewed. These concepts were identified from the literature as key aspects of individuals'

49

experiences within any community and in the discussion here are presented within the context of undergraduate student life. In the final paragraphs of this chapter the conceptual framework informed by this review of literature and utilized in this study is summarized.

Community Defined

The meaning of community in higher education is often implicit and variable. Robins (1963), for example, argued for the promotion of student social life on campus because, he asserted, universities "are not merely places of instruction. They are communities" (p. 193). Solomon & Solomon (1993) emphasized physical proximity and social interaction, and insisted that "commuter schools" and correspondence learning were inferior to campus based learning programs because they "[did] not provide the enveloping context for intellectual life" (p. 43). Wilkes, (1969) argued that for a university community to be effective, "the group has to be such that everybody involved can fully identify himself [sic] with it intellectually and emotionally from the professor to the newest student" (p. 36). Light's (1992) conception of community included a concern with reciprocity in which students were encouraged to question "what they are getting and giving in [their] demanding community" (p. 5).

The paragraph above illustrates the range of meanings and expectations associated with the concept of community in relation to university undergraduate education. As can be seen, it takes on a variety of meanings within the context of

higher education, including physical proximity, student social interactions, and intellectual and emotional group cohesiveness. Embedded within these statements are hints about necessary conditions of community (*e.g.*, that students reside on campus), about its members (*e.g.*, that each student identifies *himself* with the community), and the nature of member interactions (*e.g.*, that relationships on campus are defined by intense involvement). As shown in Chapter 2, these are aspects of community more recognizable and more easily attainable under conditions that existed prior to the expansion of higher education.

Within the context of higher education the process of membership and the boundaries of community are seldom clearly articulated, even when used in the context of empirical investigation. It is because of its prolific and diverse use that Cohen (1985) called community a concept "highly resistant" to a satisfactory definition and Plant (1996) insisted that "its very vagueness [had] become an embarrassment" to those who use it. Similarly, Stacey (1969) declared it a "non-concept" of doubtful utility, and Pahl (1970) labeled it a problematic concept that "serve[d] more to confuse than illuminate" (p. 107). Despite such assertions and even calls for the abandonment of its use (Stacey, 1969), community continues to be pervasive and enduring. Within higher education it informs investigations into social relations on campus (*e.g.*, Tinto, 1993; Berube & Nelson, 1995) and serves as a "warmly persuasive" (Williams, 1983) term of utility to commentators and researchers alike.

In part, the attraction of the concept of community stems from its association with positive human relations and the meeting of basic human needs. Its use signifies a

51

life of moral agreement, collective authority, belonging, convivial relations between individuals, stability and continuity. Not infrequently the use of the term also signifies the loss of these things, and is heard in the context of nostalgic reference to better past times. Elias (1974) writes that "the use of the term has remained to some extent associated with the hope and the wish of reviving once more the closer warmer, more harmonious type of bonds vaguely attributed to past ages" (p. 111). Lack of immunity to emotive overtones of the concept have contributed to the difficulty associated with the development of a single satisfactory definition. Community is, as Minar & Greer (1969) write, "both empirically descriptive of the social structure and normatively toned. It refers to a unit of society as it is and to aspects of that society that are valued if they exist and are desired in their absence" (p. 9).

There is, then, no single meaning of community. In 1955 Hillery identified ninety-four definitions in his review of the literature. Not surprisingly, he concluded that "when all of the definitions are viewed, beyond the concept that people are involved ... there is no complete agreement as to the nature of community" (p. 119). An examination of the literature revealed the dominance of conceptions of community as a territory or geographically bounded place. In this sense, community referred to a physical concentration of people within an identifiable area. The spatial emphasis dominated the ninety-four definitions reported by Hillery (1955) and served as the base for other definitions and typologies (Howard, 1997). Effrat (1974), for example, claimed geographical boundary was a sufficient condition for identifying a particular collective as a community and Hillery (1959) himself saw the "native village" as the

52

ideal community against which other types could be measured, making locality a necessary condition of community. Minar & Greer (1969) argued that place was a customary meaning of the word community and although generally considered an incomplete conceptualization, they insisted that it is nonetheless important because, as Poplin (1979) pointed out, in the day-to-day activities of people it was impossible to "transcend space" (p. 11).

The spatial has served as an important defining element of a community, but is nonetheless an insufficient definition. Limiting the notion of community to the spatial results in the exclusion of collectivities that are bound together by extra-territorial factors. Taylor (1982), for example, identifies "interest" communities such as economic communities which are bound by members' goals and interests. The notion of a community of interest extends understandings of community beyond confines of space or place and links members with the same characteristics or interests such as ethnic origin, employment, religion, politics, sexual orientation or leisure activities (Pons, 1970). That which is shared defines the community and members need not, indeed likely will not, be acquainted with all other members of the community. A focus on community of interest underscores the significance of membership in multiple communities, each serving a different need or interest, and also draws attention to the potential for one group to come into conflict with another (Clark, 1973). Willmott (1986) used the metaphor of a net to describe interest communities, emphasizing that not everyone was connected to everyone else, only to those who share the same interest

53

or characteristic. A scholarly community, comprised of academics of a single discipline yet globally dispersed, is one example.

Gyford (1991) prefers the division of community into two domains, affective and effective, which encompass the above two definitions. Affective community refers to the conceptual or perceived connections between individuals in a group, and effective community refers to the "revealed" community that establishes the parameters of the "action space" of individuals and collectively, the group. In the context of the university and undergraduate education, this conceptualization is useful because it acknowledges the situated nature of daily practices and allows for the existence of community ties that are not limited to geographical continuity. Community can be defined in terms of the physical location and in terms of the bonds of disciplinary affiliation. At the same time, the importance of place to the day-to-day activities of students is acknowledged.

Writers such as Lee & Newby (1983) and Willmott (1986) recognized that communities defined by place may overlap with those defined by interest, and both authors distinguished a third conceptualization of community – communion – which is seen as conceptually distinct from the other two. This type of community refers to a spirit or sense of community and is most often based on shared experiences, values, and sense of belonging. The absence of a sense of community refers to a "loss of communion, a loss of meaningful identity with other people and the shared experiences which often accompany this identification" (Lee & Newby, 1983, p. 58). One may be a member of a place or interest community and lack a sense of belonging or identification

54

with it. The perception of loss is often considered as evidence of disintegration, and fuels claims that life can not be lived as it should.

The tendency among researchers has been to integrate various meanings of community into one definition based on the assumption that collective existence within a particular locale promotes positive social interactions and a sense of community. As Day & Murdoch (1993) warn, however, attributing "causal significance" to the notion of community as place can lead to "spatial determinism" (p. 84). The danger, according to Duncan (1989), lies in assuming a "spatially specific system of causality" which can generate "autonomous, locally derived, causal effect" (p. 110).

Although not necessarily causally determinant, there may be overlap between the three conceptions of community noted above; an interest group may be located within a specific geographic region and there may be strong ties between group members resulting in a strong sense of community. Calhoun (1984) argues that the "experiential dimension is not independent of the structural; the sense of belonging to a community is directly founded on the social relationships through which one does belong to a community" (p. 89). But, membership in place or interest communities does not automatically imply the existence of a sense of community.

Whether defined in terms of place, interest, or feeling, community is essentially a normative concept. Implicit within each definition is a evaluation of what the community ought to *be*, how social relationships should be arranged. Although a university campus can been conceived as a place community and constitutes the "action space" of students, and, although a major focus of this study is the experiences of a

55

group of students defined by their disciplinary affiliation (an interest community), it is important to acknowledge the normative overtones of community beyond these minimal membership requirements.

Lamentations of the loss of community introduced in Chapter 1 and aspects of community discussed in Chapter 2 reflect these normative overtones. There is an assumption that there exists an "ideal" community in terms of size, membership and involvement as well as function of the university. Growth and development can be seen as damaging to the community if, as Tierney (1993) suggests, the definition used is one that adheres to "elite" rather than "mass" characteristics of the university. Sanford's (1982) observation that, prior to the development of mass higher education systems, raising issues of community "would have been like talking to fish about water" (p. xiv) reflects the invisibility of issues of access to and participation within the community.

In the section that follows, various definitions of community as used in this study and informed by the above discussion are presented.

Academic Community

For the purposes of this study, academic community refers to a campus based collective of students, faculty, staff and administrative personnel who inhabit the various physical spaces that constitute campus buildings and grounds. The academic community is further designated an "imagined" (Anderson, 1983) community. Even though there is little or no possibility for all members to meet or know all others or to

participate equally in the community, there still exists an "image of communion" (Anderson, 1983, p.15) based on a shared interest in participating in university life. For students, membership in the academic community is a consequence of application, acceptance and enrollment. All students who participated in this study were considered members of the academic community.

Disciplinary Community

King and Brownell (1966) identify a discipline as an interest community chracterised by a concern with the pursuit of knowledge, with the "ultimate task ... [of] the gaining of meaning" (p. 68). Specifically each discipline may be considered a unique community, the members of which "share a domain of intellectual inquiry or discourse" (p. 68). Evidence of distinctive disciplinary communities based on ways of knowing is supported by the empirical work of Becher (1989). He writes that "there are identifiable patterns to be found within the relationship between knowledge forms and their associated knowledge communities" (p. 150). Becher's evidence was drawn from "practicing academics" and focused on research rather than specifically on teaching and learning.

Distinctions that had an impact on the lives of undergraduate students were reported by Kolb (1981). Kolb explored disciplinary differences and undergraduate student learning styles. He argued that:

57

for students, education in an academic field is a continuing
process of selection and socialization to the pivotal norms
of the field governing criteria for truth and how it is to be
achieved, communicated, and used, and secondarily, to
peripheral norms governing personal styles, attitudes, and
social relationships (p. 233).

Kolb identified a congruence between students' learning styles and academic interests and the "learning demands" of particular disciplines and presented data in support of the hypothesis that over time "selection and socialization pressures combine to produce an increasingly impermeable and homogenous disciplinary culture and correspondingly specialized student orientations to learning" (p. 234). The combination of these factors contributed to a greater degree of "fit" between individual students and their particular discipline. Conversely, a lack of fit resulted in increased alienation and greater risk of academic failure.

Separate academic disciplines can be defined as communities of interest characterized by different values, cultures, student learning styles, research methods, and teaching methods. For the purposes of this study, disciplinary community refers to the interest community, where the interest is the field of Psychology and minimum membership requirement was the declaration of a major in Psychology.

58

Campus Communities

Tinto (1993) noted that the university is comprised of a variety of academically focused (intellectual) and social communities. Within the confines of the campus there are many different communities and different students will belong to several communities simultaneously depending on their needs and their ability to either find or create them. Social communities may be formed around specific interests including ethnicity, residence, sport and club activities. What Tinto called academic communities were "concerned almost entirely with the formal education of students and ... center about the classrooms and laboratories ... and involve various faculty and staff whose primary responsibility is the education of students" (p. 106). Tinto further differentiated campus communities into "mainstream" and other; there were some which reflect the prevailing ethos and culture of the institutions, and others on the periphery "whose particular values, beliefs, and patterns of behavior may differ substantially from those of the center" (p. 60). For the purposes of this study it was recognized that multiple campus communities exist and that any one student may be involved in a number of them.

Sense of Community

As noted above, a sense of community is conceptually distinct from other ways of defining community. Sense of community refers to an affective dimension of the concept. Sarason (1974) defined a sense of community as "[t]he perception of similarity

to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable structure" (p. 157). Similarly, Lounsbury & Deneui (1996) defined sense of community as incorporating feelings of belonging, commitment, fulfillment of needs, and attachment. This definition is comparable to that adopted by the Carnegie Foundation (1990) for their study of campus life.

For the purposes of this study, sense of community refers to feelings of belonging and attachment based on perceptions of similarity, interdependence, acceptance, or reciprocal influence.

Playing with Community

The purpose of the above section was to articulate various meanings of community as employed in this study. By no means is it assumed that community has at last been definitively articulated, only that boundaries for its use suitable to the context of this study have been sketched. Community, in all instances of its definition, is essentially about human relations, about the nature of human interaction bounded by particular spatial, temporal and emotional affiliations and ties. But these definitions offer little insight into the nature of those relationships. They do not provide insight into the "position" of individual students within those communities. That is, the subject is absent from the discussion.

In this section of the chapter, two opposing conceptions of community – individualistic and constitutive – each of which proposes a different relationship between the individual and the collective, are introduced. Each one offers a different lens through which to view students' experience of community and allows for the exploration of different aspects of that community. The notion of "play," or more specifically "playing the binary" (Howard, 1997), is adapted as an approach to exploring what these theories can contribute to an understanding of the experience of community for students in a university setting. Howard (1997) argues that "by constituting different descriptions of community as objects of study, [one] necessarily bring[s] their boundaries into play" (p. 69). It is at the boundaries, or the space between borders, that interactions and contradictions become evident and it becomes possible to identify different objects for examination. That is, each framework of community draws attention to different aspects of students' experiences within a particular community. Positioned within the spaces between boundaries, it is possible to assume a Janus-like perspective (Howard, 1997) that permits inspection of various aspects of students' experiences, thereby providing a more complete picture of community as experienced by undergraduate students. For this reason, in this study both perspectives are used.

61

Etymology

One way to distinguish between constitutive and individualistic conceptions of community is to focus on their etymological roots. In tracing the etymological roots of community, Corlett (1989) identified two core meanings, each of which implies a different relationship between the individual and the collective and a different motivation for individual membership and community involvement. Corlett notes that the English word community originates from the Latin *communis*, and, depending on where the prefix *com*, which stands for *with*, ends, two substantively different renderings of the word are evident. "If the final two syllables of *communis* are *unus*, one might combine them with *com* and say 'with oneness or unity'" (p. 18). Thus one meaning of community is "with unity." Alternatively, if the final two syllables are *munus*, meaning in Latin gifts or service, then the meaning of community is "with gifts." Depending on the prefix, one can distinguish between community "held together" by a desire for unity (comm/*unus*)[7] or community held together by a desire for gifts, reciprocity, or service (com/*munus*). The distinction between constitutive and individualistic conceptualizations of community stem from these etymological differences in the meaning of community.

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[7] The slashes are used to indicate the meaning that emerges depending on how the prefix is identified.

62

Individualistic and Constitutive Communities

The distinction between com/munity and comm/unity has implications for individual agency within the community, implications which Sandel (1998) notes in his typology of individualistic and constitutive communities. Sandel (1998) identifies two types of individualistic communities, instrumental and sentimental. According to the instrumental conception of community, individuals become members for personal gain and are bound to the community for the benefits they receive through their membership. Sandel (1998) writes that "this account conceives community in wholly instrumental terms and evokes the image of a 'private society', where individuals regard social arrangements as a necessary burden and cooperate only for the sake of pursuing their private ends" (p. 148). Reciprocity becomes a "guiding principle" (Howard, 1997, p.72) for such communities and individuals' actions are "characterised by a combination of what one might call short-term altruism and long-term self interest" (Taylor, 1982, p. 28).

The "community of limited liability" (Greer, 1962; Hunter & Suttles, 1972; Hunter & Riger, 1986; Janowitz, 1952) is an exemplary of the instrumental community. According to this theory, an individuals' interaction with, commitment to, and investment in the various communities to which they belong is dependent on their assessment of the 'return on investment' they receive. From this perspective, "there is a calculus of community in which individuals limit the costs of their behavior and their psychological, social, and even economic investments in a [community] in proportion to the community's capacity to provide commensurate rewards" (Hunter & Riger, 1986,

63

p. 63). Because students are members of multiple communities, both on campus and off, there are varying levels of involvement in them. Students seek diverse rewards from various communities and different communities have different capacities to provide them. Thus, the community of limited liability provides a way of understanding the partial involvement of students in the academic and disciplinary communities of the university as well as their motivation to participate in them. The extent to which students feel they belong to the community will vary as each student will have a different calculated 'sum' of their involvement.

A second type of individualistic community is the sentimental community (Sandel, 1998). Compared with the instrumental community in which individuals are motivated by egoism, in a sentimental community individuals are motivated by altruism, by the "quality of motivations and ties of sentiment" (Sandel, 1998, p. 149) that are more complex and individually involving than the egoism of the instrumental community. As with the instrumental community, the sentimental community is individualistic in so far as the explanation of members' motivation to act is dependent on individual emotions, desires, or feelings (Howard, 1997). However, whereas the instrumental community "is wholly external to the aims and interests of the individuals who comprise it, [the sentimental community] is partly internal to the subjects, in that it reaches the feelings and sentiments of those engaged in a cooperative scheme" (Sandel, 1998, p. 149).

The theorized source of motivation for members of individualistic communities implies the ability to distinguish between what Rheingold (1993) calls a "gift

economy," in which "people do things for one another out of a spirit of building something between them" (p. 59) versus a "spreadsheet" economy in which members are motivated by the expectation of future remuneration. However, both conceptualizations of community assume a subject whose identity exists prior to membership in the community, and a subject who is able to exercise her or his will in order to choose how to act within a community and which communities to act within.

The constitutive community, in contrast, assumes a strong sense of unity between members; it implies "commonly situated subjects discovering their identity to some extent" (Corlett, 1989, p. 21) through their participation in the community. Thus, the subjects are not wholly situated, but can discover identities within various communities to which they belong. A member's position within a particular community is both enabling and constraining, depending on his or her location in relation to other members (Howard, 1997).

The constitutive conception of community assumes at least a partially situated subject in which members' identities are defined by the communities of which they are a part (Sandel, 1998). In this sense,

> Community describes not just what they *have* as fellow
> citizens but also what they *are*, not a relationship they
> choose (as in a voluntary association) but an attachment
> they discover, not merely an attribute but a constituent of
> their identity (Sandel, 1998, p. 150). (Emphasis in
> original.)

65

Within a constitutive community, one's identity is established by the 'subjective position' each member inhabits (Sandel, 1998).

The conceptualization of community as com/*munity* implies self-interested individual agents acting as members of a community in order to achieve some personal goal. The conceptualization of community as comm/*unity* implies a constituted subject acting within boundaries established by his or her position within a community. Both the constitutive and individualistic framework draw attention to considerations of power within the community. Hoggett (1997) demonstrates that communities are "saturated" with power and are not "oases of equality where major issues of power magically stop at the boundary" (p. 14). A prerequisite to understanding community participation is understanding power relations between community members (Atkinson & Cope, 1997). As Ledyaev (1997) points out, "power relations run through all spheres of social life" (p. ix) making power of central importance for understanding human interactions and an integral aspect of the experience of community. Examining community from both a constitutive and individualistic perspective enables an understanding of the different internal power relations among members (Howard, 1997).

Like community, power is a complex, multidimensional abstraction, meaning different things to different theorists in different contexts. One of the first systematic discussions of power was presented by Dahl (1957), for whom power was defined as conflict between actors (or groups of actors) such that one could make the other do something he or she did not initially intend to do. Power as force is an overly restrictive conceptualization, but the value of Dahl's conceptualization lies in the distinction he

makes between power and power resources. Resources are not power in and of themselves but can be mobilized in the exercise of power. Resources include such things as wealth, authority, knowledge, which could be used only under what Dahl called specific "issue areas."

As an example, one may compare the power resources of a university professor to those of a parking and security officer over the behavior of students. The professor has power over the content of student learning while the officer can control where students park before heading to class (example adapted from Haugaard, 1997, pp. 11-12). Each has different kinds of resources that could be employed to elicit different responses under different circumstances. For Dahl, the unequal distribution of resources means that some people will have the potential to be more powerful than others. Further, different individuals with the same amount of resources may use them in different ways to meet different interests: "The importance of skill, the diversity of power resources and the necessity for motivation means that the comparative power of actors is inherently dependent upon a whole variety of factors" (Haugaard, 1992, p. 14).

A useful distinction between types of power and the uses of power is the typology presented by French and Raven (1959), which although developed over four decades ago, continues to be an accepted theoretical conceptualization of power within a variety of disciplines, including higher education (Aguinis, Nesler, Quigley, Lee, & Tedeschi, 1996). French and Raven defined power as the ability of one individual (an "agent") to alter another's (a "target's") behaviour, intentions, attitudes, beliefs,

67

emotions or values. These authors distinguish five bases of power: referent power, refers to a target's desire to be associated with an agent; coercive power stems from the target's belief that an agent can punish him or her; with expert power the target believes the agent can provide special knowledge; legitimate power refers to the target's perception that the agent has a right to influence her or him; and reward power stems from the target's belief that the agent can provide tangible or intangible benefits. Influence, according to French and Raven is the actual use of power.

In the case of undergraduate students, power tends to be seen as "a static feature inherent in certain individuals (professors) and not in others (students)" (Romer & Whipple, p. 66, 1991). Combining Romer and Whipple's notion of power with the language of French and Raven, a certain (static) "amount" of power is seen to reside with faculty (agents) and it is utilized by them over students (targets). However, Andres, Andruske and Hawkey (1996) among others (Dey & Hurtado, 1995; Romer & Whipple, 1991; Tierney, 1993) have demonstrated that undergraduate students are not powerless. Rather, students shape their environments at the same time that they are shaped by them and the French and Raven (1956) model is most useful when undergraduate students are conceived as both "targets" and "agents."

68

Key Concepts

In the final section of this chapter, key concepts that inform the experience of community and inform understanding of social interactions within communities in higher education are articulated. These concepts, – membership, identity and belonging – were derived from the literature on community in general and as it has been applied specifically to higher education. They do not constitute necessary and sufficient elements of community. Rather, these concepts constitute key components of any community experience.

Membership

Cohen (1985) suggests that a reasonable interpretation of the use of the word community implies that "members of a group of people (a) have something in common with each other, which (b) distinguishes them in a significant way from members of other putative groups" (p. 12). This is perhaps an obvious statement, but the implications of it are frequently masked by the very word signified: *community* evokes images of consensus and commonality, but ultimately that commonality is expressed in opposition to some other. Cohen writes that the "consciousness of community is ... encapsulated in perceptions of its boundaries, boundaries which are themselves largely constituted by people in interaction" (p. 13). It is through boundary definition that the community's insiders are identified and delineated from non-members. This distinction, according to many, is a central characteristic of any community. For example, Bendix

(1993) traced definitions of community in Western civilization from ancient times and in so doing demonstrated that over time "community has [had] the rudimentary meaning that people belong together by consciously distinguishing themselves from others" (p. 35). Examples from the literature outside of higher education and subsequently from within higher education illustrate this point well.

There are a number of different ways to become a member of a community. Membership may be formally designated or imposed through bureaucratic or legal structures or sanctions. Sonn & Fisher (1996) explored the impact of the legally imposed designation of "coloured": "The Coloured South African community represent[ed] a group that had membership criteria ... imposed and maintained through legal structures of the apartheid regime in South Africa" (p. 419). Externally imposed community membership by the dominant minority government was resisted by some members at the same time that it contributed to positive communal experiences and a sense of community.

Membership may also be granted as a result of existing members' assessment of whether potential members meet appropriate criteria. Day & Murdoch's (1993) study of a Welsh community illustrated that acceptance in that community was conditional on adopting the "correct" attitude, which meant fitting in and not trying to "change things." The consequence of a wrong attitude was felt by one resident of fifteen years who "still felt excluded" (p. 103).

Erikson (1966) demonstrated how a community can define and strengthen boundaries through the identification and persecution of individuals and groups (*e.g.*,

70

the banishment of Anne Hutchinson as a heretic in 1673 or the Salem witch trials, 1692). Becker (1963) also demonstrated the value of outsiders for defining communal boundaries. In his study of deviant behavior, he noted that "social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance" (p. 9). By then defining rule-breakers as outsiders (deviants), non-rule breakers, the insiders, are also defined.

Young (1995) argues that any ideal of community necessarily separates the "pure" from the "impure," authentic from inauthentic because the "essence sought receives its meaning and purity only by its relation to its outside" (p. 236). Accordingly, any attempt to achieve unity inevitably results in the denial of difference. For Young, "difference means the irreducible particularity of entities, which makes it impossible to reduce them to commonness or bring them into unity without remainder" (p. 236). Community "denies difference by positing fusion rather than separation as the social ideal" (p. 239).

Difference between those who belong and those who do not is only one aspect of membership to be considered. There are also differences within. "Membership of a community implies marginalization of those on the periphery inside and exclusion of others outside the community" (Atkinson & Cope, 1997, p. 203). Similar "splitting" of communities into parts was noted by Brent (1997) who demonstrated how "unacceptable parts within" could be denied full membership benefits. Collins' (1986) discussion of the outsider within status of Black women as "honorary members of their white 'families'" (p. 35) for whom they worked as domestic labourers is one example.

71

As shown in Chapter 2, exclusion in terms of access and participation in the context of higher education is familiar to many. Women, for example, were completely excluded from membership in the university community in Canada until the 1900s, and even once admitted were excluded and continue to be excluded from full participation within it (Andres & Guppy, 1991; Stewart, 1990). A number of other groups have been excluded from participating fully in university education (the academic community), and continue to be on the basis of gender (Guppy, 1984; Smith, 1991) ethnicity (Andres & Anisef, 1994; Carty, 1991), socioeconomic status (Guppy, Mikicich, & Pendakur, 1988) and sexual orientation (Eyre, 1993).

Tinto (1993) recognized that student membership in the communities of the university entailed inclusion in some campus communities and exclusion from others, and that intellectual and social communities, variously comprised of students, faculty and staff, had distinct forms of associations between members. In part these associations were shaped by students' temporary status as community members. The undeniable consequence, according to Tinto, was that student communities and student membership in the academic and disciplinary communities were necessarily "weak" compared with more permanent or longer lasting memberships in communities outside of the university.

Closely related to the notion of insider/outsider differentiation are considerations of identity formation and adoption. In this next section an overview of the meaning of identity within the context of community membership is discussed.

72

Identity

Social identities are derived from social interaction and accordingly identity is a second key concept useful in understanding the process of community membership. Distinctions are made between *primary* identities – selfhood, gender, humanness – which are formed early in life and are resistant to change, and *subsequent* identities that are negotiated, fluid, asserted and assigned over the course of a life time (Jenkins, 1996). It is not possible to draw a firm distinction between primary and subsequent identities because as social formations and developmental processes there are always connections between them. However, of most interest in this study is not primary identity formation associated with child development, but subsequent social identities negotiated in instances of social interaction.

Identity involves peoples' definitions or typifications of self and others (Dietz, Prus & Shaffir, 1994). Jenkins (1996) argues that all identities are essentially social and are constituted through an *internal-external dialectic* of identification. By this he means that individuals define and redefine themselves and others over the course of their lives in an ongoing process of social interaction. How one defines oneself is of equal importance to how one is defined by others.

Recognizing that social identities can be validated or rejected by others highlights the importance of Goffman's (1969) work on the "presentation of self" and "impression management." Goffman proposes that individuals send signals about themselves in social situations in order to convey a particular identity or impression of self to the person(s) they are interacting with. Clues based on appearance (including

73

gender, ethnicity, dress, accent and so on) and conduct coupled with past experience provide information that then allow actors to form impressions and make judgements about others' intentions and identity.

Recognizing that actors may wish to convey a specific message about who they are, Goffman argued that individuals attempt to manipulate others into accepting a particular self definition. Goffman argued that engaging in *dramaturgy* was an effort to control others by creating a particular impression that would result in others behaving in specific ways toward the actor:

> Regardless of the particular objective which the individual has in mind and of his [sic] motive for having this objective, it will be in his interests to control the conduct of the others, especially their responsive treatment of him. This control is achieved largely by influencing the definition which the others come to formulate, and he can influence this definition by expressing himself in such a way as to give them the kind of impression that will lead them to act voluntarily in accordance with his own plans. (Goffman, 1959, pp. 3-4).

Goffman's world is, as Alexander (1987) points out, a Machiavellian world, in which manipulation and "false advertising" govern social interactions. "Impression management" or dramaturgy is the interactional presentation of self in which, like a stage actor, a person acts, speaks or dresses differently depending on the role being played and the image one desires to present. Howard & Hollander (1997) draw on the

74

work of Goffman to demonstrate how "individuals modify their appearance and behavior in an attempt to control others' perceptions of them" but also highlight the importance of such performances for establishing identities that "locate a person in social space" (p. 94) and facilitate the formation of meaning. A process of "mutual impression management" results in agreement between actors about the social situation and the roles and identities projected within it.

There is no guarantee that the impression one attempts to make will be the same impression received. As Jenkins (1996) points out, actors have some control over the images they project, but there is no way to ensure that the 'correct' or intended image is the one received. Jenkins calls this the interface between self-image and public image which emphasizes the inherently performative aspect of social identity embedded within social practice.

Drawing on Goffman, Barth (1969) argues that in order for a particular identity to be assumed, "taken on," it must be accepted by others as significant. Identities are therefore constructed at the interface between internal sense of self and external evaluation of another's identity. In other words, identities are negotiated and constructed at the boundaries where the internal and external meet (Cohen, 1985).

Jenkins (1996) extends the distinction between inside and outside notions of identity formation with a distinction between "nominal" and "virtual" identity. The former is the name, the label, and the latter the experience. Jenkins writes "it is possible for individuals to share the same nominal identity, and for that to mean very different things to them in practice, to have different consequences for their lives" (p.

75

24). Consistent with the theme of the internal-external dialectic of identity, Jenkins further insists that these distinctions are analytical only and each is implicated in the other. Identities are combined in the naming (by oneself and others) and in the consequent experience.

Further, Wenger (1998) points out that identities are established not only by defining what one would like to be, but also by identifying what one is not, and does not want to be. He writes, "we not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through the practices we do not engage in" (p. 164). But it is not always the case that identity formation is a consensual process; it may also entail imposition and resistance.

Communities are "sources and sites" of collective identities which are socially constructed. In some instances the criteria for membership are *ascribed*, and individuals are identified as members of a category. Age, sex or parentage are examples. These identities are "given" in that they are considered basic or natural (Jenkins, 1996). In so far as an identity as student is "given" in the context of the university, it too may be considered ascribed. It is entailed in the fact of a pre-existing social circumstance that places an individual within a group of others of the same nominal status.

But, as pointed out, virtual identity may be significantly different because communities are also locales of *acquired* identities in which membership is not "entailed in pre-existent personal [or social] characteristics" (Jenkins, 1996, p. 141). Rather, this type of identity is negotiated in transaction with community gatekeepers who recruit and exclude based on their own preferences and on the needs of the

76

community, creating the conditions for different experiences of the same nominal identity. Whether ascribed or acquired, identities must be acknowledged in some way. Ascriptive identities, where membership is immanent, are affirmed; acquired identities require rationalization and must be justified (Jenkins, 1996).

<u>Belonging</u>

Belonging is the next key concept to be discussed. A sense of belonging was identified as an integral aspect of community (Cohen, 1982) that served to enforce notions of membership and identity. As Martiez-Brawley (1990) points out, belonging is intimately associated with positive experiences within communities which provide a sense of belonging and meaning among members and act as "balancing forces" against anomie and dislocation. Cohen (1982) writes that "belonging is revealed in the forms of social organization and association in the community so that when a person is identified as belonging ... he [sic] becomes, at the same time, a recognisable member of the community" (p. 21).

Bollen & Hoyle (1990) identify two elements that comprise belonging. The first, a cognitive element, refers to the accumulated information a community member holds about experiences with individual members and the community as a whole. The second element, the affective aspect of belonging, refers to "feelings that reflect the individuals' appraisal of their experiences" (p. 483) within the community. These authors draw attention to the relationship between objective indicators of membership in

77

a community and subjective assessments of feelings of belonging. It is possible, they note, for visible measures of association to be inconsistent with an individual's appraisal of her or his relationship with a group. Bollen & Hoyle argue that a sense of belonging is a concept relevant to large groups or communities in which "face-to-face interaction or even knowledge of everyone in the group of interest is not possible" (p. 485).

Turner (1987) noted that a sense of belonging is fundamental to individuals' identification with a community. He introduced the notion of "self-categorization" which referred to an individuals' sense of identity with a particular group. He also noted that self-categorization tends to enforce insider/outsider assessments made by individuals which result in discriminatory behavior against perceived outsiders.

In her study of the process of community building among ethnic minority university students, Brown (1994) identified a link between a sense of belonging and the concepts of marginality and mattering. At one end of a continuum is *marginality*, a sense that one does not belong, does not fit in, or is not needed. Feelings of marginality may be a consequence of transition where the incongruity between a previous role and a new role, lack of knowledge about a setting or environment, and weak understanding of expectations within them contribute to a perception of self as outsider (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989).

At the other end of the continuum is *mattering*, which Rosenberg & McCullough (1981) defined as "a motive: the feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate, or experience us as an ego-extension

which exercises a powerful influence on our actions" (p. 165). The authors identified four aspects of mattering. *Attention* refers to the feeling that one "commanded" the notice of others; *importance* is the feeling that one is the object of another's concern; *dependence* includes not only the dependence of an actor on others, but also the dependence of others on that actor; and *ego-extension* is the feeling that others care about accomplishments and failures (pp. 164-165).

In her discussion of key issues in community building among undergraduate students, Schlossberg (1989) introduced *appreciation*, a sense that one's efforts are appreciated by others, as a fifth dimension of mattering. Schlossberg argued that a focus on mattering would facilitate understanding of why some students within a university are more involved and more able to establish connections than others. This proposition is supported by Kuh (1993) who noted that when students feel they belong and are valued as individuals, they are more likely to seek out and take advantage of existing campus resources, thereby becoming more involved in campus life. Kuh writes that "when ethics of membership and care characterize a [university], students perceive that they are not anonymous or marginal" (p. 32).

Involvement, defined as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1984, p. 297), is key to developing a sense of belonging. According to Schlossberg (1989):

> Involvement creates connections between students, faculty
> and staff that allow individuals to believe in their own
> personal worth. This involvement also creates an

79

awareness of our mutual relatedness and the fact that the
condition of community is not only desirable but essential.
... Therefore, the concern over involving students, ... is
the very process that creates community (pp. 5-6).

Hurtado & Carter (1997) argue that a subjective sense of belonging is an important refinement of the notion of integration into university communities as posited by Tinto (1975, 1993). Tinto argued that integration into the social and intellectual communities of the university has a positive impact on students' retention decisions. The variability of operational definitions of social and intellectual integration, however, contributes to confusion about integration as a theoretical concept.

For example, Stoecker, Pascarella & Wolfle (1988) defined academic integration as academic achievement (e.g., grade point average and membership in an honours society) and social integration constituted interaction with faculty (e.g., knew a professor or administrator personally) and leadership experiences (e.g., president of one or more student organizations; served on a university or departmental committee). Anderson (1988) notes that for most researchers academic integration is measured by a limited number of variables, usually "academic performance, involvement in intellectual groups and activities, and interactions with faculty over academic concerns" (p. 161). Likewise social integration includes participation in nonacademic activities such as clubs and sports organizations and "nonacademic interactions with faculty and peers" (p. 161). Definitions tend to reflect researchers' views about what integration means, rather than students' views (Hurtado & Carter, 1997), and as a consequence de-

emphasize a distinction Spady (1970) made between students' actual interactions and involvement within the communities of the university, and their subjective sense of belonging to result from them.

Summary

The research problem addressed in this study is to understand how undergraduate students as members of a disciplinary community experience community within a contemporary research-intensive university. Having extended definitions of community beyond spatial boundaries to include both interests and a sense of belonging, the introduction of individualistic and constitutive frameworks furthered the task of conceptualizing community with the introduction of acting subject into the discussion. Individualistic and constitutive conceptions of community are complementary explanatory frameworks that direct critical attention to different aspects of students' experiences. The individualistic framework suggests a focus on individual needs and alternative reward structures and the concomitant capacity of the community to meet those needs. It implies an examination of the "fit" between needs and capacities. Alternatively, the constitutive community framework directs attention to the development of individuals' identity as a member of a specific community and the ability of members to act within community boundaries. It draws attention to the relations of power between community members and between members and non-members. Finally, the concepts membership, identity and belonging were introduced to

inform individual relations within the complex social landscape of the university. Taken together, these definitions, theories and key concepts provide a rich framework with which to examine students' experience of community.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed:

1. What do students identify as an ideal university community? How does students' conception of the ideal university community compare to their actual experiences?

2. To what extent do students experience community as members of a constitutive community? How does an identity as a member of the academic and disciplinary community evolve?

3. To what extent do students experience community as members of an individualistic community? What indicators are evident that a principle of remuneration shapes student involvement?

In the next chapter, the means by which these questions were answered is presented.

82

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY DESIGN

Introduction

The case study is a suitable research method with which to confront the "subtleties and intricacies of [a] complex social situation" (Denscombe, 1998, p. 39) and as such was an appropriate research method for this study. In the first section of this chapter the case study method is discussed and the "different but mutually supporting" (Denscombe, 1998, p. 84) sources of data used to explore the complex and little researched phenomenon under investigation are described. Specifically in this chapter are details of the samples, and the management, preparation and analysis of data. Limitations and delimitations precede an overview of details of the university, department, and students involved in the study.

The Case Study

Case study is often associated with research on communities, institutions and organizations; it is an established method in higher education and is considered an effective means of studying student life (Dietz, Prus & Shaffir, 1994). The case study is an in-depth multi-faceted investigation (Orum, Feagin & Sjoberg, 1991) that allows the researcher to explore common and unique aspects of a case. The case study is an appropriate method for incorporating and exploring contextual factors when multiple variables can not be identified ahead of time but emerge during the study (Yin, 1993).

83

Yin defines a case study as a process, as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (1993, p. 13). Stake (1995) on the other hand defines it in terms of the object of study, a particular person, programme, event and so on. Researchers agree, however, that a case study involves the investigation of a "bounded system" (Merriam, 1998) or the exploration of "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 25). Stoecker (1991) calls the case study a "*frame* determining the boundaries of information-gathering" (p. 98). In this study, the 'case' under investigation consists of the experience of 'community' among third year psychology undergraduates attending a research-intensive university.

Cases can be studied for their intrinsic, instrumental or collective merits (Stake 1994). An awareness of the purpose of the case study is important at the outset because it will shape the research process and study design, but there is no precise division between types. Stake writes that the instrumental case study is undertaken "to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else" (p. 237). Like the instrumental case study an interpretive case study is intended to "develop conceptual categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions" (Merriam, 1998, p. 38). It contains rich, thick description that aims, as Spindler (1982) notes, to make the familiar strange and the exotic familiar. This project incorporates elements of both instrumental and interpretive case study in its aim to understand and describe students' experiences of community.

84

Data Sources

A strength of case study design is that it provides the opportunity to use multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1993). In this study, data sources included documentary evidence, in-depth semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The triangulation of data sources enhanced the overall trustworthiness of the case study. Each source of information was used to illuminate different aspects of the case and thereby facilitate the development of themes through the convergence of information (Cresswell, 1998; Stake, 1995).

Documents

Documents revealing facts and figures about the research site, such as enrolments, number of faculty, breadth of program offerings, and financial data were collected; they included such things as the university fact book, annual reports, and performance indicators. Also collected were documents relating to the mission, culture and goals of the university and the department, and documents on organizational structure and research activities. The university calendar, computer web sites, information pamphlets, handbooks or sheets distributed to students through the student services offices or the department, and the various student, university and "public" newspapers were also used.

Documents were used primarily as sources of contextual information about RIU, the Psychology department and the student body. The documentary information is

referenced using the medium and/or document name within the text of the thesis, but in order to safeguard confidentiality, they are not included in the references list. Where deemed necessary or appropriate, details of the nature of the documents and how they were used in this study are placed in footnotes.

Interviews

As stated in Chapter 1, students eligible to participate in this study were those who had chosen Psychology as their major, had been at the research site for at least two years, were traditional age (between ages 18-24[8]), and enrolled full-time. Based on data from the student information system provided by the institutional research office, it is estimated that 122[9] (or 60%) of all third year Psychology students at the research site satisfied the eligibility criteria. Of this number, 23 volunteers participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews. The gender distribution of interviewees was identical to the actual eligible third year cohort, with women comprising 74% and men 26% of interviewees. All volunteers who were eligible to participate in this study were interviewed. Interviews, which lasted between forty-five minutes and two and a half hours, were conducted in a meeting room on campus. They were audio recorded and tapes were transcribed as soon as possible after the interviews.

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[8] One male student who had just turned 25 years old was included in the study.
[9] These data were made available by the Planning and Institutional Research office at RIU after the survey had been administered and so represent *post hoc* calculations based 1999 enrolment figures for third year psychology students.

Volunteers were recruited through notices posted at strategic locations throughout the university. Recruitment began once approval from the University ethics committee, the institution and the Department had been received. A request to undertake the study was forwarded to the Department's internal Research Policy Committee, and approval was granted provided it was indicated on all recruitment posters that the study would not be used for "subject pool credits." The subject pool is a list of undergraduate Psychology students who volunteer to participate in research studies and receive remuneration in the form of course credits. This correspondence with the Department administration proved to be an initial introduction to the language and culture of the disciplinary community that would later emerge in the student voices.

Posters were placed outside of classrooms, on the Department bulletin board, libraries, and other locations across campus. Most participants were recruited in this way, but each student interviewed was given a copy of the poster and invited to pass it on to a friend. This technique was of limited utility because, as became evident over the course of the data collection, students' friendship patterns did not typically centre around their disciplinary community. Four three-hundred-level classes were visited to either explain the purpose of the study to students and invite students' participation, or to drop off fliers. All student participants were paid a $10 honourarium and pseudonyms were used to safeguard confidentiality.

The decision to offer an honourarium was taken after visiting the Psychology building and viewing on the bulletin board other invitations to participate in studies. It was apparent that students were typically offered either course credits or money,

sometimes $50 or $75, in exchange for their participation. Successful recruiting was judged more likely if a modest honourarium - given that credits could not be offered - was also given for participating in this study.

Interviewing began in the spring term (January 1998) and continued until the summer session (April 1998). Initially the interview period was to be only during the spring term, but was extended to include the summer. Students who were just beginning third year volunteered during the summer, but because they could not have had the opportunities and experiences of students who had completed the first term of third year, they were not included in the study.

The purpose of semi-structured interviews used in this study was to understand, not to evaluate, test hypotheses, or even simply to get answers (Seidman, 1991). Interviewing allowed for the exploration of students' experiences and perceptions and contributed to an understanding of their thoughts, feelings, meanings, and intentions that could not be directly observed (Patton, 1990). Interviewing was a flexible, iterative and continuous process. Over the course of the research the interviews became more focused as a better understanding of students' experiences was gained. As the interviews progressed, it became apparent that the role of research was an integral aspect of students community experiences and this topic was integrated into the interviews.

88

Interviews[10] consisted of three parts: 1) questions about students' conceptions of the ideal university community; 2) questions that related specifically to interpersonal, referential, and structural aspects of the notion of community; and 3) questions about demographics, educational background and educational and career aspirations.

Data Management

All audio tapes were identified by date, and the participants' pseudonyms. Tapes containing each interviewee's signed consent form, copies of email correspondence, contact addresses, telephone number and email address were stored separately in a locked cabinet. A sectioned binder was used to organize notes taken after each interview, a copy of the transcription, and a summary of demographic information. An electronic copy of interviews, correspondence, and notes was kept on a secure computer in a building separate from the working copies of computer files and paper printouts. A journal of the research progress and processes, analysis and a journal of researcher experiences were kept and electronic backup copies updated as necessary.

Analysis of Interview Data

Data analysis began with the first student interview and was a continuous process throughout the research project. The aim of analysis was to identify patterns

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[10] Interviews were pilot tested in December 1997 and early January 1998 with individual students who were not included as part of the final sample of the study.

and regularities in the data. Each tape was transcribed as soon as possible after each interview and transcriptions were checked for accuracy. In addition to electronic copies, two paper copies of all transcriptions were printed, one for the researcher, and one for each interviewee. While interviews were ongoing, key words, themes and categories were identified and were used to inform subsequent interviews. In this way emerging themes were examined in greater detail and initial interpretations of experiences explored. More in-depth and sustained analysis was possible after interviews were complete.

Throughout, coding was informed with concepts from the literature on community and from higher education literature on undergraduate student experiences, as described in Chapter 3. A code book which defined the code, noted links with other codes and identified possible connections across code families was developed and used to guide further coding. Pattern coding was used to reduce data to analytic units and focus the analysis.

Analysis was facilitated by the use of a computer software package. A software package called Atlas/ti (v. 4.1) was selected based on its capabilities (for data management, exploration, coding, category and theory building) as well as its user friendly interface. Atlast/ti was identified as a qualitative data analysis program that would facilitate rather than inhibit a sense of being "in" the data, and would allow for the manipulation of data in much the same manner as with traditional cut-and-paste methods.

90

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness in this study will be considered under the headings of credibility, transferability and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

The credibility of this study, that is, the extent to which the experiences of students were accurately recorded and to which the researcher's interpretations of their experiences was credible to the participants, was enhanced in a number of ways: mechanically recorded interviews, the use of detailed notes following each interview, and the use of direct quotations or "low inference descriptors" (Goetz & La Compte (1984) throughout the thesis.

In addition, each participant was given a copy of her or his transcription before a second informal follow-up discussion. Two students chose to alter their transcriptions in both cases by adding further reflections on a specific topic and annotating throughout. No other students made changes. All interviewees were invited to participate in focus group meetings to discuss the initial categories and interpretations of experiences. However, due to their busy schedules and general reluctance to participate further in the study, only three participants, all of whom were pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree, met together with the researcher. This conversation was also recorded and the tape transcribed. No further face-to-face meetings were conducted. Although reluctant to participate in a focus group, all but one of the participants were contacted several times after the initial interview, usually by e-mail, but also by mail and telephone. Further contact with one student was not possible

because he had left the country. As well as providing participants with the opportunity to see their transcriptions, these follow-up contacts allowed for a discussion of preliminary interpretation of experiences.

Attention to the dependability, the consistency of data collection and results, took the form of ensuring that the interview technique was the same for all interviewees, that interviews were conducted in the same location for all participants, and that the researcher was consistent in manner and dress. Detailed description of recruitment procedures, interview process and data analysis also enhance the dependability of the study.

Providing readers of this thesis with detailed, contextual information enhanced the transferability of the research findings. Such detail enables readers to assess the extent to which the context of this study is similar to other settings in which they may be interested. Contextual information consisted of detailed description of RIU, the Psychology department and the students who participated in this study, an overview of the social and historical factors influencing higher education in Canada, and a discussion of undergraduate education within the context of the research-intensive university (Chapter 2).

Reflexivity, "a social scientific variety of self-consciousness" (Delmont, 1992, p.8), was an important aspect of the trustworthiness in this study. In acknowledging that the sense made of and conclusions drawn about students' experiences are inevitably shaped by the researchers' past experiences, values, and biases, it was important to examine assumptions that were brought to the research project. My experiences as a

research assistant to the institutional research office at the research site shaped my ideas about undergraduate education at RIU, and my tenure as a doctoral student in higher education, also at the research site, influenced the way I thought about the purpose of universities and university education. Also influential was my participation as a research assistant on a project that explored first year students' experiences at RIU. All of these experiences revealed often contradictory assumptions about student life at RIU and a useful exercise at the start of the research project entailed detailing these assumptions and exploring the extent to which they influenced my examination of third year students' experiences.

For example, I was aware that based on my work with first year students, one predominant view of RIU was as a large impersonal bureaucracy in which first year students felt isolated and lost. At the same time, a perspective gleaned from working closely with senior administration of the university was one of caring and consideration for all students and a genuine interest in the quality of student life and in enhancing students' educational experiences. Journal writing highlighted the tension between these perspectives and helped make explicit my own perceptions of RIU. I wanted to ensure that I did not assume experiences of third year students were an extension of those of first year students, or that the initiatives and objectives of administrators were automatically reflected in students' experiences.

93

Questionnaires

Survey data comprised the third source of information for this case study. The purpose of the survey was to explore key aspects of interviewees' experiences and to asses whether they were similar to those of survey respondents'. A questionnaire was developed based on the findings of the interviews; items, sometimes using students' own words, were based on categories that emerged from the analysis of interviews. The questionnaire consisted of three sections, current education experiences, experiences at RIU, and demographic information. There were 58 questions in total, including four open ended questions at the end of the questionnaire in which students could provide general commentary about their experiences. The first open ended question asked students what aspects of their experiences at RIU helped to promote a sense of community (45 respondents wrote comments); the second question what students thought could (should!) be done to enhance students' sense of community on campus and in their department (46 made comments); the third asked about barriers that inhibit the development of a sense of community at RIU and in their department (49 made comments); and the final question invited survey respondents to make any additional comments they wished (13 survey respondents wrote comments).

All interviewees were invited to pilot test the questionnaire, and eight students chose to do so. Questionnaires were mailed to them and postage paid envelopes provided for their return. Students provided written comments on the returned questionnaire and responded to specific questions about length of time needed to complete it, ambiguous or problematic questions, and overall content areas of the

94

questionnaire. Feedback was both critical and positive[11] and contributed to a sense of confidence about the content validity of the questionnaire.

Administration consisted of a three phase mailing: 1) the questionnaire and appropriate cover letters; 2) a post card reminder; and 3) a second questionnaire and appropriate cover letters. The first questionnaire was mailed on January 25th, 1999, the post card on February 5th, 1999, and the second questionnaire on February 16th, 1999. Postage paid return envelopes were inserted in the first and third mailings.

Representativeness and Response Rate

As with the interviewees, the target population for this survey was third year, full-time, traditional age Psychology majors who had been on campus at least two years. At the time of survey administration it was not possible to eliminate ineligible students from the sample so questionnaires were sent to all 203 third year Psychology major students.[12] A total of 130 (64%) questionnaires were returned. Fifty-five respondents were eliminated because they did not meet the above criteria. Five questionnaires were returned as undeliverable. The adjusted response rate[13] was 62%, with 75 questionnaires returned from 122 eligible respondents.

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[11] As one student noted, "Overall, the questionnaire was very clear. A lot of good questions are asked that I think capture what we talked about" (Katherine). However, students were also quite willing to point out when they found that particular questions "didn't made sense" (Jo-Anne) or "could be clarified" (Fiona).

[12] Based on data from the student information system subsequently made available, 122 (60%) of all third years Psychology students met the eligibility requirements for this study.

[13] Adjusted response rate is the number of completed questionnaires divided by the number successfully delivered (Gray & Guppy, 1994), after the denominator was adjusted for eligibility.

95

Gray & Guppy (1994) suggest that a "good" response rate for a postal survey is

"*at least* 60%" and Rea & Parker (1992) identify 50% to 60% as satisfactory. The

overall response rate of this survey was comparable to other surveys of this type and

length. Walker (1994, 1996, 1999), for example, reports response rates of between

44% and 67% for surveys of cohorts of university students at a number[14] of universities

across Canada. RIU participated in each of those surveys and reported a response rate

of 64%, 67%, 50% respectively.

The representativeness of respondents was determined by comparing them to all

third year Psychology major students on campus. The institutional research office

provided data from the student information system for this analysis. As shown in Table

1, women respondents and respondents pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree were

slightly over-represented in the survey.

Table 1. Survey Respondent Representativeness

	Survey Respondents (n=130) %	Student Information System (n=203) %
Full-time/	94	92
Part-time	6	8
Traditional age/	92	92
Non-traditional age	8	8
Female/	85	78
Male	15	22
BA/	87	83
BSc	11	17
Non-transfer/	82	80
Transfer	18	20

[14] Eight universities participated in the 1994 survey, 10 in the 1998 and 23 in the 1999 survey.

96

While it is not uncommon for women to be more likely to respond to survey questionnaires compared with men, it is important to bear in mind the overall number of respondents and the relatively small number of potential male respondents. There were 28 (23%) eligible males in the sample and 13 (11%) male survey respondents. In addition, 2 (2%) BSc respondents were male out of a possible 9 (7%). Thus, any analysis by gender must be interpreted with care, and analysis by gender and program is extremely problematic.

Analysis of Questionnaire Data

Data were entered manually into an SPSS data base and analyses were conducted using SPSS 8.0. Survey analysis consisted primarily of descriptive statistics. Open ended comments were coded using Atlas.ti and integrated into the written text. Each written comment for each question was typed into a text file with a respondent identification number and read through. In the same manner as with the interviews, themes and categories were identified and codes developed. The written comments were integrated with interviewees' comments, and identified with the label "survey respondent" rather than with a pseudonym.

97

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations

The intention in this study is to explore the experiences of "typical" students. By "typical" it is not meant to imply that the higher education student body is homogenous and undifferentiated. Examination of the literature on student access shows that over the last four decades there has been substantial change in the composition of undergraduate students in terms of gender (Fortin, 1987; Andres & Guppy, 1991) ethnicity (Grayson, 1995, Office of Analytical Studies, 1996) and patterns of participation (Statistics Canada, 1996). However, the majority of enrolments in most Canadian universities, including the research site, are traditional age (between 18 and 24), non-residential, campus based students (that is, not distance education students) who attend university full-time (Andres & Carpenter, 1997), and it is the experiences of this type of student that are of interest in this study. Accordingly, the study was confined to the experiences of traditional age, full-time students enrolled in third year who had been on campus at least two years.

To enable greater in-depth examination of experiences, the study was limited to one discipline, but included students who were pursuing either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor or Science in Psychology.

People are complex beings interacting and acting within a variety of domains (school, home, family, work and so on) and assuming a variety of roles (student, child, parent, employee). Although conceptually separable, the activities in one domain

98

inevitably influence activities in another. For example, the hours spent working off campus limit the hours a student might have spent on campus. This study focused primarily on university life and the social practices that were enacted during the hours students spent on campus; the influences of other domain activities were only peripherally explored.

<div align="center">

Limitations

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The administration of a questionnaire based on the results of the interviews determined the extent to which the experiences of a limited number of students were similar to other students in the same discipline and year level. The over all survey response rate was satisfactory (64%), but when ineligible students were filtered from the data base, the rate dropped to 62%.

The numbers of male participants and male participants studying for a Bachelor of Science degree were small. As a result, this study could provide only limited insight into the experiences of men in Psychology at RIU. Even though there was proportionate representation of men and women in the interviews (the percentage of eligible men interviewed was comparable to the actual percentage of eligible men in the Psychology department), had they volunteered, interviewing more men would have been valuable.

The purpose of the study was not to determine causal connections but to explore relationships between complex social practices. The exploratory nature of both parts of the study are emphasized.

99

The purpose of the survey was not to generalize beyond the sample of participants. The primary purpose was to assess the extent to which other Psychology students had experiences similar to those of interviewees, but no attempt was made to generalize beyond the sample of third year Psychology students attending a research-intensive university. Attention to the transferability of the overall case study does not imply statistical generalizability of the survey.

Earlier in this chapter it was noted that being part of a community is a longitudinal process. It was not possible to follow a group of students for three years to explore these processes because of limitations of time and money, and so while this study was a "snapshot" look at students' experiences at a particular time, it was also to some extent a "retrospective" examination of students' experiences.

The Research Site

In the final section of this chapter, richly descriptive (Merriam, 1998) profiles convey both unique and common features of the research site. The voices of students are incorporated with documentary data such as information from the University fact book and calendar, faculty and departmental publications (brochures, handbooks and web publications) and policy documents. Historically in Canada, research funds were concentrated among relatively few universities, establishing an enduring trend and defining a pattern for future university development. In 1965/66 for example, half of all

research funds were concentrated among the top[15] five universities, 82% among the top ten and 97% among the top sixteen (Cameron, 1991). In 1981, the OECD reported that "out of nearly 50 universities only 10 receive[d] between them over 50 per cent of research council funds" (p. 48). This pattern was to persist into the 1990s so that today five top research universities successfully compete for 30% of all available grant funds (Sudmant, 1999). Although all universities in Canada have the same mandate – teaching, research and service – some have emerged as intensively research focused, while other universities have maintained a focus on undergraduate education and limited enrolments. *Maclean's*[16] magazine has identified three types of universities in Canada: primarily undergraduate universities "largely focused on undergraduate education, with relatively few graduate programs;" comprehensive universities with a "significant amount of research activity and a wide range of programs ... at the graduate and undergraduate level"; and medical/doctoral universities "with a broad range of PhD programs and research, as well as medical schools" (Macleans, 1997, p. 31). As a large research-intensive university with a medical school, RIU fits within this last category. However, these categories are not mutually exclusive. RIU has an extensive undergraduate component to its education mandate, and is more accurately thought of as a "blend" of comprehensive and medical/doctoral types. The key distinction between RIU and comprehensive universities is, as illustrated in Chapter 2, its size.

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[15] Defined in terms of research dollars.

[16] It is ironic that no scholar in the higher education field in Canada has done work similar to that of the Carnegie typology of universities and colleges in the United States. This omission on the part of students of higher education has paved the way for a weekly magazine to fill the gap.

101

RIU

RIU is situated in expansive park lands outside a large urban centre. Approaching the campus through the main entranceway means an extended trek along a green grass and cherry tree lined boulevard, an introduction to the many planted gardens as well as wooded areas that comprise much of the campus. For students, the "open and green"[17] space is a much appreciated aspect of the RIU campus. Although the campus encompasses over 400 hectares of land, the main university buildings – classrooms, libraries, service buildings and so on – are located within approximately three square kilometres within one section of campus. The scattered arrangement of buildings contribute to students' sense that "it's just huge"[18] and traveling from one end of the campus to the other during a ten minute break between classes can be a challenge.[19]

RIU is the largest university in the province in terms of physical space and in terms of enrolments. In 1997/98, the university Fact Book reported a headcount of over 26,000 undergraduate students and approximately 5,000 graduate students. Most undergraduate students (73%) attended full-time. A little over half of all full-time undergraduate students at RIU were women (54%), and 90% of all undergraduates were between the ages of 18 and 26 years old (Fact Book). Student housing is available but fewer than 20% of undergraduates reside in either university managed

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[17] Descriptions in this section are from student interviews. Interviewees are introduced in the last section of this chapter. This comment was made by Carol.
[18] Comment by Katherine Bachelor of Science interviewee.
[19] Comment by Adam Bachelor of Arts interviewee.

102

accommodation or privately owned fraternities (Demographic survey data, 1997[20]). This means that most undergraduate students (83%) commute to RIU; most (60%) do so five days per week and take an average of thirty minutes to get to campus (Demographic survey data, 1997).

RIU is comprised of twelve faculties, seven of which admit first degree[21] undergraduate students. Over half of RIU's undergraduate enrolments are in the two largest faculties of Arts (34%) and Science (21%) and the remainder are dispersed over the other five (Fact Book). There are approximately 3,600 full-time staff at RIU, the majority of whom work in secretarial and clerical support jobs, followed by management and professional jobs; 1,700 faculty are employed full-time at RIU, 400 in the Faculty of Arts and 300 in the Faculty of Science. At the time of this study there were 5,617 graduate students, 3,464 at the masters level and 2,153 at the doctoral level.

In the early 1980s RIU set as "its prime objective [the] attainment of international stature as a research intensive educational institution" (policy document). RIU recognized that graduate work and research are closely linked and identified the expansion of graduate programs and increased graduate student enrolments as imperative for the development of RIU as a "major research institution" (Planning Document). Focused efforts to recruit "the best" graduate students resulted in 117% enrolment increase in since 1970 (RIU fact book). With the aim of creating a strong

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[20] The Demographic Survey data were made available to me by the institutional research office at RIU, enabling me to make the calculations presented in this study.
[21] First degree undergraduate students are those who do not have a previous degree. The definition excludes undergraduates enrolled in professions such as law or medicine.

103

research community, RIU "increasingly ... recruited [faculty] for research and scholarly potential" (Policy Document, p. 14). Although the connections between research and teaching were recognized – "research and scholarship will provide the attitude and background that are essential to university programs of instruction" (p. 13) – articulation of the role of undergraduate students as participatory members of the research community would have to await a renewed vision document that was introduced the year before this study began. This new vision document identified the integration of research into undergraduate *learning* in addition to undergraduate teaching and a subsequent planning and policy document recommended that undergraduate students "have the opportunities to take research intensive, integrative capstone courses, ... that key research skills play an important role in the ways in which we deliver and evaluate course/program offerings" (p. 7). Having achieved status as a research-intensive university by focusing primarily on faculty development and graduate student education, RIU was beginning to expand its research focus to more fully incorporate the active participation of undergraduate students.

Psychology at RIU

The Psychology building art RIU is situated at the south west edge of the core three kilometre area of campus. It is a relatively new building into which the Department moved after construction was completed in 1984. The four story building houses faculty offices and research laboratories. One interviewee described it as "well laid out ...[with] animal research labs in the attic instead of the basement ... so

104

protestors won't storm them,"[22] "human labs" in the basement, and faculty offices on the second and third floors. A main feature of the building is the "large core atrium" which is intended to "promote interaction among faculty members and students" (Psychology Brochure). Stairs on the outside of the building guide visitors to the atrium where they are greeted by curtained glass windows and doors and a reception area behind a sliding glass window. The Undergraduate Psychology Student Society office is located near the main entrance. A row of three bulletin boards seems to be the main feature of the area, along with a small round table and a solitary chair. A photocopier, pay telephones, and a drink machine are located on the ground floor. A six station micro computer lab is available for use by Psychology graduate students (Psychology Brochure). As interviewees pointed out, there are no lecture rooms in the Psychology building, so undergraduates visit it primarily to participate in research opportunities as volunteers or as lab assistants, or to meet with faculty.

Psychology at RIU is one of the programs that has traditionally provided undergraduate students with a variety of opportunities to participate in research projects, within and outside of the classroom, and visits to the Psychology building are often prompted by these research opportunities. The Psychology Department at the research site, composed of both Arts and Science major programmes places a strong emphasis on the integration of teaching and research and the involvement of undergraduate students in the research process. Interviewees studying for a Bachelor of Science degree referred to themselves as Biopsychology students. Biopsychology is one

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[22] Ole, Bachelor of Arts interviewee.

105

of the many topic areas students (in both Arts and Science) may focus on. Some of the others are behavioral disorders, social psychology, environmental psychology, computer and psychology, animal learning and cognition, hormones and behavior, and development of the brain. Students made a distinction between "Arts Psychology" which for them incorporated all those students studying for a BA and "Biopsychology" which included all those studying for a BSc. The designation distinguishing the two groups is adopted throughout the thesis, and the significance for students as a way "defining differences" is discussed in Chapter 6.

In the 1997/98 academic year, 828 undergraduate students were pursuing bachelor degrees in Psychology, 664 of whom were enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts program, and 164 in the Bachelor of Science program. Of this group, approximately 230[23] were registered as third year students, 89% (205) of whom were earning a Bachelor of Arts degree. Psychology at RIU attracts more undergraduate women (79%) than men (21%), a pattern that is consistent across program areas, with women comprising 80% of Bachelor of Arts Psychology students and 75% of Bachelor of Science students. Most students (90%) are under the age of 26 (Demographic Survey). A full 90% of all Psychology students attend full time.

The undergraduate brochure for the department describes the Psychology program at RIU as both a science and a profession. The scientific side focuses on research intended to "measure, explain, and modify the behavior of humans and other species" (Psychology Brochure), and on the practical side Psychology is described as a

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[23] This number includes all third year students, including those not eligible for this study.

106

profession in which the principles of psychology are used to "solve practical problems ... in the areas of mental health, behavioral medicine, stress management, psychological testing, and guidance counselling" (Psychology Brochure).

The Psychology brochure for undergraduate students emphasizes both teaching and research excellence. It quotes international praise of the department and draws attention to the existence of an annual teaching award given to the top teacher in the department each year. According to the brochure, many of the department's 40 faculty members "are internationally known for their research ... and regularly obtain more than $2 million each year in research project funding" (Psychology Brochure).

Study Participants

As noted in the introductory chapter, 23 students were interviewed for this case study, 6 of whom were men. The profile in Figure 3 introduces each interviewee and provides information about her or his age, program of study, volunteer and work activities, commuting patterns and educational aspirations. A summary and additional grade information will be found in Table 2. Table 3 shows the profile of the survey respondents.

In Chapter 2 it was demonstrated that students attending universities in Canada are very diverse. Even though the focus of this study was on "typical" students attending a single university, it is evident from the case study profiles that even this definition is problematic. Students lead complicated lives and it is not unusual for them to be involved in part-time work or volunteer activities on and off campus. A minority

107

of case study participants reside on campus making a daily commute part of the university experience for many. Although all participants had been at RIU for at least two years, several had transferred from a college after first year. Participation patterns were variable and included stopping out, or delayed entry, or reduced course load to accommodate other activities.

Interviewee Profiles
Adam was 21 years old at the time of the study, and was pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree. He had previously been enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program but switched after second year. He was interested in eventually taking a law degree. Adam lived by himself off campus and drove to campus almost every day of the week. He was considering volunteering in the psychology labs but at the time of the study was not a volunteer.
Amy (age 20, pursuing a Bachelor of Arts) had previously been enrolled in sciences with the intention of becoming a doctor, but switched degree programs after second year. Her new goal was to earn a Ph.D. in Psychology and eventually a university faculty position. Amy volunteered in two psychology labs. Amy usually made the thirty minute drive to campus from her parents' home five days per week.
Andrea (21, BA) had enrolled in RIU immediately after high school, but decided to take a year off to travel after first year. While still in high school Andrea had decided she wanted to study Psychology. She was interested in helping people and was considering practicing Psychology after completing an advanced degree. She worked 12 to 15 hours per week off campus but lived on campus.
Bruce (20 , BSc) had come to RIU from an outlying community, approximately one hour's drive away. He lived in residence for the first two years at RIU before moving off campus the summer before third year. Bruce worked at the office of the Dean of Science eight hours per week. He was involved with a number of fitness related activities on campus, such as working out at the gym. He had not decided about his future plans.
Carol (20 BSc) grew up in a suburbs approximately 50 kilometers from campus and had lived in residence since first year. Carol worked 8 hours per week at the campus library. She initially was interested in chiropractic medicine or physiotherapy but was unsure about her future plans.
Cheryl (21, BA) completed the first nine years of her high school education in Hong Kong, and grades 10-12 in a local high school. Cheryl lived at home with parents and usually drove to campus 3 days per week. She worked 5 to 6 hours per week as a cashier at an off-campus souvenir store. Cheryl transferred to RIU after 1 year at a local college. She planned to practice Psychology in a counseling capacity after graduation or pursue an advanced degree.

108

Diane (20 BSc), originally from out of province, lived in residence for the first two years at RIU and then moved off campus after second year. She took a half hour commute to campus by bus three or four days per week. Diane did not work on campus but volunteered at the psychology lab approximately eight hours per week and wanted to be a medical doctor.

Doreen (20 BSc) lived at home with her parents. She usually drove to campus five days per week and volunteered and worked for pay with the AMS and as a research assistant in a psychology lab. Doreen planned to complete her BSc and then pursue a degree in medicine.

Emma (19, BA) lived in residence and worked part-time at the campus day care. Emma was uncertain about her future plans, but was considering a second degree in education or a business related field.

Fiona (20, BA) lived at home with parents and commuted to campus by bus 3 days per week. She was employed two days per week off campus and intended to pursue either a Master's degree in Psychology or build on her current experience as an assistant in a law firm and pursue a law degree.

Janet (23, BA) began her studies at RIU immediately after high school, at age 18, but dropped out after second year. At the time of the study she had been on campus two years. She was considering a career as a faculty member, but not necessarily in Psychology. Janet lived off campus and commuted five days per week by bus. She was employed in a work study program on campus 5 hours per week.

Jo-Anne (20 BA) lived with her parents in the family home and commuted to campus by carpool three days per week. She worked off campus between 16 to 20 hours per week, "doing the bookkeeping" for a film company. Jo-Anne was not sure what she planned to do after graduation, but did not rule out further education.

Katherine (20, BSc) was initially interested in completing a degree in medicine but had decided to enroll in a program to study naturopathic medicine. Katherine car pooled to campus 5 days per week while living at home with her parents. Katherine tutored high school students, primarily in science and math for about 4 to 5 hours per week. She was deeply involved in a campus based humanitarian organization, and usually spent some time each day in the campus based offices in addition to volunteering in a Psychology lab.

Laurette (24 BA) had decided not to enroll in university immediately after high school, so had begun her program at age 23. She was employed off campus 7 hours per week. Laurette was interested in either pursuing a degree in education or completing a Master's degree once she finished her BA.

Linda (20, BSc) worked at three part-time jobs, including tutoring, giving piano lessons and waitressing. She lived at home with her parents and commuted to campus in a car pool five days per week. She volunteered in a psychology lab several hours each week. Linda was interested in counseling in an educational setting.

Melanie (20, BA) lived at home with her parents and worked 12 hours per week in a photo lab off campus. She drove in a car pool to campus 3 or 4 days per week. After completing her BA, she planned to pursue a teaching credential.

Neely (BA) had just turned 25 at the time of the study. He had enrolled in RIU after high school but had dropped out after first year. He volunteered off campus in a field related to psychology, and worked between 8 to 16 hours per week. Neely had no immediate plans for further education but did not rule out the possibility.

Ole (22, BA) began his program immediately after high school, but had taken two years off after first year. Ole came to campus 4 days per week by car. He was employed as a private tutor several hours per week. Ole eventually planned to enroll in graduate studies.

Paula (21, BA) came to campus 2 or 3 days per week by car. She was not working at the time of the study. She had begun her post-secondary education at a local college and had been on campus at RIU for two years. She had always been interested in science and if her marks were high enough wanted to study chiropractic medicine.

Patricia (22, BA) had begun studying landscape architecture before deciding to major in Psychology. Patricia attended RIU directly out of high school, but deliberately took a reduced course load so that she would have time to pursue outside interests. She lived off campus with parents and commuted to university 2 or 3 days per week by bus. After completing her BA, Patricia wanted to take courses in web page design.

Peter (21, BA) had graduated from an overseas high school and lived in the RIU residences. He volunteered at the local hospital several hours each week but was not engaged in paid employment. Peter had decided in high school that he wanted a career as a practicing Psychologist.

Rey (20, BSc) enrolled in RIU immediately after high school and was interested in pursuing a masters degree. Rey lived in residence and did not work while studying. He was involved in a number of sport related activities on campus.

Tamara (20, BSc) hoped to eventually earn a degree in medicine but also considered completing a Master's degree. She commuted to campus by bus five days per week and volunteered in a Psychology lab 3 to 4 hours per week.

Figure 3. Interviewee profiles

Table 2 shows interviewee grades from high school as well as average RIU grades. The high school marks are presented on a grade point scale where 4.0 is the highest possible mark and represents an "A." A grade average of 3.0 represents a "B," 2.5 a "C+" and 2.0 a "C." RIU grades are percentages with 80 or more representing an "A," 69 is the cut-off point for a "B," 64 the cut-off for a "C+" and 60 for a "C." Although 6 interviewees did not have specific further education plans, all but one student intended to pursue some kind of additional education after completing a bachelor degree. Six of this group, 4 of whom were enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program, planned to

110

pursue a career in the health professions. Analysis of survey data shows that 54% of

BSc students were interested in health professions, compared to 4% of BA students.

Table 2. Interviewee summary profiles

	Degree	Commute	Employed (hrs/wk)	Age	RIU GPA (%)	High school grades
Adam	BA	y	no	21	85	4.0
Amy	BA	y	no	20	84	3.8
Andrea	BA	n	12	21	73	3.7
Bruce	BSc	y	8	20	74	3.8
Carol	BSc	n	8	20	78	4.0
Cheryl	BA	y	6	21	66	3.0
Diane	BSc	y	no	20	80	3.7
Doreen	BSc	y	no	20	80	3.7
Emma	BA	n	8	19	62	2.5
Fiona	BA	y	16	20	78	3.7
Janet	BA	n	5	23	74	3.8
Jo-Anne	BA	y	18	20	79	2.5
Katherine	BSc	y	5	20	80	4.0
Laurette	BA	y	7	24	77	2.5
Linda	BSc	y	10	20	77	3.8
Melanie	BA	y	12	20	75	3.7
Neely	BA	n	12	25	75	3.0
Ole	BA	y	5	22	92	4.0
Paula	BA	y	no	21	75	3.0
Patricia	BA	y	no	22	72	3.3
Peter	BA	n	no	21	69	3.4
Rey	BSc	n	no	20	76	4.0
Tamara	BSc	y	no	20	79	4.0

The case study participants, interviewees and survey participants, were an ethnically

diverse group representing a number of backgrounds: Asian, British Isles, Brazilian,

Croatian, Dutch, Filipino, German, Hungarian, Jamaican, Russian, Swedish, North

European, American. One survey respondent indicated "don't know" in response to a

question about her ethnic background. The focus of this study was not on experiences

of visible minority groups and this delimitation may account for a general invisibility of

111

issues of race and ethnicity in the findings. However, students did discuss the importance of "diversity" and there was mention of "cliques" and both are incorporated in subsequent chapters.

Table 3. Survey Respondents

	Bachelor of Arts		Bachelor of Science	
	#	*%*	*#*	*%*
Degree program	62	83	13	17
Commute	48	80	5	39
Residence				
Rent	7	12	4	31
Parents	39	65	4	31
Campus	10	17	5	39
Own home	4	7	0	0
Employed	25	42	4	31
Average hours/wk	12	-	12	-
Average age	20		20	
Aspirations				
Another Bachelor degree	2	4	0	0
Master's degree	17	32	2	15
Doctoral degree	2	4	2	15
Teacher training	6	11	1	8
Law	6	11	0	0
Medicine	2	4	7	54
College diploma/certificate	2	3	0	0
Technical training	3	6	0	0
Other	4	7	0	0
Don't know	10	19	1	8
Female	51	82	11	85
Male	11	18	2	15

As might be expected among traditional age undergraduate students, the majority (80%) lived either with parents (59%) or in on-campus housing (21%) and almost all were single (93%). Friendship patterns were an important area of discussion

112

for interviewed students, but the issue of boyfriends/girlfriends was not a focus of conversation in the interviews and accordingly was not addressed in the survey. For those who commuted, it was typical to come to campus 3 (27%), 4 (18%) or 5 (42%) days each week, and the average time spent traveling to and from RIU was 70 minutes.

An interesting difference between interviewees and survey respondents was work patterns and volunteer activities. Almost 61% of students who were interviewed were employed on a part-time basis, working from 5 to 16 hours each week. By comparison, just over 38% of survey respondents were working, and the range was from 4 to 36 hours. One quarter of survey respondents volunteered at clubs, sports organizations, and the day care centre on campus; 43% of interviewees volunteered on campus in the same types of organizations and groups. The average amount of time case study participants spent in volunteer activities was 7 hours.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the method that was used to answer the research questions. The sources, management, and analysis of data were reviewed and the trustworthiness of the study discussed. This chapter was also the location for a description of the research site, department and student participants. The description integrated both survey and interview data, and when the analysis combined data from both sources, it was referred to as "case study" results. This technique is carried through the rest of the thesis, allowing for the differentiation between sources of data. Interviewees will be referred to as "interviewees," or more frequently by their

113

pseudonym. When written comments of survey respondents are included they will be referenced as "survey respondent." Having established the method for exploring the experiences of community for undergraduate students, the next chapters present the results of the case study. In addition, when relevant differences between Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts students' perceptions and experiences emerge, they are identified and discussed as such in the text. When no distinctions are made, responses and perceptions from students in both programs are presented.

114

CHAPTER FIVE: IDEAL AND ACTUAL UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Introduction

The first question addressed in this study focused on the meaning of community for undergraduate students attending a research-intensive university. As discussed in Chapter 2, in the centuries of institutional development prior to WWII, an idealized conception of the university as a community prevailed. From this perspective, one conception of the university

> was that of a selective small, autonomous, self-contained
> community devoted to the preservation and advancement
> of knowledge, exercising something like pastoral care
> over its students, focusing on the great humanistic issues
> in life, and providing places for the more prestigious
> professions in its midst. This was the "idealized
> university" (Ross, 1976, p. 145-146).

Before the shift to mass higher education and an enhanced emphasis on research within the university, a "common discourse" (Smith & Webster, 1997) about the ideal university community was evident. But the notion of the traditional university community was challenged with the transition to a system of mass higher education and the growth of the research university. RIU reflects these changes and it is within the context of a "vastly different" university that this exploration of the meaning of community for undergraduate students takes place. As discussed in Chapter 4, RIU is a

large, research-intensive university. It reports revenues totaling just under $800 million, an endowment valued at approximately $580 million, and in 1997 received research awards of $137 million (Annual Report, 1998). RIU faculty is responsible for 60% of the total research activities in the province, it employs about 5,500 faculty and staff and enrolls over 33,000 students (Fact Book, 1997). It offers the greatest variety of undergraduate and graduate programs of study in the province, including medicine and dentistry (RIU Calendar, 1998). RIU has course credit agreements with 171 universities in 44 countries and enrolls over 2,000 international graduate and undergraduate students (Annual Report, 1998). By all accounts, RIU is a vastly different university from an "intimate and homogenous" pre-war institution, and as Ross states, as a consequence of forces of change following WWII, "the very means of achieving the ends of the idealized university were disappearing ... the gap between the ideal and the real was widening" (1976, p. 147).

In this study that explores the meaning and experience of community from the point of view of third year undergraduate students within the context of a contemporary research-intensive university, is there a gap between the ideal and the real? From the students' point of view, what is the ideal university community? How do students' conceptions of the ideal university community compare to their actual experiences? Asking and answering these questions is the purpose of this chapter. This chapter reviews notions of an ideal compared to actual aspects of community from the students' point of view. In so doing, an initial overview of what students perceive to be important

116

characteristics of community was provided, establishing a backdrop for the detailed exploration of their lived experiences reported in the subsequent two chapters.

The initial expectation was that interviewees would discuss the ideal community in the terms of a sense of belonging, intellectual engagement or homogeneity, as suggested by the ideal articulations by Newman (1852) and Humboldt (1809/10) and reflected in discussions in the literature about structures of the "traditional" university community. Although some aspects of students' ideal reflected traditional conceptions of university community, students were concerned with day-to-day necessities of their university lives, and accordingly also focused on pragmatic issues. Disciplinary influence, though not absent, remained largely hidden during these discussions. That is, interviewees focused on the academic community, rather than the disciplinary community. The influence of discipline on the experience of community was revealed most clearly when examined through the lens of the constitutive (Chapter 6) and individualistic frameworks (Chapter 7).

In the interviews, students were asked what they thought the characteristics of an ideal university community would be in order to understand what students thought about "community" in relation to their university experiences and to construct an overview of their perceptions. Several interviewees indicated difficulty articulating an ideal because they had limited experience with other universities. Interviewees did not "really know what goes on in other universities" (Melanie) or "haven't been to another university to compare" (Andrea) so it was difficult to know what an ideal might be like. According to Doreen,

I think [RIU] is it because like I said I grew up thinking I was in [RIU] so what I get is what it should have been like, ideal wise. And I think that's how I framed it up to be. I haven't been to another university so I can't really compare.

Some interviewees relied on reports from friends attending other Canadian universities or on their perceptions of student life in the United States. Accordingly, this discussion of the characteristics of an ideal community focused to a large extent on students' current experiences and aspects of those experiences that were rewarding or, alternatively, frustrating or problematic.

Interviewees' conceptions of important aspects of community were wide ranging, but reflected to a large extent, the categories of meaning in the literature. The review of the literature in Chapter 3 revealed three broad conceptualizations of community: first was the notion of community as physical space or "geographic continuity" (Gusfield, 1979) with an emphasis on *a* community, a physical concentration of people in one place. A community in this ecological sense was the totality of buildings, roads, gardens, and so on that constitute the physical structures within and around which individuals congregate (Minar & Greer, 1969). A second dimension of community was the interest community, in which membership was defined by the sharing of characteristics, identities, or interests. Finally was the social-psychological and cultural dimensions of social interaction which refers to a sense of community that flowed from those interactions.

118

The idea of place and space was discussed by students in relation to both campus grounds and buildings and as evidenced by case study data was an important aspect of the ideal community. Students also discussed community in terms of "sharing" ideas, interests and goals. The nature of social interaction and feelings of belonging were frequently identified by students, and closely related to considerations of feeling a part of the university were discussions of "university spirit" and involvement. The data presented in this chapter report interviewees' reflections on characteristics of community and survey respondents' evaluation of the items generated from those reflections.

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of each item derived from interviews on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 was "very important" and 4 was "not very important." They were then asked to indicate whether each item was a part of their actual experiences at RIU; 4 was a "significant part" of their experience, and 1 was "not at all a part" of their experience. For this analysis items were reverse coded and percentages collapsed into two categories. Items referred to as "important" or a "significant part" within the text reflect the percentages of respondents who selected a 3 or 4 for that item and "not important" or "not at all a part" reflect percentages of respondents who selected 1 or 2. The means were coded so that a mean of 4 would represent a very important or significant part of community and 1 would represent not very important or not at all a part of community. A paired sample t-test was used to measure the significance of the differences between the two scales. Of interest was the numerical difference in each survey respondents' ideal rating and his or her actual

rating on each item. The null hypothesis (H_0) was that the ideal rating was equal to the actual rating ($\mu_I = \mu_A$); rejection of the null hypothesis resulted when the actual rating was statistically significantly different from the ideal rating. Rejection of the null hypothesis in each of the paired samples represented a statistically significant difference between the measurement of the ideal and the actual ratings, such that the actual (μ_A) was not equal to the ideal (μ_I), equivalently, $\mu_I \neq \mu_A$. A two-tailed t-test was used because it is a useful way to determine whether there were actual aspects of the university community that were a significant part of the undergraduate student experience, but were not considered important to students. That is, the two-tailed test would identify aspects of the community with high actual ratings and low ideal ratings. Bonferroni adjustment was used to establish the comparisonwise critical probability rate for statistical significance (see Appendix B for details). With the exception of three items, each of which is identified in the text and tables, the differences between students' ideal and actual experiences of community were statistically significant at an .05 level.

Community as Place

It was not uncommon for students to identify a gap between ideal and actual aspects of community, both in terms of the conversations with interviewees and the numerical assessment of items provided by survey respondents. One of the characteristics of an ideal university community identified by interviewees was the availability of meeting places on campus for students. Students talked about the

120

importance of places for them to gather to informally socialize between classes. In general, interviewees were of the view that there was a lack of space for students to gather at RIU. According to survey data, 93% of respondents thought that meeting places on campus were an important aspect of an ideal university community, and 63% thought that this feature of the ideal was a significant part of their RIU experience. (See Table 4) As Carol noted, "as far as a social gathering place, there really isn't one." According to this survey respondent,

> RIU does a pathetic job at building a good student atmosphere. I know of many people who didn't know where to go and ate lunch in their cars alone. I've seen many people sitting in the hallways because there's no where else to go.

As one survey respondent said, students needed "a place ... to gather and talk" and another said that there were "no places (clean places) to go and discuss things academically." Other survey respondents suggested it would not be difficult to "create better meeting places," preferably lounge spaces with such things as kettles and microwave ovens, more comfortable furniture, and less "harsh fluorescent lighting." This comment summarized hand written sentiments of survey respondents:

> Have more large comfortable, open lounge areas where students can eat, study, talk... The way it is now, you can eat only in some places, quiet study in others.

121

Some gathering places on campus were deemed inadequate either because they were "jam packed" (Survey Respondent) during lunch times and between classes, or they were "too few" (Survey Respondent).

Table 4. Community and Place (survey respondents)

	In the ideal university community the following are:				What part of actual experiences at RIU were the following:				
	Not Very Important			Very Important	Not at all part			Significant Part	Statistical Significance
	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4	
Meeting places on campus	3	4	34	59	6	31	52	11	*
Comfortable campus buildings	1	6	20	73	15	31	47	7	*
Attractive campus buildings	4	10	40	46	15	28	43	14	*
Attractive campus grounds	4	4	38	54	2	12	43	43	-

* Indicates statistical significance at .05 level using Bronferonni adjusted critical probability.

According to interviewees, the Psychology building was equipped with a lounge, but it was restricted to graduate students (Adam, Linda). Unlike other buildings that had cafeterias or lounges, there was no "social space" in the Psychology building for undergraduate students. The Psychology building was primarily for research and faculty offices and did not provide space for most students to just "hang out" (Katherine). In addition, unlike other disciplines that had designated learning spaces that students identified as theirs, undergraduate Psychology students were required to "borrow" other disciplines' space. Katherine put it this way,

122

One thing that's amazing with the [Psychology] building
... like there's no lecture rooms. You know like,
psychology students have to go [to another building] to
have their lectures. Whereas, like if you're a physiology
student, if you're a chemistry student, each building has
their own lecture hall.

As shown in Table 4, the item "comfortable campus buildings" was identified
by 93% of survey respondents as a significant aspect of the ideal university community,
and 54% were of the view that this was part of their actual RIU experiences.
Comfortable campus buildings that were well lit (Diane, Laurette), had pleasant views
(Cheryl) and comfortable chairs (Laurette) were "basic" aspects that would be included
in an ideal university community. A survey respondent suggested using "all the money
provided by Psychology students to improve the classrooms" and another suggested that
RIU build more lounge space scattered through out the campus.

Attractive buildings were also identified as an important aspect of the ideal
university community. Over 86% of survey respondents identified attractive buildings
as a significant part of the ideal university, and 57% as an actual part of their RIU
experiences. Unlike RIU where "some of the buildings really suck" (Diane), at other
institutions there were old buildings, but "old in that super antique way, but not like
1960s, and some of these buildings [at RIU], they don't seem to have the same
mystique" (Diane). Another student identified the importance of the "right kind" of
buildings for a university. Commenting on buildings at RIU that were old and run down
and looked like a "high school" Janet suggested that "ugly" campus buildings "just

123

didn't seem really ... up and alive or something, like ... it didn't feel like there was a community." Speaking of a science building that had been constructed in the mid-1920s when the student population at RIU was predominantly male and women were "discouraged" from enrolling in science programs (Stewart, 1990), one female survey respondent suggested that "nicer buildings – bathrooms without urinals! Might give more of a sense of pride." Another survey respondent thought that RIU was

screwed up from the start, ... by disregarding unifying layout plans by conscientious architects. The buildings are all over the place, and the campus lacks a central focus. Some buildings are nice on their own, but all together it is a hodge-podge and a mess. The only nice thing about walking around is the space and the trees, but these are being cut down too much.

As hinted in this quotation, the opposite view was also expressed. Buildings at RIU were considered superior to those at other universities (Ole) that had "just one big building" (Linda). Separate buildings added to the "university feel" (Paula), rather than a university that was "all inside and you didn't go outside the building, ... like an airport" (Paula). Based on their experiences at RIU, students identified individual buildings separated by green space (Jo-Anne) as part of an ideal university campus and the physical appearance of the campus grounds was mentioned frequently. An ideal was "a really nice place to be, you know, physically" (Neely). Gardens (Cheryl), landscaping (Patricia), green spaces (Emma), the trees and beautiful plants (Peter) all

124

contribute to a university-like atmosphere (Doreen). According to Patricia, "it's just beautiful with the trees, ... its like relaxing, a therapeutic experience just to walk through campus here." As shown in Table 4, the item "attractive campus grounds" was an important part of an ideal community for 92% of survey respondents, and part of the actual experience of 86%. However these differences were not statistically significant, indicating that for survey respondents attractive physical landscape was an important aspect of an ideal university community and a significant part of their actual experiences at RIU.

Symbolic Identification

A university spirit was identified by interviewees as a key characteristic of a university community (Laurette); as shown in Table 5, 90% of survey respondents identified a strong university spirit as an important part of the ideal university community, and 31% identified it as a significant part of their experiences at RIU. Speaking about RIU, Ole pointed out that "people are just so bored looking around here. ... There's no real community or anything, it's not a very spirited university." An ideal was a place where there was a "real university atmosphere" (Andrea). "Spirit" was seen to be a characteristic of smaller universities that were "close knit, [with] a lot of, let's say like, school spirit" (Andrea) and one student suggested activities in first year could contribute to it.

125

> I think there should definitely be a "Fresh Week" like all
> the universities out East. [RIU] is nothing in comparison.
> I envy my friends out East because they have so much
> more school spirit (Queen's, Western for example, and
> even U of T!). (Survey Respondent)

Andrea was of the view that ideally the university community would have the same kind of atmosphere that universities "back East" had. "There would be a lot more support ... and a lot more spirited" involvement and RIU, it was asserted, should "work on creating greater school spirit" (Survey Respondent). The sense of a lack of a university spirit was also discussed in the context of US universities (Laurette). Speaking of sports teams, Rey thought:

> I think it would be neat to experience the American side
> of the frenzy that they get into there. ... I mean you watch
> college football and stuff and it's kind of cool to see that
> many people get behind something.

One survey respondent echoed these comments when he said that there was "no RIU spirit – [RIU football team] games usually have very little spectators."

The literature on community suggests that taking part in university ceremonies and the existence of recognized university symbols and logos were important aspects of the university community (Carnegie, 1990; Gilley & Hawkes, 1989). Only one interviewee mentioned the symbolic importance of university graduation ceremonies (Laurette). Graduation was "pretty big" and something "students worked very hard

126

for" but at RIU, according to Laurette, some of the graduation ceremonies at RIU were held in the gymnasium – "a big stinky sports facility where everybody is like on bleachers" – rather than a more formal and pleasant setting, such as a large theatre or outside. Discussion of the ceremonial aspects of university life was, apart from this discussion of graduation, notably absent. Taking part in university ceremonies, was, however, identified as important by 58% of survey respondents and a part of RIU experiences by 11%. (See Table 5.)

Table 5. Community and Symbols (survey respondents)

	In the ideal university community the following are:				What part of actual experiences at RIU were the following:				
	Not Very Important			Very Important	Not at all part			Significant Part	Statistically Significant
	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4	
Strong university spirit	3	7	39	51	35	34	27	4	*
Taking part in university ceremonies	16	26	44	14	52	37	10	1	*
Recognized university symbols/logos	12	26	37	25	14	36	31	19	-
Active student government	1	22	45	32	30	46	24	0	*

* Indicates statistical significance at .05 level using Bronferonni adjusted critical probability.

Two interviewees commented on the notion of symbols and logos with a slight cynicism and negativity which was a reaction against the "corporatization" (Leo) of the university, and the "administration" was accused of putting "a lot of money into commercial things at RIU" (Diane) and neglecting other things. According to Diane,

> RIU will put all the money into all kinds of stuff. They'll
> put money into attracting money to the university from
> corporate sponsors and not necessarily worry that much
> about, like, for example, crappy residences.

When asked of survey respondents, 62% identified logos and symbols as an important part of the ideal university community, and 50% as an significant part of their RIU experiences. This difference was not statistically significant. Sweat shirts and t-shirts brandishing university colours and logos were worn by students who felt proud of their university (Emma), but it was perceived to be less common at RIU than at other universities. According to Laurette,

> One university where everybody is so gung-ho is Western
> in Ontario. Everybody that has been to Western is "Oh
> yea, great university." ... and all the Western people
> wear Western sweat shirts. And Western purple, like it's
> easily recognizable.

When asked to explain further Laurette commented that she "didn't have a heart [felt] connection" to RIU in the same way that Western students seemed to have about their university. Even though RIU was

> trying to foster an identity ... I don't think it's worked. I
> don't think we feel like we're [all] part of the same
> university. (Laurette)

128

When asked why she thought this was so, Laurette suggested it was part of the culture at RIU that made such displays a "nerdy" thing to do.

Finally, under this category, students suggested that a more "active student government" (Janet) would contribute to a greater sense of community for students. Again, making comparisons with other universities, Doreen was of the view that

> they're more of a community in the sense that they're into
> this student politics. ... Like, [other students] were telling
> me how like only 10% of the population actually vote [at
> RIU]. ... But then another person was telling me, he came
> from Queen's and at least 60% of students vote for things.

Among survey respondents, 77% thought an active student government was a important part of the ideal university community, while 24% thought it was part of their actual RIU experiences.

Social Interactions

The most frequently identified characteristics of the ideal community were in reference to the nature and quality of relationships among community members. Interviewees focused on common goals, interactions between peers, between students and faculty and between students and "the administration." Notions of belonging and involvement were introduced as were ideas of reciprocity, social networks, and diversity.

129

The importance of having goals in common was identified by a number of interviewees. As shown in Table 6, it was considered an important aspect of the ideal university community by 76% of survey respondents. Doreen suggested that in the ideal community, members "group together for one reason. ... Everybody is striving toward something, like they're learning" (Doreen). Other students also identified learning as a common goal among members of the university community. "In the community, ... you're all focused on ... this one goal, that you want to get your education" (Fiona). Although individual community members will be pursuing individual goals, "on a large scale people are there for the same reason – to get an education" (Katherine). For other students, goals in common did not have to be restricted to the overall educational mandate associated with attending university. Rather, as long as there was "basically someone who shared your goals or interests" (Andrea), in a particular area (*e.g.*, sports, or clubs or student government), there would be the possibility for a community (Bruce). Table 6 shows that having goals in common was considered a significant part of the actual RIU experience by 39% of survey respondents.

130

Table 6. Reciprocity, goals and opportunities (survey respondents)

	In the ideal university community the following are:				What part of actual experiences at RIU were the following:				
	Not Very Important		Very Important		Not at all part		Significant Part		Statistical Significance
	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4	
Goals in common with others	8	16	49	27	15	46	31	8	*
Equal opportunities	0	3	31	66	7	58	28	7	*
Sense of belonging	0	1	22	77	12	44	34	10	*
Being involved in campus activities	3	10	44	43	24	38	30	8	*
Knowing in general what's going on	0	1	43	56	7	47	39	7	*
Strong social networks	1	3	26	70	10	41	36	13	*
Reciprocity	4	5	40	51	23	53	17	7	*
Cared about as an individual	0	3	31	66	16	41	32	11	*
Diversity of people on campus	4	5	35	56	3	18	32	47	-

* Indicates statistical significance at .05 level using Bronferonni adjusted critical probability.

Andrea took the notion of common goals a step further and suggested the ideal community was

a place where people share your goals and support each
other in terms of learning. ... and share the resources to
achieve those goals.

Everyone would have the same opportunities to participate in the community (Laurette) and there would be involvement in campus activities (Melanie). Equality of opportunities was identified by 97% of survey respondents as an important characteristic of the ideal university community and by 35% of respondents as part of

131

their actual RIU experiences. (Table 6.) Although this aspect of the ideal community was not discussed frequently among interviewees when talking about their ideal university community, it became evident when daily experiences were explored in more detail, that equal opportunities for participation in the disciplinary community was a key aspect of belonging. This is taken up in Chapters 6 and 7.

Being cared about as an individual was considered an important part of the ideal university community by 97% of survey respondents, and a part of the actual experiences of 43%. (Table 6.) Doreen talked about

> knowing there are people you care about, about their welfare, wellbeing. I guess the feeling of knowing in that way makes it feel like it's a community. There's people that care about you.

Katherine agreed that "you care about how people do" and other people also care about you, such as one professor who asked about her future plans: "some profs ask you personal questions and you're like 'You care!'"

As Melanie noted, the ideal university community "has a lot to do with involvement, [so that] you feel you're part of a community." Table 6 shows that 87% of survey respondents indicated that being involved in campus activities was an important aspect of the ideal university community and 38% indicated that it was not a significant part of the RIU experience. When the interview discussions focused more on students' daily lives (rather than asking students to talk specifically about community), interviewees noted that it was difficult to "get involved" on campus because of the

132

other competing interests and demands in their lives (*e.g.*, volunteer activities, work). This aspect of students' involvement with RIU is highlighted in the discussion of the individualistic community in Chapter 7. Laurette thought that, although there were many social and sport related opportunities for students on campus, it was up to the individual to learn about the activities and participate in them.

> You really have to find the things yourself. You've got to
> really actively want to seek something out to find it in a
> lot of ways. So in some ways it's hard to get involved.
> (Laurette).

Involvement was an important aspect of the ideal university community and interviewees linked it with "knowing in general what's going on" (Melanie). Almost all survey respondents (99%) identified this as a important aspect of the ideal university community and fewer than half (46%) indicated it was a part of their actual RIU experiences. (See Table 6.)

"Sticking together" (Laurette) was another aspect of the ideal university community. For Patricia, "members interact and help each other." Reciprocity was identified by Carol who suggested "people are interdependent on each other. ... You have to give in to the community, and also take back as well." Peter linked the notion of reciprocity to personal satisfaction.

133

If I think I can contribute something to the community and
I can be a part of it, I can get ... membership. ... [The
community] expects a member to have their contribution
and ... I have a kind of fulfillment in return.

Interacting in a reciprocal manner at RIU was difficult in part because "everyone was just there for their own thing" (Survey Respondent). This perspective of social interactions was also particularly evident when examined through the lens of the individualistic community, a discussion taken up in Chapter 7 in relation to friendship patterns that developed around the need for an exchange of "goods" such as lecture or lab notes that resulted in strategic exchanges between "associates." Reciprocity was identified as an important part of the ideal university community by 91% of survey respondents and as part of the actual RIU community by 24% of respondents. (See Table 6.)

RIU was described as being a difficult university for students to get to know each other. When asked about the ideal university community, Janet said:

I wish it was more. I wish I felt more involved, I wish I
had more interaction with students. I mean I feel very
lonely sometimes. I'm sure everyone does. It's quite
frustrating and even when I try to make friends, I can't
make friends. That sucks.

By comparison, in an ideal university there would be more opportunity to develop strong social networks (Carol) and there would be a strong sense of belonging. Strong

134

social networks, an idea closely related to consideration of sharing ideas, feelings of belonging, and involvement, were identified as ideally important by 96% of survey respondents and as part of RIU experiences by 49%. Table 6 shows that a sense of belonging was identified by 99% of survey respondents as an important aspect of the ideal university community and by 44% of respondents as a part of their actual experiences at RIU.

A diversity of people (Fiona, Neely) with different backgrounds (Cheryl) was also important. As Doreen put it, members are "collected and somehow unified, but in that community, there's quite a diversity." It was important that there still remain respect for individuals (Fiona). Diversity was a valued and significant part of students' experiences at RIU.

> I just enjoy meeting a lot of people from different
> backgrounds and finding out how their experiences might
> be different from mine, and learning about them, and
> different ethnic backgrounds especially. Especially at RIU
> I find it's really diverse and it's nice.

Opportunities to meet different people were valued by interviewees. Fiona, for example commented on the fact the RIU was

> really so diverse. ... You sort of interact with different
> people all the time. Like you interact with your friends
> and also you can, you know you meet new people and you
> find out that they're totally different, they're from another

135

town or specific country or, I know people who come from Toronto or the States. Just, you get to meet different people in that sense.

Table 6 reveals that a diversity of people on campus was identified by 91% of survey respondents as an important part of the ideal university community, and as part of their actual RIU experiences by 79%, differences that were not statistically significant, indicating that diversity was both important to students, and a significant aspect of their experiences at RIU.

Students identified the sharing of ideas (Andrea, Doreen) as key characteristics of the ideal community. This was expressed in terms of both shared ideas between students and between students and faculty. Table 7 shows that sharing intellectual ideas between students was identified by 87% of survey respondents as an important part of the ideal university community and by 53% as a significant part of their RIU experiences.

I always think that you'll solve ... life's conundrums when you're at university, you'll have those candlelight talks at this little dingy café or something. (Tamara)

I don't feel connected to the students, .. to the people who are learning the same thing I'm learning. I don't have a chance to discuss things with them. (Janet)

136

Janet was disappointed with her RIU experiences because of the lack of interaction between students. Janet was "really interested in the intellectual part. ... I want to talk to people about how to develop our minds, right."

Table 7. Social and Intellectual Connections (survey respondents)

	In the ideal university community the following are:				What part of actual experiences at RIU were the following:				
	Not Very Important		Very Important		Not at all part		Significant Part		Statistically Significant
	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4	
Sharing intellectual ideas between students	3	10	38	49	10	37	40	13	*
Sharing intellectual ideas between students and faculty	1	7	38	54	11	54	28	7	*
Contact between students and administration	1	7	35	57	23	49	27	1	*
Having input into university issues	1	6	41	52	19	57	23	1	*

* Indicates statistical significance at .05 level using Bronferonni adjusted critical probability.

Sharing intellectual ideas between students and faculty was important to students as well. Table 7 shows that 92% of survey respondents indicated this would take place in the ideal university, and 35% identified it as a significant part of their actual RIU experiences. The ideal/actual contrast is even more apparent when the percentages of those respondents who selected "4" (on a scale of 1 to 4 with four the most significant or important option): 54% reported that it was very important in the ideal community, and 7% thought it was a significant part of their RIU experiences. At RIU, the ability

137

to share ideas with a professor was linked with the sense students had of their own intellectual competence. As Janet stated one of the things she like most about her third year at RIU was that she could "go and talk to professors":

> I wanted to before but I, I guess I just didn't have enough
> knowledge, I ... only had a general idea about what my
> questions would be, but now I can actually go and say,
> "Well, can you please tell me about Eliminative
> Materialism because I don't think it's particularly right but
> give me your opinion." (laughs)

As is evident in the discussion of the constitutive community (Chapter 6) and individualistic communities (Chapter 7) engaging with professors intellectually, not just asking questions for the purpose of "being known," was a important part of being in third year. However, the opportunities for this type of exchange were restricted by the limited opportunities for student/faculty interactions and by the lecture style classes. Opportunities to share intellectual ideas with peers were also limited, not only by the structure of classes, but by the nature of friendship patterns students developed with other Psychology students and by the campus use patterns that reflected a tendency to leave campus when not tied to it by classes.

An interesting item to arise in the discussion of characteristics of the ideal university community was a concern with "stronger contact between students and the administration" (Peter). According to one interviewee, the administration was "invisible;" the university community consisted primarily of faculty and students, "it's

really just the students and the professors who make it work" (Emma). Another student thought that "the administration" should be seen to have more involvement with students: "you show us that you're involved and we'll become involved," was Laurette's suggestion. Returning to the topic later in the interview, Laurette suggested that the "administration" should

> consult with students, they have good ideas, you know.
> We're at university. Obviously we're here for a reason.
> We're using our brains constantly. We might have some
> good ideas. So I think that that's a big thing. (Laurette)

Bruce was of the opinion that students sometimes expressed negative attitudes about administrative personnel because

> the president isn't, ... or the governing bodies aren't, you
> know, very vocal in what they're doing.

Table 7 reveals that contact between students and administration was identified by 92% of survey respondents and an important characteristic of the ideal university community. By comparison, 28% identified it as a significant part of their experiences at RIU.

Having a say in key issues that concerned the community was also part of the ideal. However, at RIU, according to Bruce, students didn't have a say in key issues involving the university community.

139

It's tough to feel a part, a real close association with the
university simply because ... there's a lot of decisions ...
and a lot of concerns that ... I'm not necessarily privy to,
but it affects me, but, you know, I don't feel that my
voice would be heard enough.

Drawing an analogy with her participation as an executive member of a campus club,

Katherine highlighted the importance of "being heard" if students were to be "actual"

members of the community.

[The club is] something I have a lot of power over, and lot
of influence over it. I don't think I have a lot of power
over what happens here, even though I want to. But I
think I'd like to have more of a student voice. And you
rarely get that [at RIU].

The final item in Table 7 shows that, according to 93% of survey respondents, having

input into university issues or concerns was an important aspect of the ideal university

community. By comparison, 24% of respondents indicated it was part of their actual

RIU experiences.

Several students identified effective and efficient students' services as an

important characteristic of the ideal university (Diane, Jo-Anne, Peter). Table 8 shows

that for survey respondents both of these items were ideally very important, but less

likely to be a part of their actual RIU experiences. One student noted, "there are things

140

that frustrate me in terms of efficiency" (Katherine) which would be eliminated in the ideal situation.

Table 8. Student Services (survey respondents)

	In the ideal university community the following are:				What part of actual experiences at RIU were the following:				
	Not Very Important		Very Important		Not at all part		Significant Part		Statistically Significant
	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4	
Effective student services	0	0	16	84	9	37	47	7	*
Efficient student services	0	0	15	85	20	35	41	4	*

* Indicates statistical significance at .05 level using Bronferonni adjusted critical probability.

One example of a frustrating aspect of students' services was the delay in receiving a transcription of grades (Katherine). Another student found staff were not always knowledgeable and able to help students with specific questions (Diane). Effective and efficient students services were considered important in the ideal community by all survey respondents.

Discussion

Statistical significance is a valuable way to look at these data, but substantive significance is also important. The case study data revealed that the importance of space and place to undergraduate students was a theme that would reemerge throughout the thesis. At a fundamental level, having a place to "be" on campus outside of classes was

141

imperative if one was to participate directly within the communities of the university. Students identified characteristics of the space that would not only encourage them to spend time within it, but would promote a sense of ownership and belonging. Having space designated specifically to a particular group of students has been identified as a key aspect of belonging (Pawluch, Hornosty, Richardson & Shaffir, 1994; Schlossberg, 1989) and an integral characteristic of spatially defined communities (Effrat, 1974; Hillery 1955). In addition to promoting a sense of ownership and belonging, making space available to students would, they suggested, enable greater social and academic interaction. As Gyford (1991) pointed out, the physical environment plays a role in establishing the parameters of the "action space" for interaction between community members. If students are to engage in intellectual and social relationships with other students and with faculty, there must be spaces within which various groups can come together. Given that the RIU is predominantly a commuter institution, the availability of "usable" space, lounges or group learning areas, that were comfortable and attractive, was integral to the promotion of spatially based community.

The issue of place also took on a less tangible dimension. Violich (1998) illustrates that there is a dynamic relationship between a physical place and feelings generated by its properties. As students' comments suggest, there exists a complicated relationship between the physical environment to which they were exposed and their identification with RIU. Students identified the look and "feel" of the campus grounds and buildings as contributing to a sense of community. A university was expected to have physical characteristics that not only differentiated it from other institutions but

142

also signaled its status as a higher education institution. A university should, according to interviewees, be composed of the "right kind" of buildings, situated in the "right" way within a natural landscape. This feature of the ideal university reflected students' current experiences at RIU which, (even though for some it was an architectural "hodgepodge") as noted in Chapter 4, is located within attractive settings of gardens and beautifully landscaped spaces. Finally, the use and designation of space that students commented on hinted at aspects of exclusion that would emerge when a more detailed examination of students experiences was undertaken. The designation of space for graduate students and the exclusion of undergraduate students, and the general lack of space at the Psychology building for undergraduates, served to support perceptions of their status as peripheral members of the disciplinary community.

The importance of "spirit" to students highlighted an interesting contradiction in their patterns of participation. Although students recognized that there was a "lack" of spirit at RIU, and they had suggestions to promote "school spirit" (e.g., a "Fresh Week" or turning out for games the university teams were playing), subsequent analysis revealed that forces shaping students' patterns of participation as well as their own preferences and priorities, militated against its creation through enhanced participation. The display of symbols such as the university crest on shirts or jackets was not, according to interview data, as important a part of the culture at RIU as it was perceived to be for students at other universities. For some, other displays (e.g., carrying RIU binders) was considered "nerdy." However, 62% of survey respondents did identify logos and symbols as ideally important, and 50% identified them as part of

143

their actual RIU experiences. It may be that greater attention to the types of the symbols and logos that students value and would not reject is warranted.

Interviewees suggested that at the level of the academic community "binding ties," the aspect of the community that all members had in common, were broadly conceived educational goals ("getting an education") but, as identified in the higher education literature (Tinto, 1993), there were other communities based on specific activities or interests that formed part of the university community and "goals in common" element of community could be found within them as well.

Interviewees talked about community in terms of "doing" and "feeling." Involvement was a key aspect of the ideal university community and referred to both actively participating in the university and through that participation, feeling a part of the community. Interviewees expressed a need to know, in general, what was happening on campus so that they could be involved, but as shown in the survey data, this was less a part of their actual RIU experiences.

Consistent with the literature on belonging, community meant feeling that they "mattered" (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981; Schlossberg, 1989) to others on campus and that there were others who mattered to them. When faculty expressed interest in one interviewee's wellbeing, it was a memorable and noteworthy event that was retold with animation. This aspect of community speaks to the importance of student-faculty relationships and the profound impact faculty have on the sense of belonging students feel. The role faculty play in the involvement of students as community members was revealed in a variety of ways when examined from constitutive and individualistic

144

community perspectives. As shown in this chapter, student-faculty interaction was a key aspect of the ideal community in relation to desire on the part of students for intellectual engagement with other community members.

The importance of intellectual engagement with peers and with faculty was also an aspect of students' conceptions of community that would reemerge in later discussions of daily experiences. As illustrated in this chapter, although both received high ideal ratings, students' intellectual interaction with other students was of less overall importance than was student-faculty interaction. Both of these aspects of the ideal community are consistent with "traditional" notions of community. Humboldt's (1809/10) conception saw faculty and student interaction as a dynamic interplay between the "able and mature" minds of faculty and "youthful intelligences" of students. Newman (1852) was certain student to student conversations were "a series of lectures" from which they gained "fresh matter of thought and distinct principles" (p. 26). Survey respondents indicated that sharing ideas with other students was more a part of their actual experiences at RIU than sharing with faculty. A variety of techniques employed to enhance interactions and forces that students encountered that inhibited it are illustrated in Chapters 6 and 7.

Though interviewees tended not to focus on specific student services at RIU or to discuss services to a large extent, the effectiveness and efficiency of student services was identified as an element of community, and it received strong support as part of the ideal community from survey respondents.

CHAPTER SIX: EXPERIENCING COMMUNITY – A CONSTITUTIVE PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Chapter 5 provided an overview of students' conceptions and experiences of the ideal and actual university community. When asked specifically about the ideal, interviewees tended to focus on the academic community rather than the disciplinary community. In the exploration of daily experiences that followed this discussion, the influence of discipline became much more evident. Many of the themes that were identified in Chapter 5 re-emerged in the exploration of daily experiences highlighting both the complexity and multidimensional nature of community.

This chapter focuses on viewing students' experiences through the lens of a constitutive community framework, which directs attention to the process of membership and identity formation. Students discover who they are as members of different communities through their involvement in them (Corlett, 1989). That is, students form an identity as a community member over time and in relation to their experiences within the community. Their perception of their status and the perceptions others hold of their status within the community has an impact on their opportunities, level of involvement and the nature of their social interactions. The constitutive framework draws attention to how the "status" or as Howard (1997) calls it, the "subject position" of members within a particular community enables (and constrains) their participation within it (Howard, 1997).

146

Membership and Identity

Interview data reveal that the development of an identity as a community member was a longitudinal process that resulted in differential degrees of membership and strength of identification with the academic and disciplinary communities for individual students. As the literature on membership suggests, members of a community engage in a process of boundary definition that serves to identify insiders from outsiders. Case study data show that initially, differentiation occurred at several levels. As members of the academic community, students made distinctions between their university and other universities. As members of the disciplinary community, students distinguished Psychology from other disciplines. And finally, distinctions between Arts and Science Psychology students were drawn. Each of these aspects of boundary definition is reviewed in turn.

RIU compared to other Universities

RIU was considered by students to be one of the top universities in Canada (Diane, Emma) and the number one university in the province (Rey). The process of developing an identity as a member of an "elite" university in some instances began long before high school graduation. Some study participants had "always known" they would not only go on to further education after high school, but that they would do so at RIU. As Doreen put it, "ever since I was a little kid, it was RIU, ... that was the bottom line." For a number of students (Tamara, Melanie, Neely, Fiona, Emma) parents played a significant role in shaping expectations to attend RIU. It was a

147

common sentiment that participants were "just socialized, ... raised with this idea of ... [attending] RIU" (Neely). Parents wanted their children to attend the "top" university in the province (Tamara, Melanie, Fiona), in one instance going so far as to refuse to help pay costs otherwise (Doreen).

The choice to attend RIU was also a matter of associating with an academic elite, with the "smart ones" (Adam). Linda noted that "the people who did better [in high school] always seem[ed] to go to RIU rather than [another provincial university]." The perception that RIU admitted only the top high school graduates was accurate. The grade point average for students attending RIU directly from high school was among the highest in the province at 3.5 (78%) for Arts and 3.9 (84%) for Science (University Statistics, 1998). In addition to top universities in other Canadian provinces, Harvard, Berkeley, and Stanford in the United States were identified as comparable or somewhat better institutions to which students aspired (Amy, Katherine, Adam).

Size was correlated with prestige (Cheryl, Ole). RIU "was just ... the bigger university, ... the better university" (Linda), and accordingly students "didn't want to go somewhere like the smaller schools" (Emma) even though it was recognized that they would have "a different kind of experience" with smaller classes that allowed for "a lot better teaching style" (Doreen). Other provincial universities were seen to be "too insular" (Ole) and high-school-like (Paula, Ole) and as such "didn't seem like that big of a step" (Neely) up. When asked to indicate their extent of agreement with the statement "I wish I had chosen a different university," 19% of survey respondents

strongly (3%) or somewhat (16%) agreed, suggesting that for the majority of respondents, RIU was the right choice of institutions.

As discussed in Chapter 5, RIU was one of the top research universities in the country and frequently drew research funds exceeding $100 million. The Faculty of Arts research award over the last ten years has averaged $5 million per year; the Faculty of Science, $3 million. In 1996/97, RIU was one of the top ranking universities among comparable peer institutions in terms of social science and humanities grants awarded to full-time faculty. RIU has always had a strong emphasis on research; historical university documents note provision of "facilities for the prosecution of original research in science, literature, arts, medicine, law and especially the applications of science" (University Documents). This research emphasis continues today. However, as noted in Chapter 4, there have been recent changes. In the past administrative personnel at RIU have described the university as centrally concerned with research rather than undergraduate education. As one administrator noted in 1993,

> This is not a small undergraduate institution, it's a major
> research institution and whether we like it or not, that
> happens to have been the thrust that the present senior
> administration has put on things. And there are a lot of
> people for whom teaching is not ... their primary
> [purpose]. (Andres, Andruske, & Hawkey, 1996, p. 111)

According to recent policy documents, campus newspapers and public addresses by the president, there was a resurgent interest in enhancing the undergraduate student

149

experience and strengthening links between undergraduate teaching and research. An identified goal of the university was to "offer students an intellectually challenging education that takes advantage of our unique research environment" (Draft Policy Document, 1997).

Participants recognized that RIU "focused a lot on research," especially in their Department where "research, research, research, [was] all [faculty] think about" (Katherine). They also recognized that part of the institution's reputation as a "top" university was linked with the research its faculty undertook. According to Katherine:

> You want to be recognized as a university that comes up with good research papers and can publish good papers in the big research magazines. So the impression I got ... was RIU is so occupied with being recognized in that sense.

Students suggested that overall, the professors at RIU were "not necessarily good teachers, but what they [did] research wise [was] quite good" (Doreen). Some professors were thought to be uninterested in the teaching aspect of their job, through which they tended to "sleepwalk," giving the impression that they were "incredibly bored" (Neely). Students were aware that for some professors, students were an inconvenience, "something they had to deal with so they [could] do their research" (Tamara). Despite occasionally feeling that there was a lack of respect for undergraduates (Katherine), students acknowledged that the research focus at RIU was

150

"valuable to the university because it [made] a reputation and a name for it which attract[ed] more students" (Ole). It also meant that students were affiliated with a world renown, prize winning university (Katherine).

This affiliation was important to students. When anticipating not being admitted to RIU one student had been prepared to enroll in a local college until she could "finally ... get to RIU" (despite her fears, Fiona was admitted directly out of high school). One student who did her first year at a local college recalls "looking forward to [being] in an official university" (Cheryl) in second year. As the oldest university in the province, the one with the "longer history" (Cheryl), RIU was considered the most prestigious with the best reputation, especially as a place to study science (Rey, Doreen, Katherine, Amy). A Bachelor's degree from any other provincial university "just [didn't] sound that good" (Adam); "if you [had] an undergraduate from RIU it sound[ed] better" (Melanie).

It was for these reasons that students were "proud" to be RIU students (Katherine, Amy, Fiona, Peter), a sentiment shared by 92% of survey respondents who strongly or somewhat agreed that they were also proud to be RIU students. For the most part, students were satisfied that RIU was the right institution for them, (86% strongly or somewhat agreed this was so). Almost all interviewees had selected RIU as their university of first choice (as noted, a few had aspirations to top universities in the US), but in the end decided on RIU. Almost 87% of survey respondents agreed that RIU was their institution of first choice. (See Table 9 for details.)

151

Table 9. Studying at RIU (survey respondents)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4
I am proud to be a RIU student	44	48	5	3
RIU is the right university for me	34	52	8	6
RIU was my university of first choice	60	27	7	6

Studying Psychology

The second element of defining difference was the identification with a particular discipline, in the case of this study, with Psychology. Defining difference in this context occurred at two interconnected and conflicting levels. One was the differences students perceived from "external" sources, other differences were "internal" to their field of study and department. Internal sources of information that students received and interpreted about their discipline came from their textbooks, from faculty and staff, and from peers and tended to be positive in nature.

Students described their discipline as "young" (Tamara, Adam) and as such lacking in a well developed and established body of knowledge. Comparing his course work in the natural sciences to that in Psychology, Adam noted:

Most of the theories that I'm doing now, the oldest one is,
what, 1930s. That's the oldest. Usually they're all in the
50s. Yea, the 50s and 70s.

152

Compared with a discipline such as Mathematics that had the Pythagorean theorem or Physics with the law of gravity (Adam), Psychology was described as a new but rapidly expanding field of study. The newness allowed for a greater involvement by undergraduate students with the material they were learning. One avenue which was considered unusual compared to other departments was involvement through research (Andrea). From Tamara's point of view, there was greater opportunity for undergraduate students to contribute to the discipline simply because it was so new.

> Just because ... it's so new and ... it hasn't been
> exhausted, like it's not getting down to the nitty-gritty,
> there's still a lot ... of big facts that have to be found out,
> there's a lot of theories that need to be ... resolved.

In addition to its relative youth, "of the social sciences, it's generally the most scientific" (Neely). One student placed Psychology on a middle ground between the hard sciences like Physics or Chemistry and the soft disciplines like English and History (Patricia). Knowledge within the field of Psychology was "factual and scientifically supported" (Patricia), but also left room for more interpretive ways of knowing (Paula, Rey).

As mentioned, Psychology at RIU was comprised of both Science and Arts programs. Students studying for a Bachelor of Science in Biopsychology further distinguished their field of study which they described as so new that "not a lot of

153

people [were] aware of the field" (Doreen) either within RIU and outside of it (Tamara).

> I guess most people think ... that Psychology is Arts. I don't think many people know there's the part of it in Sciences as well (Linda).

In addition, this particular program was considered too small to have made much of an impact on those who were not directly involved with it. Few knew about it because only an estimated 50 students were admitted each year (Doreen) and because Biopsychology was not as familiar a name as Psychology or other "traditional" discipline names such as History or English (Katherine). Compared with Arts Psychology, the Biopsychology program at RIU was indeed small. In the 1997/98 academic year there were 164 students pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, compared with 664 pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree (Undergraduate Brochure for Psychology, 1998).

Whether studying Science or Arts, students who chose Psychology as their major were faced with the negative assessment of their choice by family members, friends who were not also in Psychology, and even in some instances by strangers. Students were thus often required to develop a sense of their academic selves in opposition to others. Initially intending to major in biochemistry, Doreen, who planned to pursue a degree in medicine, switched to Biopsychology in her second year. She remembers that when she told her parents "they were absolutely going ... insane." The

154

route from biochemistry to medicine was clear and established for Doreen's parents and to them, the change in major signaled a change in aspirations. Doreen had no intentions of closing off future options for a career in medicine, and interpreted her parents' reaction as an indication that they did not understand what Biopsychology was, nor what future possibilities it created for her. In addition, their response was a typical "outsider" reaction to Psychology in general.

Students were aware that their chosen field of study was often perceived negatively by others: "just like one of those bogus things" (Tamara); "psychologists ... are perceived to be a bit weirdo" (Bruce); "everybody [in Psychology] is a bit lazy and it's just an easy way out" (Adam); "they think it's kind of flaky" (Melanie); "you can't do much with it" (Emma). Despite these perceptions, students were proud to be enrolled in a "good" (Peter) program and expressed confidence that it was not a weak discipline (Fiona). As shown in Table 10, among survey respondents, 82% agreed that they were proud to be Psychology students at RIU, and 90% were confident that Psychology was the right program for them to choose as a major.

Table 10. Studying Psychology at RIU (survey respondents)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4
I am proud to be a Psychology student at RIU	35	47	15	3
Psychology is the right program for me	47	43	10	0

155

Part of students' identity as members of that community entailed "coming to terms" with their own and others' perceptions. When she switched programs, Doreen had these thoughts:

> I thought it was sort of degrading. I can't believe I'm
> saying this, but anyway, um, yea, ... but ... somehow I
> got interested in it, so of course my view point's changed.

Melanie recalled a stranger's reaction to her statement that she was studying Psychology: "I saw the little smirk on his face, ... and I was just confused. ... I was just offended by that." When discussing other's perceptions that people selected Psychology as a major because it was "easy" Adam asserted that, "as for me, I know that's not true. I'm interested in the stuff, not because it's easy and I can't get into anything else." Fiona agreed: "they don't understand what's put into it. ... It's not just ... common sense. ... It *is* hard." However, for about 5% of survey respondents (2 BSc and 2 BA) the academic ease of studying psychology was identified as a very important reason for selecting it as their academic major and for an additional 17% (11 Arts) it was a somewhat important reason.

When discussing perceptions of Psychology, interviewees drew attention to the quality of their professors. One professor was reputed to have been on television to discuss a book he had recently written (Ole). The Psychology department was considered to have "lots of famous people" (Ole) who had done pioneering work (Melanie) and had outstanding reputations in their field in terms of the research they

156

had done (Cheryl). There were Psychology professors from whom students were proud to have taken courses and students spoke of them as noted scholars in their field (Katherine). According to the survey, the good reputation of faculty was not, however, identified as a key reason to become a member of the Psychology community. This item was identified as very important by 7% of survey respondents and somewhat important by an additional 20%.

Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts

The third aspect of defining difference was in relation to students' degree program. Partly a response to the negative perception of Psychology noted above, Biopsychology interviewees were adamant about differentiating between their program of study and the Arts program of study. Arts interviewees also differentiated between the nature and quality of the Science related program and the type of students in it compared with themselves and their program.

Biopsychology students were quick to distance themselves from Arts Psychology students.

> Yea, everybody goes, as soon as I said I'm in Psychology
> they kind of assume, "Oh, you're in Arts." I'm like,
> "No!" (Carol).

When asked to confirm that he would receive a Bachelor of Science, with a major in Psychology, Rey pointed out that "it's printed as Psychology, but it's a Biopsych degree." Students acknowledged that there was overlap in some of the courses between

157

the two degree areas, but primarily Arts *honours* students would take *some* of the same courses as Biopsychology students (Carol, Diane), emphasizing that only the top Arts students were permitted to enroll in Biopsychology courses. One course these students were referring to was a three hundred level research methods course in which students were required to complete a research project, usually by working with a professor on his or her existing study (Rey, Diane, Bruce). And as they pointed out, it was a required course for BSc Psychology majors and an elective for BA Honours majors. Ultimately the distinction between Psychology and Biopsychology was "not as clear as a lot of Science people would like it to be. A lot of us kind of want to separate ourselves ... from the Arts students" (Carol).

One reason for wanting a clear distinction between the two was because science was perceived as a more rigorous and elite program of study that admitted only academically top ranking students. As measured by grade point average, Biopsychology students were higher achievers academically. As illustrated in Table 11, of all the case study participants, 53% of Biopsychology students had a GPA of 80% or greater, compared with 23% of Arts Psychology students.

158

Table 11. Current Grade Average at RIU (all case study participants)

	Arts Psychology		Biopsychology	
	#	%	#	%
90-100	2	2	0	0
85-89	4	5	1	5
80-84	12	16	10	48
76-79	12	16	7	33
72-75	19	21	2	9
68-71	17	25	1	5
64-67	5	7	0	0
60-63	4	5	0	0
55-59	2	3	0	0
<54	0	0	0	0
Total	77	100	21	100

Differences in formal program requirements for Arts compared with Science programs were notable. Students in both program areas were required to complete a minimum of 120 credits to earn a Bachelor's degree, and Psychology courses comprised 30% of the overall course load for both programs, but students believed there was considerably more flexibility in course offerings and scheduling for Arts students. Of the 120 credits required to earn Bachelor of Arts at RIU, 60 had to be outside the major and 30 had to be upper level. At the lower levels students were required to take "certain sciencey" (Jo-Anne) courses – six credits of either Biopsychology or cognition and perception. Arts students declared a major at the end of second year. There were two required Psychology courses for all Arts Psychology majors in third year, one on research methods and design and one on analysis of

159

behavioural data. Students were required to complete the Faculty of Arts English, language, science and literature requirements.

To meet Faculty of Science requirements, students needed to satisfy "breadth" requirements consisting of fifteen or more credits of Science electives outside the field major and twelve credits of Arts electives. Courses in first year consisted of math, Science (biology, chemistry, physics) and English. Bachelor of Science students declared a major after first year. In second year there was a required course in experimental Psychology and laboratory studies; students could take two electives. All upper level Biopsychology students had to complete a year long research methods course. By third year, students could select a greater percentage of elective courses, including Psychology electives. As Bruce pointed out, "there's a lot of hurdles you have to jump through before you can actually start ... studying what [you] want. ... Everything is completely structured." Arts students had much more flexible course schedules compared with Science students who had two or three hour labs each week per Science course, in addition to the three hours of lecture per week (Rey). Arts students would likely enjoy "three to nine hours a week less" (Adam) work compared to Science students because of lab time.

The quality of student life was considered better for Arts students compared to Science students "who seemed like they were just going to keel over and die" (Amy). Arts students were "a lot happier ... and more relaxed" (Amy). They were more likely to start a conversation with classmates and were friendlier (Adam). Science students on the other hand:

160

don't look happy at all and they don't talk to anybody else. They just sit there and wait for the teacher to start talking. And ... after, pack up and leave and they have this, you know, no expressions on their face" (Adam).

Science in general was "a totally different world" (Janet), a highly competitive world (Amy, Katherine) in which there was perceived to be no interaction between students (Amy) or between students and faculty (Ole) and in which students were driven to achieve academic success. Science students were believed to "have this attitude where 'we're better', right. But on the flip side the [Arts] Psychology students would say 'we are better, because ... we actually have a life'" (Patricia). As already reported (Table 12), according to survey data, 53% of Bachelor of Science students had an average RIU grade of over 80%, compared with 23% of Bachelor of Arts students. When asked to indicate the extent of agreement with the statement "getting top marks is very important to me, Table 12 shows that Biopsychology respondents were more likely to strongly agree (62%) than were Arts Psychology respondents (38%). Biopsychology respondents were also more likely to be satisfied with their grades.

Table 12. Grade Satisfaction (survey respondents)

	Arts Psychology				Biopsychology			
	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Getting top marks is very important to me	38	37	20	5	62	23	8	7
Overall I am satisfied with my grades	8	34	42	16	15	62	15	8

161

Students from both program areas perceived differences in the nature of knowledge. Both thought the Biopsychology program was more research oriented (Diane, Peter) and students in it were more inclined to think in terms of numbers and evidence whereas "psychology from the Arts [was] more descriptive" (Katherine) and "there are lots of different answers" (Paula). The pursuit of knowledge in Arts Psychology entailed using a quasi-experimental research design. Researchers did "a lot of surveys or ... experiments that [were] kind of on the border line" (Rey). There was also room to use "interviews and more phenomenological" techniques (Peter). On the other hand, Biopsychology relied more on animal models and there was a greater emphasis on studying human behavior as a science, "defining the behaviors in a way so you can test them as the same scientific method that you use in Chemistry or Biology or any other sort of traditional science" (Rey).

Academic Major Selection

The academic major selection process was an integral aspect of membership definition and identity formation. The process was far more complicated than the formal designation assigned by the university. It demanded considerable energy of students, and involved a process of discovery as students worked to find a satisfactory "fit" between their interests, aspirations, and abilities and what was demanded and offered by various disciplines. Case study data reveal that the process of academic major selection was an important step in establishing an identity that located them within the confines of the disciplinary community. Another important aspect of the

162

academic major selection process was the development and reinforcement of feelings of belonging to the disciplinary community.

Selecting an academic major was a sophisticated process of identifying interests, assessing abilities, and articulating future goals. Before completing high school, some students had become interested in Psychology through family members or friends who were professionally involved in the field and some were interested in "helping people" (Andrea, Jo-Anne) after graduation. Other students had long been intrigued with the relationships between thought and behavior (Katherine, Jo-Anne). A large number of participants had taken an introductory Psychology course, either in their high school or during their first year of post-secondary education and were "turned on" to the subject matter. One student who had taken Psychology 100 at RIU immediately felt a personal connection. She found she "liked the thought of doing research ... and finding things out" (Emma) and decided Psychology was the right major for her.

In part students selected their academic major based on experiences with other disciplines, disciplines that did not hold their interest or did not suit their academic abilities. One student majoring in Biopsychology discovered that after taking the required science courses in first year, she knew that some kind of biology (rather than chemistry or physics) was the right field for her (Linda). Biopsychology was a suitable compromise for "Science people" who wanted to study a more varied and clinical discipline than the traditional Science options (Katherine). Cheryl abandoned an interest in Commerce because she was "not good at math" and Doreen knew Economics was not for her, she "just [didn't] have a grasp of it because [she didn't] think in money

163

terms." Similarly Paula considered majoring in Economics, but discovered that although she did well in an introductory course, she "couldn't do business" because it didn't suit her personality. In some instances students "didn't make the cut" (Neely) and so "just didn't get in" (Survey Respondent) to their chosen academic major and were forced to select an alternative.

Both Adam and Amy started out in Science but the combination of a heavy workload and a loss of interest in the subject matter, motivated them to switch to Arts. When asked if he had thought about transferring to Biopsychology rather than Arts Psychology, Adam was adamant that he was not the least bit interested in "staring at molecules" any longer. Amy knew continuing to participate in "the whole [Science] atmosphere" was not for her. Adam had discovered that "the kind of studying [in Arts] was more [his] type of studying," offering as proof the 20% overall increase in his grade average. Adam also acknowledged that the initial major selection had been strongly influenced by his parents and he had selected "pre-med" to "make them happy."

When first enrolled at RIU Patricia had selected a "practical" program (Landscape Architecture) instead of Psychology even though she had a long standing interest in Psychology. She was the youngest student in the practical program (18 while others were between 22 and 35) and the only one who had gone into it straight from high school. Unlike her classmates, she did not have related work experience. As a consequence she felt isolated, could not be "serious" about school, and found that the structure of the program left little time for other interests. Patricia attributed part of

164

these feelings to the fact that it was her first year and she was younger than the other students, and part to the mismatch between her interests and the nature of the program.

> I didn't know why I was in that program. ... my heart was somewhere else. It wasn't into school. And then afterwards I realized I should have gone into Psychology all along and I would have done much better.

One consequence of initially selecting the "wrong" academic major was delayed graduation because of the credits were not applicable to an Arts Psychology degree.

The consequences of a wrong choice could be severe. Based on "intuition" Janet, a strong Science student in high school with plans to be a research scientist, decided to drop her Science courses at RIU part way through the second term of her second year. In retrospect she realized she should have dropped during first year, but was reluctant to give up.

> I was very driven. Like, I very much wanted to succeed. I ... always wanted to go the whole way. I was very ambitious (Janet).

Janet dropped out for two years and eventually returned to RIU, this time enrolling in Arts and selecting Psychology as her academic major. After two years in Arts, Janet had found the right program at RIU and felt good about being a student there. Reflecting on her initial major choice, she said that at the time she "really didn't know what it would mean to be a scientist" and although it clearly turned out to be the wrong

165

program for her, she had found the Science courses "inspiring." They just "weren't [her] thing."

The interview data illustrate the complexity of the academic major selection process for students, a process that is an integral step in the development of one's identity vis-à-vis the disciplinary community (Attinasi, 1989). The survey data illustrate key factors students identify as important reasons for choosing their academic major are consistent with the interviewees'. As shown in Table 13, an affinity with the subject matter in terms of liking the material or its correspondence with academic strengths and interests, were among the top three reasons identified by students for selecting Psychology as an academic major. Helping people and wanting to study Psychology were also key reasons. Comparatively less important were employment related reasons.

Table 13. Choosing Psychology (survey respondents)

	Very important	Somewhat important	Somewhat unimportant	Not at all important
	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4
I've always wanted to study Psychology	24	48	17	11
I didn't know what else to study	5	36	20	39
It suited my existing skills and abilities	28	51	16	5
To train for a job or career in the field	21	39	31	9
Because my friends also decided to major in Psyc	0	5	9	86
Because I enjoyed the subject matter.	68	29	3	0
I took a Psychology course and really liked it	42	38	7	13
Because of the good reputation of faculty	6	20	39	35
To prepare for medical school	11	2	16	71
To be able to help people after I graduate	34	41	12	13
I thought it would be academically easy	5	17	33	45
Because of job prospects in the field	4	41	27	28
To prepare for an academic career in the field	13	33	27	27

166

The survey data also show that many students begin with one academic major in mind, but change during the major selection process. This was the case for one third of the survey respondents. Twenty-nine respondents switched their program major or intended major, and of those, nine respondents switched degree programs. Table 14 shows the direction of these changes.

Table 14. Academic Major Selection Decisions (survey respondents)

To	From Science/Applied Science	Arts
	#	#
Biopsychology	10	1
Psychology	8	10

Survey respondents were asked to write down the reasons they switched programs or majors. There were two reasons survey respondents switched programs. First, 80% of survey respondents indicated that they had lost interest in the program they initially chose. Of 29 survey respondents who had changed program majors, 23 (79%) commented on why they switched. The following comments were typical:

It wasn't my calling - I hated it.

To suit my personal interests.

Interest in biopsych/psych.

167

As reflected in the interview data, there was also a group of students who selected Psychology because it suited their skills and abilities. This was commented on as a reason for switching into Psychology from another program by 21% of survey respondents.

Community Involvement

The academic major selection process was an initial step toward becoming a member of the disciplinary community. Membership status in the disciplinary community proved to be very much of a negotiated process with other community members, in particular with faculty and peers. Participating more fully in the disciplinary community, that is, becoming less of a peripheral and more of a core member, was preceded by a period of competency development. It also entailed a period of transition during which students' priorities switched from an emphasis on social integration in the various university communities to academic integration in the disciplinary community. This period of competency development and transition were key processes that defined future participation and membership status in the disciplinary community. They enabled a "shift" from peripheral to core membership status. Students discussed this shift from peripheral to core membership status by reflecting on their first and second undergraduate years and comparing their feeling and experiences to their third year.

168

Competency Development

In his work on first year students, Attinasi (1989) demonstrated that there were three geographies that students learned to "navigate" – physical, social and academic/cognitive. Attinasi's work focused on first year ethnic minority students and the strategies they developed. The analysis of case study data showed that Psychology students underwent a similar process of navigation, although the strategies they used were somewhat different. Rather than relying heavily on peers and student mentors (Attinasi, 1989), students at RIU felt they had to "go it alone." This approach reflected a culture of isolation and independence at RIU that "shaped patterns of routine interactions" (Kuh and Whitt, 1988, p.45) among students, faculty and staff.

When navigating the physical geography at RIU, initially, interviewees frequented only those places they had to visit. They were not comfortable (Paula, Neely) with the physical environment and would "stay in same buildings, basically the same rooms" (Doreen), tending to remain in their "own little segment of the campus" (Neely) as much as possible. However, "in second and third year you got to walk a lot more" (Doreen) because "as I've been here longer and longer ... I've really started to become comfortable and more knowledgeable about more, if not all, of the campus" (Neely). As shown in Table 15, by third year, 95% of survey respondents indicated they were familiar with most of the university campus, and 96% indicated they knew their way around RIU.

169

Table 15. Navigating Geographies (survey respondents)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4
I know my way around campus	67	29	4	0
I am familiar with most of the campus	64	31	5	0
I have friends at RIU I can turn to for help	45	41	8	6
I have improved my study habits	38	32	26	4

The social isolation of university life was a sharp contrast to the intimate and familiar high school setting. There was no "homeroom" (Tamara) and friends no longer gathered at lockers before heading to class (Katherine). By third year, however, according to survey results, most students (86%) had made friends on campus they felt they could turn to for help if it was needed. (Table 15.) The work load and level were also navigation points for students. As Table 15 shows, study habits improved, and "procrastination" gave way to better time management as students learned how to study efficiently (Linda) and developed a better sense of "what to expect from the classes" (Jo-Anne). Breaks between classes became key study times (Neely, Linda) rather than socialization times. Faculty became less intimidating: "Now I know how to approach my profs . . . . you know, I'm not scared of them any more" (Paula). All in all, "with each increasing year it [got] easier" (Jo-Anne) and students became competent campus navigators.

Building a knowledge base was the next step in the process of developing competence and is distinguished from the competencies associated with navigating

170

geographies by its specific disciplinary focus. Advanced level course work and involvement with research played key roles. There were two main aspects to students' knowledge base development. One was cultural, the other intellectual. Both interacted to produce a nascent identity as Psychology student or even Psychologist, rather than student-majoring-in-Psychology. Greater distinction between students as participating members of the disciplinary community and their awareness of their position within it were becoming apparent.

Research and course work played important roles in socializing students into the culture and values of their discipline. Socialization is an act of production and reproduction that enables a community to renew itself over time. Only a few undergraduate students will eventually pursue an advanced degree, and of those, even fewer will aspire to a Ph.D. in Psychology, thereby reproducing the disciplinary community. However, in the shorter term, the socialization process contributes to student involvement in the disciplinary community in so far as it defines boundaries of discourse between faculty and students, and enables their interaction.

Within the Psychology Department, research was an integral element of the undergraduate curriculum. Participating in research projects provided a reason to frequent the Psychology building, (Jo-Anne, Melanie) and offered a window through which students could "see what [was] going on" (Emma) in the department. Participation contributed to students' awareness of the culture of their discipline and provided a point of contact between undergraduate students and graduate students and faculty members.

171

Students' integration into the research culture of their discipline was evidenced by the language used throughout the interviews. One student who was involved in a research project with a faculty member in which they were studying human development, talked about going to the Psychology building between classes in order to "run a baby at the lab" (Diane). This meant the "subjects" were "run through a couple more of the studies" and the data entered in a statistical data base on a computer. Running experiments, testing hypotheses, filling in questionnaires, and measuring causal relationships were all common phrases used by students when discussing their involvement with research or when discussing Psychology in general. Students learned the language specific to their discipline from text books, faculty and graduate students. One student relayed a story about being corrected for using "inappropriate" language in relation to animal experiments:

> I said "kill" once, because ... I mean I'm really blunt and
> I said kill, the animal dies, you kill it. And the graduate
> student I work with, she got really offended, she said,
> "Sacrifice!" And I know with even "depriving" I used to
> say "starving" them and she said "No! Depriving them."

Learning the language of their discipline was one aspect of developing a broader knowledge base in Psychology, which also included learning the history of the discipline, foundation theories all core members of the community knew, and accepted procedures for knowledge generation and validation. As Bruce pointed out, it was important for students to "get the technical lingo down to understand what's being

172

developed" in terms of ideas in class. He was skeptical that students had achieved this ability before third year, "maybe in second year, but in first year, definitely not" (Bruce). Others confirmed that students needed "that background" in order to participate in the disciplinary community in the area of research (Katherine) and in classroom discussions in general (Janet). Peter suggested that "first or second year of study [was] quite general and students [were] not quite expected to ... really go that deep." Similarly Rey suggested that in first year courses students were "not really learning anything ground breaking. Sort of the stuff you need for your foundations." Part way through third year students had taken sufficient numbers of courses specifically related to their discipline to accumulate a substantial body of knowledge. By the end of third year, most students would have completed 30 credits (10 term - four month - courses) in Psychology.

Transition

In addition to competency development, another element of movement from peripheral to core membership in the disciplinary community was a transition from social integration in the communities of the university to academic integration in the disciplinary community. This transition was characterized by a general pattern of movement away from social preoccupations toward more academically oriented activities.

Students were asked if they belonged to academic or social and sport related clubs or informal groups on campus. This question generated discussion of the altered

173

patterns of social and academic integration. Enrolling in post-secondary education signaled a time to enjoy new found freedoms, including, for many, social activities associated with drinking alcohol. "Partying" and "clubbing" (partying in nightclubs off campus) (Doreen) were noteworthy activities for a number of students, even among those students who lived at home with parents (although this certainly curtailed such activities for some) (Tamara).

Rey, discussing his observations in campus residences, identified an inability "to handle" too much freedom as contributing to student attrition after first year.

> I saw ... people coming from high school first year, ... people dealing with partying, especially in residences. ... You could actually watch the people that handled it and watch the people that didn't, ... how guys that ... haven't handled it and they're ... working right now and they're sort of taking a course here and there, trying to get back through colleges.

In addition to "partying," being involved in a variety of other social activities was a significant aspect of students' experiences in first year (Carol, Janet, Adam). These activities included joining one or more campus clubs, participating in intramural sports, or using the "excellent" (Bruce) fitness facilities on campus. But, both types of activities began to diminish in importance by third year. As Neely noted, "I did plenty before. ... I was in the skydiving club, ski club, beer gardens, I played hockey every Friday. ... But nothing too much right now." Patricia had been involved in three

174

different clubs but by third year was not a member in any. Rey argued that "it was good to party, have a good time, fit in with the first year crowd" but at some point it was imperative to stop: "you've got to ... draw the line."

Students talked about "growing up" (Janet) and "leaving behind" immature pursuits better left to younger students:

> I did the same thing before, you know, trying to look so cocky, 'I'm so cool." And then, you know I'm with this big group of friends .. at dances and stuff that RIU has. I go through that phase. But, I was still like that in first two years, ... and then I realized that I wasn't heading any where doing that. (Adam).

Bruce talked about observing how "first year guys ... were being and how I was the year before" and although "it was a lot of fun in first year" he had outgrown the life style. For some, partying was the dominant pre-occupation in first year when the objective was "you just try to party your ass off and ... it's like, how much can you get away with and still pull off [the grades]" (Rey). By third year, however, "you just get tired of it. ... [You're] just growing up a little bit" (Rey).

Almost all interviewees talked about undergoing a social to academic transition. Two students described the social to academic shift in terms of percentages. Katherine said if she was to "make a ratio out of them, extracurricular was 60 percent, and studying was 40, whereas now it's more like extracurricular 40, studying 60." Bruce identified the same "60-40 split. ... [It] was 60 in the first year, then it sort of bumped

175

down to 50 last year" and so on. "You just started realizing ... going out Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, ... wasn't so beneficial!" (Bruce).

Astin (1984) points out that the amount of energy (mental and physical) that one devotes to a particular endeavour contributes to one's integration and an enhanced sense of belonging. The gradual reduction of intensive involvement in the social communities of the university was an integral first step toward giving more energy to academic involvement and the eventual integration into the disciplinary community that would result.

Altered friendship patterns were also indicators of the social-to-academic transition and the beginnings of a shift to stronger membership and feelings of belonging within the disciplinary community. The majority of first year, first-time students at RIU were from the city within which RIU was located. In the same academic year the case study was conducted, just under 90% of such students were from the province. Approximately 80% of first year students who enroll at RIU from high school had graduated from a high school in the area of the university (RIU Statistics). It is not surprising then that many of the case study participants came to RIU with a group of high school friends. As Amy said, "everyone that graduated from my high school pretty much came to RIU." Friendship patterns, initially a continuation of associations and behaviors held over from high school, underwent significant change over the course of students' experiences at RIU. This change corresponds with and was a part of the shift from social to academic concerns.

176

In first year, students tended to "hang out" with friends from their high schools who had also enrolled in RIU (Katherine, Amy, Tamara) "because it's security, ... you don't know anybody, you just want to stay together" (Doreen). Doreen for example, met on a regular basis during first year with a group of up to thirty friends from her graduating high school class. Other participants had smaller groups of friends, but talked about the same tendency to maintain high school associations. For these students, the continuity served to ease the transition process. "It was sort of cliquish" (Doreen), "everyone is sticking together [because] you don't want to venture out or anything" (Melanie). Several students had come to RIU from out of the province and had found it difficult to get to know other students (Peter), difficulties that in part were attributed to the "cliquish-ness" identified above. One out of province student said she could "actually see a lot of people who are from [the city] whose whole social network is completely composed of high school people" (Diane). The perception was that they walked to classes together, sat together in lectures and generally kept to themselves. It was easy for others who were not part of a group to "end up a little bit lost" (Diane).

Although the initial first year transition period was difficult for local and non-local students, by third year they were describing similar friendship patterns. Students were becoming more independent. They were developing their own interests (Katherine) and were pursuing different academic and social paths (Adam). As Katherine pointed out, "in high school you have the same view, and then [your friendship] sort of falls apart if your views change." A consequence for Katherine was a new "distance" between former intimate friends: "Every lunch I saw them. This year

177

I've seen them once this month." As shown in Table 16, 57% of survey respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that they had less time to spend socializing with friends. Of those respondents who went to high school in the region and came to RIU with high school friends, two thirds indicated they saw less of them. Survey respondents also indicated that they see less of high school friends that were also at RIU.

Table 16. Friendships (survey respondents)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4
I have close friends in Psychology at RIU	17	36	31	16
I have less time to spend socializing with friends	12	45	24	19
I see less of my high school friends also at RIU	27	39	18	16
Most of my friends at RIU are not in Psychology	45	37	13	5

Altered friendship patterns were also linked with academic program. For Science students once they selected their major after second year, there were fewer opportunities to select the same sections of a required course or to select the same courses as friends.

> In my first year classes there was almost everybody who
> came from my high school was in Sciences so we were all
> in the same classes. ... And then in second year because
> we were in different classes [we] kind of split up more,
> we were in different majors. (Linda)

178

Likewise in Arts, "by third year everyone is starting to do their own things, they're in different faculties, and they have different time schedules and stuff" (Melanie). Table 17 shows that even though 53% of survey respondents indicate they have close friends in Psychology at RIU, 82% indicated that most of their friends at RIU had not selected Psychology as their academic major. This altered pattern of interaction with friends signaled a shift away from the dominance of social communities and the emergence of the importance of the disciplinary community.

Academic demands also had an impact on the levels of disciplinary community involvement. As one interviewee said:

> The stuff that we're doing ... in third year or fourth year,
> it's really time consuming, so unless you're doing exactly
> the same thing it's really hard to find time to spend time
> together. (Adam).

Some students found it "much more productive ... staying in the library and doing your own thing" (Doreen) rather than meeting friends during breaks between classes. Overall, interviewees expressed less interest in socializing with friends compared with the first two years. In contrast, they expressed a desire to engage more intimately and meaningfully with the course material and with their professors.

179

Table 17. Social and Academic Transition (survey respondents)

On a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 is less/easier/lighter and 7 is more/harder/heavier and 4 is about the
same, compare your experiences before third year to your experiences now that you are in third year:

	Mean
Social activities on campus less/more important	3.96
Academic interests are less/more important	5.05
Academically I am less/more engaged	5.38
Socially I am less/more engaged	4.31

As shown in Table 17, although survey respondents indicated they were more engaged

socially (mean of 4.31), social activities on campus had become less important (mean of

4.31). Academic interests (mean of 5.05) and engagement (mean of 5.38) had both

become considerably more important. These patterns of participation within the social

communities of the universities signaled the development of "conditions" that

contributed to further integration into the disciplinary community and the development

of an "academic affinity" with it.

Membership Status

The competency development and transition processes were key elements in

positioning students to be more active participants in the disciplinary community.

Students reported a different kind of experience with professors compared with

previous years, and an altered personal orientation toward their academic work. Not

only were students showing a greater capacity for and interest in the academic aspects

of their education, students also perceived faculty were "letting them in" to participate

180

in the disciplinary community in ways they had not done previously. The literature on identity suggests that individuals define and redefine themselves over time. Identity is constructed through social interaction, and an identity assumed by an individual and accepted by others locates an individual within a particular social space. The redefinition of oneself as a "more serious student" (Gloria) corresponded with the perception that faculty were treating them as more valued members of the disciplinary community. In this section, students' relationship with their professors and their in-class experiences, including the nature of their course work, are discussed.

Students commented on the nature of advanced level courses compared with lower level courses. Laurette noted that "second year courses are still really basic courses. And you have to take them. They're really, really basic and really boring." Andrea, speaking specifically of Psychology courses thought "first year was more general because they're trying to give ... a general introduction to Psych, ... trying to give a bit of history, ... to touch on a lot of different ... schools within Psychology." Only once the foundation had been laid were courses "a lot more interesting" (Cheryl) and "in-depth" (Laurette).

For interview participants in both Science and Arts programs, in-depth study contributed to their perception that the quality of upper level courses was superior to that of lower level courses (Linda, Laurette). Adam, arguing that it was easier to earn higher grades in upper level Psychology courses, suggested it was because "the professors go into concepts in more detail so you get a more thorough understanding of [the material]." He gave the example of an upper level Psychology course that was

181

"pretty much the same as a lower level course." It "pretty much used the same text" book, which was shorter "but it's the same authors and a lot of the same paragraphs." The key difference was in the depth and detail of instruction which made the material more meaningful, and therefore more memorable on the exam. (Adam reported a 10% higher grade in the upper level course.) There is some support for this experience among survey respondents: over half (57%) of survey respondents agreed it was easier to get good grades in upper level courses, although 56% agreed that overall getting good grades was difficult.

Other interviewees expressed similar thoughts; upper level Psychology course work "kind of overlaps ... and you kind of feel like you already know" (Linda) the material. As students took more Psychology classes, they "learn a little bit different, ... a different view of [the material], and you kind of know it already so you feel like you're ahead of the game a little bit" (Linda). These experiences are consistent with the suggestion by King and Brownell (1966) that the more a student is immersed within the knowledge of a specific discipline, the less complicated the body of knowledge becomes. Because the discipline is a collection of concepts "each new idea is illuminated by ideas previously acquired" (p. 92).

Bruce suggested upper level courses were of better quality and considerably more interesting, an assessment based on his experience with "an easy first year course" he had enrolled in to increase his overall grade. The course was outside of but related to his field of study.

182

But I had to get out and take a different one, because, ...

maybe I was like that the first year, but a) the students in

the class were terrible, and b) the professor was, well, just

really boring!

Survey respondents confirm a qualitative difference between upper and lower level

Psychology courses. The interview data reveal that students find academic work more

interesting, more engaging and because of the established knowledge base, easier.

Survey data show support for interviewees' assertion that overall, academic work

(mean of 5.97) and academic work in Psychology (mean of 6.08) were more interesting

now that students were in third year. (See Table 18.)

Table 18. Courses and Academic Work (survey respondents)

On a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 is less/easier/lighter and 7 is more/harder/heavier and 4 is about the same, compared you experiences before third year to now that you are in third year:

	Mean
Academic work in general is less/more interesting	5.97
Academic work in Psychology is less/more interesting	6.08
Course work in general is easier/harder	4.93
Course work in Psychology is easier/harder	4.86
Overall workload is lighter/heavier	5.18
My academic goals less/more focused	5.19

Unlike some of the interviewees, survey respondents did not think course work was

easier now that they were in third year. In Table 18, it is evident that this was the case

for course work in general (mean was 4.93) and for course work in Psychology (mean

was 4.86). However, academic goals were much more focused (mean of 5.19) and, as already stated, compared with social engagement (mean was 4.31) academic engagement (5.38) was more important (these data are in Table 17). In addition, as shown in Table 19, just under 92% of respondents agreed that upper level Psychology courses were more engaging that lower level courses. Table 19 shows that survey respondents agreed they had substantially grown intellectually and that their interest in academic work had increased. It also shows that almost all survey respondents agreed that Psychology lectures were intellectually stimulating and interesting.

Table 19. Psychology courses (survey respondents)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4
Upper level Psychology courses are more engaging than lower level courses	55	37	8	0
Intellectually I have grown substantially	35	55	10	0
My interest in academic work has increased	30	47	18	5
The content of my Psychology lectures is intellectually stimulating	34	59	7	0
My Psychology lectures are interesting to me	40	56	4	0

These changes in the nature of students' academic abilities and interests were key prerequisites to feelings of belonging to the disciplinary community and they were a sign of growth toward "competent membership" (Tinto, 1993) within it. Research within the classroom was similarly an indicator that drew attention to the shifting relationship between faculty and students. Upper level Psychology courses had a strong

research focus compared with other courses within and outside of Psychology. In addition to opportunities for students to participate in research projects (discussed in Chapter 7), current research results based on faculty's research programs were typically part of course lectures. Faculty tended to integrate current research into their lectures so that "the lectures were all on the newest, up-to-date papers with the most interesting things that had to do with the subject. So, it was fascinating" (Janet). This approach was something that was less likely to happen in "first and second year [where] it was more ... strictly based on the ... text book" (Katherine) because "it just doesn't work" (Katherine) with lower level students. Students discussed the use of research examples as part of a different kind of connection with faculty. Rather than being lectured "at" from a text book, faculty were seen to be acknowledging undergraduates as competent members of the disciplinary community by offering insights into faculty research projects, and sharing with them work in progress. Among survey respondents 88% agreed that Psychology professors use current research as examples in their lectures (compared 75% agreement about non-Psychology professors). (See Table 20.) One result of integrating current research with upper level lectures according to Rey was that,

> you sort of get the impression that the ideas you come up
> with now, because you're on top of the field, are
> questions that maybe could be further research, you're
> sort of that close to it being in third and fourth year.

185

A significant part of the greater academic interests that developed among this group of students was their experiences with professors both within and outside of the classroom. Students compared their professors in Psychology to professors outside their discipline. For example, according to Melanie,

> professors in the psychology faculty are really good. ...
> this year maybe I'm just lucky, but this year um I've had
> a number of profs that are really ... responsive to the
> students like if they have problems, you know. They ...
> really encourage participation. Whereas you know I ...
> took math and economics ... and you have to go home
> and figure it out on your own kind of thing. ... that's why,
> I found I really like the faculty as well. I'd say there's a
> lot more interaction.

Interviewees talked about enjoying the classroom experience more than they had in previous years and attributed this in large part to a more meaningful relationship with their Psychology professors. As Diane said, "when you get into third year, the professors are good." Even though students would identify professors they considered poor teachers, on the whole students were positive about the instruction in their upper level courses. Excepting the occasional poor teacher, usually an "aberration," "the norm [was] good to very good" (Neely). It is not clear whether students' positive experiences within the disciplinary community and their perceptions about the quality of instruction were related to the development of an "academic affinity" connected to their disciplinary affiliation or whether Psychology professors were actually "better"

186

professors and Psychology classes were "better" classes. As Neely noted, "I don't know if it's the Psychology department, since I'm primarily in those courses now," or whether there were differences between disciplines. Amy observed that it could be that she was "more motivated to actually get involved and like, talk to the profs myself, ... but I find that they're a lot more helpful and they take the time to explain things the best they can. They're basically nicer." If students have developed a knowledge base in a specific discipline and academic and social competencies within a specific department, it is probable that when making comparisons outside their discipline, they would have a greater sense of belonging, feelings of competence, and greater interest within their own community.

These issues, interviewees' perceptions of differences between Psychology and non-Psychology professors, were explored in the survey. A paired sample t-test was used to assess survey respondents' perceptions of the differences between the Psychology professors and non-Psychology professors. (See Appendix C for details.) There were statistically significant differences between Psychology and non-Psychology professors on four of the items identified by interviewees and assessed by survey respondents. They were friendliness of Psychology professors, use of research as examples in Psychology lectures, enjoyment from attending Psychology classes, and the influence of Psychology professors on students' academic careers.

According to survey respondents, there was greater strong agreement that Psychology professors were friendly (53%) compared to non-Psychology professors (36%). (See Table 20.) Among survey respondents, 40% strongly agreed their

187

Psychology professors were competent lecturers compared to their non-Psychology professors (29%), however, these differences were not statistically significantly different; both Psychology and non-Psychology professors were considered competent lecturers. When survey respondents were asked about receiving help from professors outside of class when needed and being encouraged to ask questions in class, there was little difference between Psychology and non-Psychology professors. (See Table 20.)

Table 20. Perceptions of Professors (survey respondents)

	Psychology Professors				Non-Psychology Professors				
	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	Statistical Significance
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Professors use current research as examples in their lectures	43	45	11	1	28	47	21	4	*
Professors are friendly	53	43	4	0	36	57	7	0	*
I am encouraged to asked questions in my classes	24	59	14	3	29	48	20	3	-
Professors encourage me to express opinions in class	15	57	27	1	23	55	22	0	-
I received help from my professors outside of class when needed	27	49	19	5	27	50	20	3	-
I enjoy going to classes	39	56	5	0	21	60	16	3	*
Professors are competent lecturers	40	56	3	1	29	67	4	0	-
Profs show interest, excitement when teaching	45	45	8	2	32	57	11	0	-
Professors are knowledgeable about their subject	70	28	1	1	59	40	1	0	-

* Indicates statistical significance at a < .05 level.

It is interesting to note that Psychology professors were considered somewhat more knowledgeable about their subject area, and tended to show slightly more interest

188

and excitement when teaching in Psychology classes compared to other classes. Table 20 shows that 70% of survey respondents strongly agreed that their Psychology professors were knowledgeable about their subject area, compared with 59% of non-Psychology professors in their subject area.

According to case study results, overall there was an increase in the level of involvement in academic aspects of their university experience. Third year students talked about enjoying their classroom experiences in a way they had not done in previous years. Most survey respondents (95%) agreed that they enjoyed going to their Psychology classes compared with their non-Psychology classes (81% agreed). As Carol said, "I have a lot of professors that I really enjoy and I actually enjoy going to lectures ... and listening to them." Attending a greater percentage of lectures was a change identified by a number of students (Cheryl, Melanie). Speaking of a particularly stimulating third year class, one student said, "I didn't find it difficult to make it through those lectures, and didn't miss too many classes, what I was doing a lot of ... [laughter]" (Neely).

When the two agreement categories (strongly and somewhat agree) are collapsed into one, there is less evidence in support of distinctions between Psychology and non-Psychology professors. But, when the "strongly agree" category is considered separately, differences emerge. Psychology professors were identified as more inclined to be seen as competent lecturers and to use current research as examples in classes. The use of research as examples in Psychology classes was considered statistically more likely according to survey respondents. This difference is consistent with the

189

"scientific" nature of the discipline and, according to students, was considered a significant aspect of the Psychology classroom experiences. Survey respondents strongly agreed that non-Psychology professors encouraged opinions and questions in class. Considering that interviewees reported classes in Psychology were almost always lectures (rather than seminars), disciplinary differences may be relevant in terms of understanding differences in students' perceptions in these areas.

Bruce described his first year as a "learning experience" that included surmounting the "hurdle" of "incompetent professors" by which he meant professors who "just didn't seem to realize that they're not teaching" or who were dismissive of students' queries and requests for help. One student suggested that first year was a "filtering out" (Rey) process. Faculty were seen as reluctant to invest energy in students who would not be long term members of the academic community. Such students would also be ineligible candidates for future membership in a particular disciplinary community.

> It seems like profs know first and second year, they're not
> trying to excite you they're just sort of okay, 'I've done
> this for 20 years, here it is. Here's another batch of first
> years, half of you aren't going to be here next year.' So,
> they don't really care. (Rey)

By comparison, once students reached third year they reported having experiences with a greater proportion of "better" (Bruce), "more interesting" (Diane, Cheryl), "nicer" (Amy) and "responsive" (Melanie) professors. According to one

190

student, once in third year, "it definitely seems like the quality of the professors ... has been night and day. I've run into a lot more quality professors, ... I'm sure it's not just me. I'm sure it's them" (Neely).

Students partly attributed the change to the fact that advanced year level courses were more likely to be taught by faculty who were able to teach "more in their specialization" (Diane) and as a consequence were teaching material they liked. Students responded to the enthusiasm of professors who "seem really interested in what they do" (Carol). As one student said, "I like that they love their subject" (Janet). Also, "you get their own unique personal taste of how the field is ... so it's a lot better than someone who is just doing a general studies" (Doreen).

Students also perceived their relationship with professors as qualitatively different than it had been in previous years:

> The profs lecture more as if they respect you for knowing stuff. Whereas before, they were just kind of, they're on this automatic pilot where they spiel off their first year Science lecture number ten. And then they go. (Diane)

> This is what's really nice about moving up. I think through the years you get your better professors who are interested in the topics they're teaching and interested in you as a person learning what they have to say. (Bruce)

As Rey noted,

191

You've been exposed to enough knowledge now that your ideas aren't just sort of stupid questions that the prof is going to answer, because half of the time the prof can't answer them because you're asking questions that maybe have never been asked before.

I think all the profs I have ... are the top. ... As you get higher up, I think they really know they're stuff, like you know, you think you stumped them, but you know, but here they are coming up with [the answers].

Once again, the link with the important phase of competency development is emphasized. The knowledge base that students have developed in the first two years of their program facilitates the establishment of a relationship between faculty and students "on a different level" (Peter). A evident in Table 21, among survey respondents, there was some support for interviewees' perceptions: 61% of survey respondents agreed that Psychology professors had greater respect for their ideas now that they were in third year. When the same statement was posed about non-Psychology professors, 55% of survey respondents agreed. Also shown in Table 21, survey respondents indicated that they were only slightly more satisfied with the quality of teaching in their Psychology classes (97% agreed with this) compared with their non-Psychology classes (93%).

Table 21. Professors (survey respondents)

	Psychology Professors				Non-Psychology Professors				
	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	Statistically Significant
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Professors have greater respect for my ideas now that I'm in 3rd year	12	49	36	3	8	47	40	5	-
I am satisfied with the quality of teaching in my classes	29	68	3	0	20	73	7	0	-
Professors are interested in my academic development	11	47	32	10	11	45	29	15	-
Some or one of my professors have had a major influence on my academic career	26	33	29	12	19	21	40	20	*

* Indicates statistical significance at a $<.05$ level.

Interviewees perceived that their professors were taking a greater interest in their academic development and that they were more likely (than in previous years) to have an influence on academic careers. As shown in Table 21, there was some support among survey respondents for this perception, but there was little difference between Psychology and non-Psychology professors with these items. The differences between Psychology and non-Psychology professors was slight and limited to a few areas of students' experiences. These data suggest that the development of a "different" relationship with professors extended beyond disciplinary boundaries, but students were more likely to identify Psychology professors as influencing their academic careers and as connecting with students (in terms of levels of friendliness and accessibility outside of class) as individuals. Students were also more likely to enjoy their Psychology

classes compared with non-Psychology classes, suggesting that there was the development of an affinity with a specific discipline as suggested by student interviews.

Other students noted an increased ease within the classroom – Paula, for example, noted that by third year, "you're comfortable, you're comfortable because you know you can do it." And as Bruce said, "I tend to ask questions in class now too, ... and that's purely out of interest, whereas before it was more of ah, you know, 'Think of a question!' sort of."

Table 22. Intellectual Engagement (survey respondents)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4
Overall my classes are intellectually stimulating	34	54	12	0
Overall my university courses are interesting	26	58	16	0
I make contributions to class discussions	15	31	31	23
I enjoy going to my Psychology classes	37	55	8	0
I have gained substantial knowledge in my field	46	45	9	0
I am comfortable asking questions in class	21	23	37	19
I have had academic discussions about topics or issues in Psychology with my Professors	16	32	34	18
I feel academically competent to discuss to discuss Psychology topics/issues with my Professors	26	45	26	3
Interaction and discussion are encouraged in class	19	51	26	4

Despite interviewees' agreement that the third year student classroom experience was generally superior to previous years, and that they found interacting with professors within the classroom less intimidating, survey respondents indicated they

194

were not exceptionally comfortable asking questions in class. As shown in Table 22, the statements about the encouragement of interaction and discussion in class (19%) and students' level of comfort about asking questions in class (21%) were slightly more frequently very strongly agreed with than was the statement that students actually make contributions to class discussions (15%).

Summary

The data in this chapter show that, consistent with Cohen's (1985) observation that membership entails defining differences between community insiders and outsiders, students in this study made boundary distinctions at a number of levels. Students differentiated between membership in the RIU academic community and membership in some other university. RIU was identified as a first rate and a first choice institution, and the criteria for this assessment included its size relative to other provincial institutions, its reputation as a top research university, and the perception, based on the fact that it was the oldest university in the province, that it was the most prestigious. Being a Psychology student entailed resistance of an assigned identity as a weak or lazy student, one who was taking the "easy way out" by enrolling in a less academically rigorous program. Perceptions of Psychology as "easy," "flaky" or "just common sense" were strenuously contested not only by proclaiming the opposite, but also by drawing attention to the prestige of Psychology faculty at RIU. As a discipline, Psychology was differentiated from other disciplines by its relative youth and lack of a well developed body of knowledge. It was considered "scientific" and balanced

195

between hard and soft (Becher, 1987) disciplines in terms of its epistemological assumptions and evaluation criteria. The Biopsychology program was small and relatively unknown, and had a stronger research and natural Science approach to knowledge validation and generation compared to the Arts program. As measured by grade averages, students in this program were high academic achievers, and considered themselves top students. Both Arts and Science students discussed the relative advantages of being in their program rather than the other: Arts students focusing on the quality of student life, and relationship with professors, Science students focusing on being a member of a select, academically superior group.

The academic major selection process was also an important aspect of "defining differences" as students underwent a process of matching their interests, learning styles, and future goals with an appropriate program. For the students in this study, choosing to major in Psychology often followed a positive experience with the curriculum. Significant numbers of students switched into Psychology from other programs after discovering that they and the other program were not well suited - there was a poor "fit" between them (Tinto, 1993), and a few students indicated they selected Psychology as their major because they were not admitted to another program. For some, selecting Psychology was consistent with a long-term interest in the area and a desire to help others. This section of defining differences illustrated the negative consequences, such as academic failure or delayed graduation, to result from a poor fit between student and program of study.

196

The process of competency development that began with students' initial contact with the university entailed learning the physical layout of campus building and the location of classes, as well as "navigating" new social, cultural and intellectual settings. Students were required to contend with a less intimate social setting compared with high school, to manage their course work load without constant "teacher intervention" and learn where things were on campus. These competencies were, to a certain extent, managed over the course of the first year, even in the first few days when finding classes or the cafeteria, but were improved on with each passing year. Building a knowledge base and learning the values, languages and knowledge assumptions associated with Psychology was a key competency which required more time and engagement with the discipline. Course work and involvement with research were integral aspects of this competency.

Students underwent a transition from a greater interest in and preoccupation with social pursuits and activities to a greater interest in and engagement with academic aspects of their university experience. While first year was a time for "clubbing" and socializing with friends, often friends from high school, by third year students were less interested in "socializing" and more interested in pursuing academic goals and engaging in meaningful ways with the academic aspects of their university experience. Friendships were also shaped by disciplinary affiliation. In some cases, past close friends selected their academic major, usually not Psychology, scheduling conflicts and time commitments interfered with opportunities to get together and students started to "do their own things" rather than spend free time with friends. Survey results showed

197

that social activities on campus were less important to respondents, even though they were, overall, slightly more engaged socially. Respondents were more focused on academic goals, were more engaged academically and found academic work more interesting.

These changes corresponded with a perception among interviewees that course work and professors were qualitatively better now that students were in third year. A further distinction was made by some between Psychology professors and non-Psychology professors. Interviewees suggested that professors treated students differently in first and second year because of the high expected attrition rate, but once students were in the upper year levels, professors treated them with more "respect" and with interest and concern about what students were learning. Students also suggested that this difference was related to their ability to ask "intelligent" questions and to challenge professors in their fields of expertise.

Discussion

Viewing students' experiences through the lens of the constitutive community framework reveals the longitudinal process of establishing oneself as an actively participating member of the disciplinary community. Members of a constitutive community are "situated" in so far as "the subject positions they inhabit are constituted by the particular community" (Howard, 1997, p. 130). Students revealed the subject positions most clearly through their discussion of community interaction in their third year compared with the first two years. Initially students assumed the nominal identity

198

of "student" and eventually altered their status within the academic community with the declaration of a major in Psychology. As peripheral members of the disciplinary community, competency development and a concomitant greater interest in academic aspects of their undergraduate experience helped to reposition students more closely as core members of the disciplinary community. The competency development and transition processes enabled greater participation in the disciplinary community at the same time that they defined the parameters of that participation. As students interested in Psychology and interested Psychology students, a new kind of relationship with faculty emerged. As suggested by their discussions of feelings of greater competence and comfort within the classroom that enabled students to more freely address their teachers, contribute more to classroom discussions, and intellectually challenge faculty with questions that had not yet been asked or that they may not be able to answers, students "spoke" with a stronger voice that was more easily "heard" by faculty. This constitutive framework was a useful tool for exploring the evolution of an identity and for highlighting the subject position of students that eventually resulted from it.

A key "power relationship" affecting the lives of undergraduate students is that which exists between students and faculty. Romer and Whipple (1991) identify undergraduate students as existing at the lowest levels of a "power line" compared with faculty who reside at the top. Despite the power imbalance, students were able to develop a stronger subject position within the disciplinary community which resulted in the acquisition of power resources.

199

In this study, it was evident that over time students acquired greater re-sources, (such as information about the values and culture of the disciplinary community, relevant theories and research procedures, greater understanding of the effort and time required to meet academic requirements, confidence in the academic abilities). The mechanisms that facilitate the acquisition of resources are highlighted by the examination of students' experiences through the lens of the constitutive community framework. That is, defining difference, developing competence, and the process of transition, all contribute to the repositioning of students as more powerful actors within the disciplinary community in so far as these actions serve to endow students with greater resource capacity. For example, the accumulation of a knowledge base in Psychology provided students with additional resources with which to engage with other community members, especially, to engage with faculty. The transition from social to academic interests helped to redefine students as "more serious" participants in the disciplinary community and thus enhanced their status as academically competent participants within the community.

The constitutive framework is particularly useful in highlighting the temporal aspects of resource acquisition. Communities have a history, they are constituted by their past, and the ability to engage with members of the community entails tapping into the "memory" of the community. Bellah, Nadsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985) suggest that learning the languages, practices, and manners appropriate to a particular community comes from memories passed from established members to new members. Accumulating memories of a particular community entails learning a "second language"

200

with which to speak within that community. Memory, then, may also be considered a resource that students acquired over time.

Students' memories will inevitably be shorter than those of most faculty and other longer term members. In addition to the shorter period of involvement with the disciplinary community, undergraduate students "drop in" to the community at a particular period of its history and then exit at another period, but the community does not "stop" in between. Thus there is inevitably a imbalance in the power resources of the two groups.

As shown in Chapter 5, students' articulation of ideal and actual aspects of community drew attention to their desire to engage intellectually with the community by sharing ideas with faculty. Examining students' experiences through the constitutive community framework illustrated ways this could occur that students found meaningful. One was to involve students in research by introducing new research projects in class. As was shown in this chapter, students found the use of research as example in the classroom engaging and a "reward" commensurate with their status as core (3rd year) rather than peripheral (before 3rd year) community members.

CHAPTER SEVEN: EXPERIENCING COMMUNITY – AN INDIVIDUALISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Viewing students' experiences through the lens of an individualistic community framework draws attention to the remunerative aspects of community involvement. Members of an individualistic community may be motivated by either egoism or altruism, but the motivation to act is nonetheless dependent on a desire for some kind of reward. Participation and involvement are an exchange. The individualistic community framework also draws attention the variability of members' involvement and the capacity of the community to provide rewards.

The first section of this chapter presents the remunerative aspects of students' involvement with the disciplinary community. This includes an exploration of the relationship of undergraduate students to the credit research activities of the department, and an examination of student-student and student-faculty relationships. In the second section of this chapter the "degree of investment" in the academic and disciplinary communities is explored, including those aspects of students' experiences that are barriers to community involvement and that facilitate the emergence of a sense of belonging among community members.

Viewing students' experiences of community through the individualistic framework often brings into focus aspects of those experiences that were hidden or

202

even contradict the view as seen from the constitutive experience. When they arise, these differences are made explicit in this chapter.

Remuneration

There is ample evidence from the case study of the remunerative aspects of community membership. One of the most obvious forms of remuneration is grades. At a fundamental level, maintaining a passing grade point average is essential for continued membership in the academic community. In addition, however, grades were identified as key indicators of future success and were closely linked with students' educational aspirations and desired career paths. In addition to employing strategies designed for "making the grades," students arranged "interpersonal relationships" with other community members in order to receive a maximum benefit. Students were also willing to point out that "paying the bill" entitled them to certain compensation. Finally, an aspect of the remunerative principle shaping students' experiences was the effect of studying material most relevant to career paths.

Making the Grades

Many of the comments interviewees made about their marks make it clear that achieving a high grade average was important and that "people were so concerned about their marks" (Adam); indeed, "getting good marks, it's a very big thing!" (Paula). As Rey explained,

> Right now I'm trying to keep my grades up enough so I
> have as many options as I can when I graduate. I think
> graduate school is a definite goal.

Among survey respondents, 42% strongly agreed that getting top marks was very important to them, and an additional 35% somewhat agreed with this. When interviewees talked about their academic aspirations and career goals, they tended to mention grades and the necessity to "get the best marks" (Jo-Anne) possible. For example, Paula noted that "if my marks are high enough, ... I'm going to apply for chiropractic [medicine]" and Carol noted that in general,

> People want to get the best marks. They want to get into
> grad school, they want to get into med school. They want
> to do the best.

Almost 90% of survey respondents indicated that they intended to continue their education in a formal way in the future. As shown in Table 23, the majority of these students (70%) intended to pursue either an advanced degree or a second Bachelor level degree.

Table 23. Further education aspirations (all case study respondents)

	Arts %	Science %	Total %
Another bachelor's degree	4	0	3
Master's degree	32	15	28
Doctoral degree	4	15	7
Teacher training	11	8	10
Law degree	11	0	9
Medicine degree	4	54	13
Community college diploma/certificate	4	0	3
Technical or vocational training	6	0	5
Other	6	0	6
Don't know	18	8	16
Total	100	100	100

Differences between aspirations of Science and Arts students are noteworthy. Science students were more inclined to want to pursue a degree in medicine (54%), a master's (15%) or a doctoral degree (15%). Few Arts students were interested in Medicine (4%), but many wanted to pursue a Master's degree (32), teacher training (11%) or law (11%). A significant percentage (19%) did not know what further education they would pursue.

Although other students were less concerned about grade point average and employment, Paula was concerned that,

> these days ... if you want to continue after a Bachelors, [getting in requires] a quite high mark. ... Even if they don't want to continue, if you want to apply for a job, they always look at your marks. So you have to have good marks, otherwise there's no point of going to university.

The perception that grades were a key indicator of success was a strong force that enhanced participation in the disciplinary community in the form of greater involvement with academic course work. Students employed a variety of strategies in order to secure "good grades." The shift away from social activities that was discussed in the last chapter was in part due to an unexpected drop in grades following first year and the need to improve grade averages. The majority of interviewees experienced a drop in grades ranging from 10 to 30 percent. This drop proved to be the case for 80% of survey respondents as well. Interviewees had expected to be able to continue previous study habits and maintain grade levels achieved in high school and were often surprised and dismayed by the dramatic drop after first year. As Amy said, "I did pretty well in high school without really trying hard, so when I came here I thought 'I'm going to make lots of friends, and I'm still going to get the grades I used to get.'" For most case study participants, this was not so.

As shown in Table 24, for both Arts and Science survey respondents, grades improved considerably after first year. A notable difference between these two groups was how difficult they thought it was to get good grades in upper level courses. Forty-six percent of Science students indicated that they strongly disagreed that it was difficult to get good grades in upper level course. Only 16% of Arts students strongly disagreed.

206

Table 24. Making the Grades (survey respondents)

	Arts				Science			
	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4	% 1	% 2	% 3	% 4
Overall my grades dropped compared with my my high school grades	55	24	13	8	62	23	0	14
Overall my grades improved after my first year	34	40	19	7	31	46	8	15
It is very clear what I need to do in order to get good grades in Psychology	20	40	35	5	31	46	23	0
Overall it is difficult for me to get good grades in upper level courses	13	47	24	16	8	31	15	46
It is easier for me to get good grades in upper level Psych. courses than in lower level courses	16	40	29	15	23	39	23	15

In order to achieve what they considered satisfactory grades, students had to "cut back" on the level of non-academic involvement. Katherine noted that even though grades were more a priority for future admitting institutions than for her, "in order to achieve my long term goal, becoming a naturopath, I need to raise my grades. ... priorities become rank ordered, and you focus on [grades] more." The time commitment for diverse social activities was too extensive (Jo-Anne, Melanie) and setting different priorities was considered imperative if students were to attain expected levels of academic achievement.

I think to do well you basically have to get your priorities straight, like "I'm a student now so I have to do one hundred percent school work. I have to put school before everything else." And that's what I kind of decided. ... That was a big change because before I was like "I'm

207

going to have friends, I'm going to be this, I'm going to
be club ... executive." But I kind of had to give that up to
do well in school. (Amy)

Doreen had been heavily involved in sports as well as music, but by third year had learned to keep the extracurricular activities "to the bare minimum" and had come to see the diversity of social opportunities on campus as distractions and time-wasters. The shift was less a result of changed interests and more a consequence of the fact that in first year students "didn't really know what was required to do well" (Amy). Increasing and maintaining a satisfactory grade average entailed reassessing the time commitments needed for academic work (Jo-Anne) and that in turn meant a reduction in social involvement.

By third year students were beginning to achieve grades that were comparable to what they had earned in high school. They were "doing better than in [the] first two years" (Carol) and grades were improving (Amy, Adam). As Tamara noted, it was a slow process: "It wasn't like I was down here and suddenly I was back on top. ... I mean, it was a gradual process, but I'm back to where I was when I was in high school, more or less." A number of students attributed their renewed academic success to a clearer "focus" (Katherine), "getting a little more serious" (Carol) about school work and setting specific "goals" (Andrea).

I guess I set my goals and I sort of know what I'm doing,
and in first year I was sort of lost. I really don't know
why I'm here, I just think that I want to complete my

208

degree and that's it, right. But now I sort of have a goal, like now I'll do my degree and I might want to go on (Fiona).

Some interviewees underwent a transformation in their approach to learning. Adam made a connection between his "changed thoughts about postgrad" (pursuing a law degree after completing his Bachelor's) and a renewed interest in studying in general.

My thoughts about school in general changed. ... You know, before it was just something you had to do. ... Before I thought school was somewhat of an annoyance. It was like "Oh yea, I've got to do it, I've got to do my homework." Now I don't really mind.

Doreen articulated a similar sentiment:

Summer was a turning point for me where I actually, wanted to learn. Isn't that weird? Before where, high school and all the way up to first and second year, sort of, you're given the material to learn, you learn it, regurgitate it. I was fine with that, right. But now, ... it wasn't enough. I actually want to learn now.

For Doreen learning meant more than memorization and "regurgitation," it included reading beyond assigned readings and "experiencing more" intellectually.

209

Students employed a number of other strategies to ensure the best possible grades. Adam explained that he started coming to campus seven days a week in order to increase his grades.

> I come Saturdays and Sundays too, ... just this year. I have to pull my marks up ... from the first two years, because I want to get into law school. So to have a realistic chance, I need at least 80.

Two interviewees mentioned that there were a number of "loop holes" that students had to learn in order to get good marks (Laurette); it was necessary to learn "how the systems work and how to get good grades" (Paula). One such way the "system worked" was suggested by Laurette:

> I always go and meet my professors, and I tell you and I will tell everybody, if you want to get good grades, ... go let your self be seen, introduce yourself and ask questions.

According to interviewees, by third year, students had a much better understanding of how to get better grades in the department. This was supported to a certain extent by just under 22% of survey respondents who strongly agreed and 41% who somewhat agreed that it was very clear what needed to be done in order to get good grades in Psychology. However, clearly, according to this item, 37% of survey respondents were still unsure how to succeed in terms of getting good Psychology grades.

210

A number of interviewees mentioned stories that reflected the pressure students were under to achieve high marks, and the lengths some would go to in order to secure them. The following story was told by Linda:

> For our lab we were doing, sexual behavior of rats and we
> had to go and find all this literature on it, and write a
> paper, like the introduction part of our paper. And so we
> went to the library and all the papers had been gone. None
> of the librarians knew where they were, and apparently
> someone had taken them and like hidden them so no one
> else could get them.

As Bruce explained, "people would run, get all the material and sign it out and keep it so no one else would have access to it and that would of course increase their mark in the class." None of the interviewees suggested they had hidden key references, but this story and several others like it, were mentioned by a number interviewees.

Another method of increasing class marks was to participate in research studies for marks, what interviewees called "credits." One of the key aspects of the undergraduate Psychology student's academic life is the opportunity to participate in research projects outside of the classroom. In the first and second year levels, students were able earn additional marks (up to 2% per course for selected courses) for participating as "subjects" in studies being conducted by faculty and graduate students. Projects were posted on the main bulletin board in the Psychology building and usually

211

the experiments were conducted in the Psychology laboratories in the same building. If a student wanted to participate in a study,

you'd sign up for it on the sheet, then you'd show up at the time that you said you would show up for. ... You do the study, you fill out the sheet with the professor's name and your name, the section [of the class] and then depending on if you were there an hour or half an hour, you would get a half credit or one credit, then you stick the sheet in this little box, and someone goes through it I guess and gives it to the professor so that at the end of term when it's time to add up the marks they'll have the extra marks. (Jo-Anne).

The following experiment was typical of the types of studies students participated in:

I did one where it was, they set up a fake, some type of fake intelligence test. Just like, it was really basic. And then they asked whether you thought you had done well. ... Then they gave you a set of scores back, which wasn't true to your performance and you were asked to evaluate how well you did in comparison. And it was to see how North Americans judge themselves, ... and then I think they did it in Japan, and they were comparing whether different cultures evaluate themselves [differently]. (Rey)

212

All interviewees were aware of the possibility of earning additional credits by participating in research and all but two had done so. As shown in Table 25, the survey data indicate that 91% of all respondents had participated in at least one research project for credit.

Table 25. Credit Research (survey respondents)

	Arts				Science			
	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
The credit studies I participated in were a valuable part of my education at RIU	12	47	38	3	0	46	45	9
My motivation for participating in credit studies was to improve my class marks	54	43	3	0	73	18	9	0
I usually received results from the credit studies in which I participated	22	18	27	33	0	27	27	46
I learned a great deal about my discipline by participating in these studies	6	37	45	12	9	27	27	37
I learned a great deal about research by participating in these studies	13	57	27	3	28	18	36	18

Most students were motivated to participate in these studies because they wanted the additional percentage points added to their grade (Neely, Adam, Andrea). As shown in Table 25, Biopsychology students (59%) were more likely to agree that the project(s) they had participated in were a valuable part of their education, compared with Arts Psychology students (46%). Almost all students agreed that their primary motivation for participating in such studies was to improve class marks. Students were skeptical of any larger educational value of their participation (Adam), partly because the

213

"arrangement" was that students would participate as "subjects" and be rewarded with "credits" rather than, as discussed later, as "researchers" who had a valuable contribution to make to the research project. Learning seemed to be of secondary importance (Neely) an assessment that was supported to a certain extent by survey respondents. As shown in Table 25, more Biopsychology students (70%) than Arts Psychology students (46%) indicated they had learned a great deal about research by participating in the studies. Frequently participants did not receive results of the studies they participated in, in some cases because results were not offered (Emma). Again, as shown in Table 25, Biopsychology survey respondents were somewhat more likely to indicate that they usually received results form the credit studies in which they participated. In most cases, students did not receive results of the credit studies because they weren't interested; they "just grabbed [the] credits and ran" (Rey).

The following comments by survey respondents reflect the sentiments of the interviewees.

I didn't get much out of participating – all for credit.

I think really most people participate just to benefit themselves in some way. That's why university students make up the most subjects.

Most people participate in these studies for credit, and don't really take in anything more about the studies.

214

> Some of the research studies are pointless, and I seldom
> get feedback.

A total of 9 survey respondents commented on the credit research and all of them noted that they were primarily interested in the credits.

Interpersonal Relationships

Another aspect of the remunerative nature of students' involvement in the disciplinary community was evident in the relationships they developed with their peers and with faculty. Disciplinary based associations were described as "superficial," and "more of casual acquaintances" (Adam). It was difficult to "get on a close personal level with [people]" (Fiona). Friendships were more likely to be strategic and focused on establishing a relationship with at least one individual from whom students could get missed lecture notes (Neely). Classmates were seen as "colleagues" with whom friendly relations were established because "the more friendly you are the more you can get help" (Doreen). Such relationships were "more of an exchange" (Adam) than a friendship. The nature of student relationships is revealed in this quote about an impromptu study group. In preparation for an open book final exam, a group of students remained in the lecture hall after class the week before the exam to discuss "the data" they were given. As Paula remembered:

215

> We stayed half an hour after the class discussing it with
> people in my class ... [people] I didn't even know. We
> discussed everything. We were pretty comfortable. ...Yea,
> . . .. It was really good.

These students had been in the same class for an entire term, but it was only the benefits expected to accrue from participating in a study group that brought them together. Friends were a separate group with whom they did not study and preferred not to engage in intellectual discussions. When students were with their friends, they preferred to "just relax and not get into heated debate on some sort of issue or something" (Carol).

Similar strategic relationships were cultivated with faculty. Students attempted to "get to know professors" (Peter) so that when needed, they could ask for letters of reference. Even students who had low grades but had cultivated relationships with their professors were seen to have an advantage over those who had not.

> There's other people who did worse, or had not as good
> grades, but at least they got to know the profs, you know,
> they got some references, and got contacts and that kind
> of things that led them somewhere. (Melanie)

In the previous chapter the transition from a strong focus on social activities to a greater focus on academic activities as students developed a stronger identity as a member of the disciplinary community was discussed. Viewing that transition through

216

the lens of an individualistic community framework draws attention to the "calculus of community" (Hunter & Riger, 1986, p. 63) embedded within it. Cutting back on extracurricular activities was important, but cutting it out completely was seen to be counter productive. Students believed a balance between social and academic aspects of their university lives contributed to their overall academic success, and it was the value placed on academic success that, from the individualistic community perspective, motivated participation in the disciplinary community.

Balance was important, not only for "mental health" (Patricia), but also to enhance future job prospects (Melanie, Cheryl, Carol). "Grade point average seem[ed] to be very low on the scale of things future employers looked for" (Bruce) compared with "people skills" (Katherine) or such abilities as "social interaction and cooperation behavior, ... [or] conflict resolution skills" (Bruce). Students were concerned that too great an emphasis on academic achievement would retard the development of these abilities (Melanie). Just as an excessive social life was detrimental to academic success, an excessive academic life was seen to be detrimental to "social success." Katherine was concerned that students who were primarily academically focused were "one dimensional." These students "know a lot about their major ... but current issues, [or] about, their [own] views, some people are ignorant out there!" Such students "were in for a big shock" if they applied for a job that "requires interaction, books aren't going to do it for you." Thus, one aspect of students' motivation to participate in the academic community was the accumulation of the appropriate "skills" to secure future employment.

217

Students linked the value of "balance" with their understanding of university as an institution that could provide opportunities for "networking" (Doreen). Going to university had "a lot to do with the people that you meet, the contacts. ... In terms of undergraduate experience it's more of the social connections that you make ... that really help you out" (Melanie). Volunteer work, for example, contributed to the development of general social skills (Katherine, Peter) and helped to "connect people to where [they] could be ... in the real world" (Doreen). The "reward" of possible employment connections and the development of skills valued by employers would be lost for those who placed too great an emphasis on academic success at the expense of social success.

Paying the Bill

Evidence of the rewards (such as a credential, letters of reference, and so on) students receive through their participation in the communities of the university is one example of the remunerative principle in operation. An opposite example is the response of students when they feel they do not receive the appropriate service or reward for their participation. Students' dissatisfaction under these circumstances is usually expressed in terms of real currency. These types of comments by students were made in reference to both physical and curricular aspects of RIU.

The value of utilizing two conceptual frameworks is that each one highlights different aspects of the same phenomenon, and in the case of the constitutive and individualistic frameworks, contradictory aspects of students classroom experiences are brought into focus. From the constitutive community perspective, the developing

218

subject position of students reveals, on the whole, an increasingly more positive classroom experience for students. From the individualistic perspective, it is evident that it was not uncommon for students to be dissatisfied with some of their courses, and in some instances to express their dissatisfaction in terms of the principle of remuneration. A good example is provided by Laurette who was of the view that as a student there "was a great deal that was expected" of her; "when you're majoring in something," you had an obligation to attend classes and "work really hard to present quality work." When the same consideration was not given by faculty to her as a student, she felt she was not receiving appropriate compensation for her commitment to and involvement in the disciplinary community. In her opinion, "the students, the people who pay to come [to RIU]" deserve quality instruction in return for submitting quality work.

> But the difference with ... professors is that sometimes
> they don't show up, or they're extremely disorganized. ...
> You know, you don't come in one day, teach something,
> and then come back the next day and say 'Oh, remember
> what I taught you, well, it was wrong.' ... I come here
> and I show up, and I'm paying to come here and I expect
> to get my money's worth!

Getting some benefit from courses in addition to grades was important to students. Melanie described a course she thought she had failed, but it turned out passed with a "C" grade.

219

In a way I would rather have had a lower grade and at least known what was going on and get something out of it, because I did pay $300. ... You know just to get a sense of like being productive and accomplishment, because I really didn't feel like I got anything out of that. It was just like a number, a grade that was put on my transcript, but it really didn't have any effect on me.

Finally students' sense of fair return on their investment also extended to the physical environment. Diane, for example, commented on the run-down and out-dated state of some classrooms at RIU. Students, she felt, "pay so much money" there should be up-to-date equipment and satisfactory lighting in the classrooms. Speaking of a classroom in one building in particular, Diane noted that

It was dark, you couldn't see, and the audio visual equipment was really, really terrible, overheads and stuff were difficult to see, and there's a chalk board!

Studying Relevant Courses

Rewards received for sacrifices made to the community were evidenced by students' eventual ability to enroll in the courses they found most interesting and relevant to their career goals. Feeling that they were getting "the most out of third year" (Laurette) was in part because students were studying material that interested

220

them. They made comparisons with first and second year, again drawing attention to the importance of finding a "fit" between their interests and abilities and their academic major. By the end of second year students had completed the majority of prerequisite courses that were outside of Psychology. The result was the freedom to select courses of interest (Jo-Anne) and to more intensely focus on their chosen discipline.

Katherine was a good example. She talked about the tedium of taking a multitude of "general" courses that were not specifically what she wanted to study. For example, she could see no connection between mathematics and her interest in the human body and behavior.

> Another reason I like third year, it's so much more specific to what I wanted. I mean last year, first year, general chemistry, general biology, math, physics. I'm not weak in math, but I mean, working with numbers, what does that do for me? Nothing! (Katherine)

Without exception Biopsychology students commented on the rigid course requirements in first and even second year and the restrictions imposed on enrolling in courses of personal interest. Carol noted that in third year her "studies are more ... what I want to do, more specific, concentrated on specific subjects that I'm interested in." She noted that "in [third year] Psychology there are only twelve credits of required [courses]. Everything is basically like an elective." To a lesser extent prerequisite courses "interfering" with academic interests were a concern for Arts Psychology students (Melanie, Laurette). Overall, with prerequisite courses "out of the way"

221

students in both Arts and Science "were finally getting to learn things that [they] wanted to learn rather than stuff [they] have to [learn]" (Jo-Anne).

Remuneration went beyond simply "liking" a greater proportion of courses. At this level of study some students were making an explicit connection between course content and their career and/or further education aspirations. Nutrition, physiology and specific Biopsychology classes available to Katherine in third year "were a lot more relevant to what [she] wanted to do." and directly informed her future educational aspirations.

> I just couldn't see that big picture. And this year it's just
> incredible, just exactly what I wanted. (Katherine)

For Katherine the "big picture" included having a clear goal (studying naturopathic medicine) beyond completing her first degree in Psychology. This combination of factors resulted in a very positive third year experience:

> It's just putting them all together, like my motivation, my
> interest, my courses, everything is just fitting so well into
> place this is one of the best experiences of my undergrad.
> (Katherine).

Community Investment

The theory of limited liability implies a community in which individuals' involvement is highly variable depending on the capacity of the community to provide

222

rewards. An individual's commitment to a particular community may be limited either because she or he chooses not to "invest" in it, or because the community lacks the capacity to meet members' needs or expectations.

In the following section of this chapter, the variable participation of students in the communities of the university are explored and forces that both constrain and enable involvement are identified. First, a student's role as researcher and/or research assistant is discussed; second structural constraints both within and outside of the classroom are reviewed.

Researchers and Research Assistants

There are several ways a student can become involved in research as a researcher or research assistant in the Psychology department at RIU. One is as part of a credit course. Biopsychology students were required to enroll in a course that "incorporated a large chunk of [their] mark into helping out with research" (Doreen). Students are expected to "get hooked-up with a prof" (Doreen) who would supervise them on a small project that was usually a part of the professor's larger research program.

> At the beginning of the year, it's kind of a mad rush for
> everybody to go and find a prof that they want to work
> with. And if you don't luck out and you get someone you
> don't want to work with, well, too bad for you. (Linda)

223

Once students have found, or if necessary, are assigned, a "sponsor" (Bruce), students took on the role of researcher and conducted a study. The student was required to engage with the research process from conceptualization of a research question and the development of appropriate hypotheses, through data collection, analysis and finally writing a research report. There were a wide variety of projects students were involved in, such as working with infants in a speech and sound lab; testing how consumers perceive price quality and product quality; researching immigrant women and access to health care; using children as expert witnesses; and exploring moral reasoning in hypothetical and real life situations. These descriptions were provided by survey respondents:

> I am studying stereotype formation with an evolutionary twist. It is part of my lab for [particular Psychology course] and I will be the main experimenter running participants, analysing the data and writing the report.

> It was part of my [research] course; worked in the area of animal behaviour/ animal models for hormone effects on the brain. It was my own project so I was basically the one that was in charge of it (besides my supervisor of course).

> Rat research on stress - feeding & seretonin. I was an experimenter.

224

Arts Psychology students were not required to take the same or an equivalent course to the one described above, but one interviewee had enrolled in a directed studies course that allowed him to conduct a research project of his own, under the supervision of a professor. According to the survey respondents, 9% of Arts students had worked under the supervision of a professor on a research project as part of their degree, compared with all of the BSc students.

A second way students could be involved in research in the Psychology laboratories is to volunteer as research assistants. This was something both Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts students did. According to the survey results, this was so for 15% of Arts students, and 54% of Science students. Becoming a volunteer could be the result of having established a relationship with a professor from class, and being in the right place at the right time, as was the case for Katherine.

> I was sitting in a lab doing whatever the day's thing was
> and I saw my Psychology professor from last year, and
> she recognized me. ... And she said "This is very similar
> to what I do in my lab," and I was like "Oh, hey, can I
> volunteer?" And she said, "Sure come on in."

Other students had to be much more proactive if they wanted to volunteer. Amy, who wanted to get into graduate school, visited several counselors to ask their advice and was told "it's a good idea if you have some background in doing laboratory work" (Amy).

So, I printed out a whole bunch of letters and stuff and then I sent it to all the profs and to ... assistants in their labs. So, some called back, so I'm in two labs right now.

One of the projects Amy was involved with entailed "setting up" and monitoring a study that other students volunteered to be subjects in for additional course credits. In the second laboratory she was involved in a study of the relationship between "cognitive load" and parenting skills. Her role was to administer questionnaires, "debrief subjects" and enter data.

There was a third group of students who either did not know about the research opportunities, were not interested in them, or were certain that they would be excluded from participating and so did not pursue the possibility of volunteering in a professor's lab. That kind of work was for "other" students (Jo-Anne). Diane noted that if students wanted to do research outside of the course requirements, they had to "push" a bit, "you have to approach the profs, and be interested and get them to let you do studies with them." When asked if he had done any work as a research assistant or on a research project of his own, Neely said, "No, nothing like that. [pause] This is undergraduate students? [shaking his head] No, nothing like that at all."

For those students who did engage in research, either as part of their course, or as a volunteer, the rewards were substantial. In addition to greater access to professors and the benefits (*e.g.*, letters of reference) mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, students who were involved as researchers or research assistants felt privileged

226

and developed a strong sense of belonging to the disciplinary community. Among survey respondents who participated in these types of research projects, 88% strongly (75%) or somewhat (13%) agreed that their participating had made them feel more a part of the Psychology department.

One factor that contributed to students' sense of belonging was access to a physical place to "be" on campus where students were known and knew other people – access to a place where they "commanded" the attention of others (Rosenberg and McCullough, 1981). As Tamara notes,

> I'm [at the Psychology Building] all the time, ... I know a lot of people, I know a lot of the graduate students, I know, ... just, I'm really familiar with it, it's really familiar ground for me.

Access was limited to those students who had been given access codes or keys to a professors psychology lab. According to survey results, this was the case for 85% of Science students compared with 10% of Arts students. However, these data must be interpreted with care; the percentages of Science students represents 9 individuals as does the percentage of Arts students. As Katherine pointed out, "all the rooms have this secret code. Not everyone can get into it, and you know, that's part of research, right." Two students commented that giving undergraduate students keys or codes was a sign of respect and trust.

227

> They actually trusted me with a key and stuff, so [laughs].
> ... I can go in and punch in stuff. So, I was quite surprised
> ... because I thought maybe they'd be more like "Oh,
> maybe after you come for a month or like two months,
> when we trust you more." ... They just said you know,
> "Feel free to come in, and we have cookies and stuff."
> And I'm like "Okay!" (Amy)

Amy's experience was similar to Katherine, whose sense of privilege and responsibility extended to the task she was entrusted with.

> And feeling respect, though as an undergrad, ... you do
> get that sense of trust as well. Like Dr. [particular
> professor] gave me the code to get into her lab any time.
> And she aid any time you feel like, you know [come in].
> ... And for one of her experiments I made, sort of like a
> fluid, which was necessary ... to run her equipment. And
> it's hard, I mean if I contaminate it, that's it. Like you're
> in trouble, the machine will get contaminated, everything.
> And she let me do it. ... And that really, you know,
> meant a lot to me.

For all of the survey respondents who participated in this type of research, the experience was rewarding. As displayed in Table 26, 63% strongly and 37% somewhat agreed that this was so. Likewise, all respondents would recommend participating in a research project to other Psychology students.

228

Another key aspect of feelings of belonging were articulated by Tamara who pointed out that she had the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the research project.

> I'm doing research, I'm actively involved in the department, like I'm actually contributing to what they're doing there. ... I leave and I feel I've done something and it's good. (Tamara)

Most survey respondents strongly (38%) or somewhat (50%) agreed that they had made important contributions to the research project. Compared with their participation in credit research projects as "subjects," when assuming the active role of researcher or "experimenter," students felt they learned a great deal about their discipline (100%) and their participation contributed to feelings that they were "more a part of the Psychology department" (87% agreed or strongly agreed that this was so). (See Table 26.)

229

Table 26. Supervised Research (survey respondents)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4
The study I participated in was a valuable part of my education at RIU	69	25	6	0
I learned a great deal about my discipline by participating in the research project	62	38	0	0
Participating in the research project made me feel more a part of the Psychology department	75	12	13	0
I made important or useful contribution to the overall research project	38	50	12	0
My participation was a rewarding experience	63	37	0	0
I would recommend participating in a research project to other Psychology students	69	31	0	0

Sixteen survey respondents commented on the benefits they felt they received from participating in research projects. All but one commented on the "experience" they gained, including "practical lab experience," and a "full understanding of what research is about." The value of hands on experience was extended to understanding what was being taught in the classroom and, according to one respondent, was a better way to learn than through course work.

> Ability to have hands on experience with what we have been learning about in [Psychology classes] and to see a project through until completion.

230

> I feel that I learned more about Science and the study of
> behaviour through this experience than any course. It is
> the only way to understand Science!

It was also important to one respondent as a way to plan further education goals by "helping a lot in focusing (more in deciding) whether or not I want to pursue graduate studies in psych" and for another student it was valuable to learn that "I do not like working with rats." The experience made this student

> more aware of psych research, I learned a lot about my
> area of study. Became familiar with career & job
> environment in psych field; met people that will help me
> out later.

According to anther respondent, even if she did not go on, the experience was valuable because,

> even though I may not continue with research I am
> gaining skills that will help me critically evaluate research
> I come across later.

One of the most frequently identified benefits to result from participating in research projects as a researcher was the increased interaction with professors, teaching assistants or laboratory assistants.

I liked getting to know the prof and the other students working on the project. It was also valuable experience on research. I enjoyed conducting the experiment, seeing as I participated in experiments my 1st year.

It let me experience first hand what research is really all about. It also showed me how research is conducted for studies heading for publication. I was go to interact with professors and grad students.

getting to know more profs and TAs; developing lab/research skills.

A sentiment expressed by a number of survey respondents was the positive impact the research activities had on their overall RIU experience.

It involved the effects of malnutrition on ageing rats. I have learned a lot bout the research area, as well as the actual research process. It has really made me enjoy my degree more.

It got me involved in research at the level of the actual work involved. I gained experience in animal care and what's involved in animal research. It was a great experience.

232

Tamara recognized that students who were involved with this type of research were a privileged group and that as one of them her undergraduate experience was qualitatively different from other students'.

> I totally think that if I didn't have this, it would be very much a different experience. ... If I hadn't forced myself to like, actively seek out what I want, if I had just been really lackadaisical and just, been like "Whatever, what comes, comes..." then I think you'd be talking to somebody quite different."

Students' participation in the disciplinary community as researchers and as research assistants highlights both the benefits they derived from their participation, and the inability of the department to afford the same privileges to all students. It was interesting to note that although 10% of Arts students had worked or were working under the supervision of a professor on a research project, 43% expected to do so in the future. Although it was an experience all Biopsychology students would eventually have, Arts students were required to find some way to volunteer in a lab, or enroll in a directed studies course.

233

Limited Involvement

The theory of limited liability highlights the capacity of a community to provide rewards that encourage and facilitate active participation in the community. From this perspective, aspects of a community that hinder such participation are also brought into focus. That is, there are aspects of the university community that limit the involvement of students in various aspects of the university. The curricular and structural limitations on students' involvement in research described above is one example, but there are others. The classroom environment within which students spend most of their on-campus time, is a significant factor that shapes and restricts students' interaction as members of the disciplinary community. In addition, commuting, paid employment, language, and residence are identified as factors that shape participation in the disciplinary and academic communities.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, once students have declared an academic major, they were less likely to be enrolled in the same classes as friends who were typically in different degree programs. Classes were not based on a cohort model at RIU, so "when you have someone in a class, it's rare that you'll have them in another class the next year. So every year you have to meet a whole new set of people" (Ole). In addition the way classes were scheduled made it difficult to develop bonds of friendship. As Janet pointed out, "the system of going to four or five classes ... really breaks you up. Like you go and do one thing for an hour and then 'Bye!' you go and do the next thing. And you don't even interact with anyone really." Amy also recognized that the constraints on meeting people were part of the "system":

234

> The classes are set up so that you don't really have time
> during class to meet people. ... Like ... it's kind of the
> prof comes in and they lecture for the whole time and
> afterwards you have to get to the other class.

To strike up a conversation during class was not only "rude" but "you'd miss something" (Amy) of the lecture. Instruction format also contributed to feelings of isolation and marginality. Going to a lecture was like going to the theatre:

> In RIU it's like watching a movie, kind of. You go in, and
> you listen to the guy talk, and then you leave" (Adam).

Fiona agreed: "class starts, you take notes until it's over and you don't really have time to communicate with anybody else."

Class size was seen as a barrier to the development of a strong community. One student reported having a third year class with approximately five hundred students (Katherine). Others reported more modest class sizes of between forty to fifty people but more often they were over two hundred. A few students noted that they had classes outside of Psychology that were typically twenty or so people, and occasionally a class in Psychology would be small, particularly the honours courses. Although class sizes tended to vary considerably, to have a class that was not a lecture (excluding labs) was rare.

The size of classes and the instruction format discouraged students from participating in class by asking questions or engaging in a discussion about course

235

material. As discussed in the last chapter, although survey respondents reported that they felt more comfortable speaking in class and interaction within the class was encouraged, they nonetheless tended not to do it. According to interviewees, students "ask ... questions after class, ... usually [during] office hours" (Adam). Peer relationships were also inhibited. Students tended to "move around a lot" (Paula) when selecting seats in lectures so that "you could be beside one person one day and then, the next someone completely different" (Paula). However, selecting a seat could also be a strategic act that could overcome some of the alienation of large classes. As Neely said,

> I think that one of the myths about ... a real barrier to enjoying a class or having a good class is the size. ... You have a lot of choice as to where you sit in a class, so it can really change the whole perception. If you're at the back of the class obviously it feels like a big class and impersonal. But if you're up close then you feel a lot more contact.

Overall, however, students felt that the large class sizes, the nature of scheduling, and the lecture format prevented them from engaging with their professors and peers in the classroom. Fewer than half (46%) of survey respondents indicated that they made contributions to class discussions, even though 70% agreed that interaction and discussion were encouraged in their classes.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, RIU is predominantly a commuter institution. Commuter students have been identified as "at risk" for drop out and as less likely to

236

be provided with the interpersonal and academic experiences of on-campus students (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Commuter students have fewer opportunities to interact with peers and faculty and are pulled away from campus by external commitments such as family and paid employment. In their extensive review of literature, Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) concluded that "the evidence ... clearly suggests that living on or near campus (versus commuting to [university]) facilitates integration into the campus social network of peers, faculty, and extracurricular activities" (p. 401).

The difficulties of creating community in a large commuter institution such as RIU was reflected in students' experiences and activities. For some students time on campus was restricted by their means of transportation and the length of the commute to and from RIU. Some students were reluctant to come to campus except for class: "I think it's such a lame excuse but the fact that I have to commute out here makes all the difference" (Tamara). According to Janet, "little stresses in life ... like the bus make [coming to campus] hard." Also, "just waiting for the bus, that's really [inconvenient]" (Amy). Adding to the inconvenience, the bus riding experience could be unpleasant: "I hate taking [particular bus], these nasty people get on the bus and they always end up sitting next to me and they smell" (Tamara). In addition, for Tamara, "the later it gets the more buses [she] has to take to get home," making the commute time over an hour and a half. The inconvenience and general unpleasantness of commuting by bus made students reluctant to make the trek to RIU for extra-curricular activities or to remain on campus longer than was necessary. However, those who commuted by car were also

237

reluctant to spend extra time on campus. As one student said, "I don't want to stay here. I want to get out of here!" (Amy).

When asked to describe a typical day on campus, it was not unusual for students to respond as Janet did: "I just come to school, I go to my classes and I go home. That's about it." Occasionally students would try to meet a friend for lunch (Fiona, Jo-Anne), or study on campus between classes (Neely, Laurette), but it was not unusual for them to construct their schedules so that they could leave campus as early as possible. Some students said they were reluctant to stay on campus after classes because they were not satisfied with the food services and preferred to eat at home (Amy, Tamara). Ole was of the view that spending extra time on campus was wasteful: "I don't spend a lot of extra time here. ... I think of it as wasting time to spend too much time on campus just hanging around."

Table 27 shows similar patterns among survey respondents. Of those students who lived off campus, 62% strongly or somewhat agreed that they usually left campus right after class; 62% of those who lived in residence strongly or somewhat agreed that they returned to residence right after class. A total of 49% of survey respondents indicated that outside of class, they spent little time on campus.

Table 27. Time on Campus (survey respondents)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4
Outside of class I spend little time on campus	26	23	26	25
I usually leave campus right after classes	32	30	16	22
I usually return to my campus residence right after classes	33	29	19	19

In part, students' desire to leave campus stemmed from a need to work. Canadian university students working part-time is not unusual. In a study of 3,357 undergraduate students at ten universities across Canada, Walker (1996) reported that 43% funded their education with earnings from current employment. Although this source was not identified as the main source of financing, it does indicate that students are working to finance their education, at least part-time time while attending university.

Some case study participants scheduled campus based paid employment around classes (Bruce, Erin, Janet) but others had paid jobs off campus for which they left as soon as classes were over. Among the case study participants, 70% worked during the regular school year, 22% of them on campus, and 48% off campus. Students worked an average of eleven hours per week, ranging from five to twenty-five hours per week. Most students worked off campus at service industry related jobs (such as waitress, cashier, clerk). Three students worked on campus, one at the library, and two at other work study positions. Most students worked to earn "pocket money" (Ole, Melanie)

239

and relied on parents for the bulk of the living and educational expenses. For a minority of students, financial stress was identified as interfering with academic success and social involvement. Speaking about friends, Katherine said, "once you have financial problems, then you're sort of forced into working for money, like doing anything, and ... it sort of restricts you from doing other things." For one student, the lack of sufficient money had contributed to the decision to stop-out after first year. In addition to academic stresses, Janet was financially under a great deal of pressure: "I didn't have any money. My family couldn't support me. And you know, I didn't really know what to do."

For some students it was necessary to make choices between school work and involvement in university life, and off campus commitments, primarily work. As one student said, "I have to make a choice. Am I going to, like go home and do my homework? Or am I going to go to this neat lecture that sounds pretty great? And then I just have to go home and do many, many, many other things" (Janet). Several students were involved in non-school related hobbies (music, skating, sports) also located off campus. And again, it was a matter of making choices: "It's really hard, you know I sort of have the choice, and I'd rather do piano or do sports" (Doreen) both of which were non-RIU activities.

Commitments and demands in other "domains" such as work and volunteer activities and for some the "hassle" of commuting by bus, restricted access to the campus. Interviewees expressed a desire to be more involved than they currently were,

240

both socially and academically at RIU and in their Department, a desire that was

reflected in the survey. (See Table 28.)

Table 28. Academic and Social Involvement (survey respondents)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%
	1	2	3	4
I would like to be more involved in academic activities in my department	17	50	22	11
I would like to be more involved in academic activities at RIU	9	48	30	13
I would like to be more involved in social activities in my department	13	52	24	11
I would like to be more involved in social activities at RIU	13	57	19	11

Survey respondents did not tend to "strongly agree" that they would prefer to be more

socially and academically involved at RIU and the Psychology Department, but there

was some overall support for greater involvement.

As Hunter and Riger (1986) point out, "it is unrealistic to expect community

commitment to be either total or comprehensive" (p. 63). Rather, students are members

of a variety of communities and their commitment to each is commensurate with the

ability of the community to provide appropriate rewards. Although interviewees

expressed a desire to meet their peers and to be more involved in the classroom, the

mode of instruction and the size of the classes, prevented that from happening.

Likewise, many students saw no reason to remain on campus any longer than was

241

necessary, particularly when other "needs," such as work or recreation, drew them away.

Summary and Discussion

The individualistic community framework allows one to ask questions about the undergraduate student experience that are difficult to formulate from the constitutive perspective. In particular the individualistic framework draws attention to the "principle of remuneration" which highlights the benefits students receive and the sacrifices they make when participating in the disciplinary and academic communities. It enables one to ask what rewards students receive for particular behaviors, and the capacity of the university and department to furnish those rewards. It also draws attention to the external "forces" that shape the undergraduate student experience and have a significant impact on the development of a strong sense of community.

Evidence of the remunerative aspects of students' membership in the "individualistic" community (Sandel 1998) took a number of forms. Grades were perceived as key indicators of future success in terms of enrolling in further education and future employment, and students accordingly engaged in a variety of strategies to ensure satisfactory grades. Strategies included "cutting back" on non-academic activities so that there would be more time for studying. For some interviewees this meant coming to campus more often and for many it meant setting academic work as a priority over social engagements. The aspect of community involvement was indeed

242

"individualistic" as its net effect was to encourage less engagement with the social communities of the university and reward what was typically a solitary activity. The remunerative value of the focus on course work did, however, yield the benefit of not only "doing better" but also studying "relevant" courses and liking what they were studying more. Participating as "subjects" in research projects for additional course marks was a key strategy for enhancing grades and contributing to academic success; although students agreed they learned about their discipline and about research by participating, it was abundantly clear that grades were the primary motivation and the dominant outcome associated with their involvement. The cultivation of strategic relationships with peers (in order to obtain help or class notes) and with faculty (to obtain letters of reference in the future or to become "known" from among the many other students in a particular class) were also aspects of individualistic community membership.

From the perspective of the individualistic framework it was appropriate to cast students in the role of "client" or "customer" and drew attention to the tendency to identify the monetary investment (in the form of tuition paid) as justification for complaint when they did not receive an expected level of service. Not only did students raise this issue with reference to unsatisfactory courses or teachers, they also pointed out inadequacies with classrooms and other campus buildings and facilities.

Students' engagement with the disciplinary community as researchers and research assistants yielded substantial return on their investment. Participation

243

facilitated greater "access" to professors, contributed to students' knowledge base and understanding of disciplinary norms and culture, made "connections" that might be useful in the future, enhanced students' sense of belonging, and provided the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way to the discipline's advancement of knowledge. This aspect of the individualistic community also highlighted the exclusivity of the community. Limited numbers of students gained access to this "inner realm" of the disciplinary community. For Science students, access was "built in to" the structure of the program. For Arts students, access required personal initiative.

The capacity of the individualistic disciplinary community to ensure and facilitate involvement of community members was restricted by "structural" barriers such as class size, competing demands made of students (such as work, volunteer and extracurricular activities off campus), and the reluctance of some students to remain on campus beyond the time necessary to attend classes. The means of transportation to and from campus also inhibited involvement outside of class because students were reluctant to travel by bus or to make an extra car trip out to campus.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Patterns of Participation, Modes of Exclusion

The purpose of this study was to come to an understanding of the meaning and experience of community for undergraduate students. It was assumed that exploring community bounded by disciplinary affiliation would be a valuable approach to understanding this phenomenon within the context of the research-intensive university. In-depth interviews were conducted with 23 third year Psychology students pursuing either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree, and a survey designed to explore key aspects of interviewees' experiences was administered to a larger cohort of such students. Students' experiences were examined through the lens of constitutive and individualistic community frameworks, and ideal and actual experiences were compared. The results of this study show that a focus on disciplinary affiliation was a useful approach to understanding the meaning of community and results document significant influences of disciplinary affiliation on community membership and belonging. This exploration revealed that issues of community membership, involvement, and belonging were longitudinal processes that entailed complex patterns of participation and modes of exclusion that were influenced by students' aspirations and obligations as well as structural characteristics of the Psychology department and of RIU.

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate, based on the case study findings presented in the previous three chapters, how undergraduate students experience

245

community, the mechanisms that facilitate and constrain involvement within it, and the consequences of that involvement. This discussion, which comprises the first section of this chapter, will show that "competent membership" (Tinto, 1993, p. 106) in the disciplinary community of the university is a complex process of negotiation that involves considerations of power, agency, and involvement. In the second section of this chapter, the implications of these negotiations for policy and practice and for further research are discussed.

Central Findings of the Study

In Chapter 2 of this study, it was argued that the nature of community in higher education has undergone substantial change, particularly since the transition toward mass higher education, and that considerations of community in the contemporary university must account for these changes. A number of authors argue that non-traditional students are redefining the meaning of community in higher education institutions (*e.g.*, Gilley & Hawkes); others (*e.g.*, Andres & Carpenter, 1998) have demonstrated that non-traditional learners have gained a substantial presence on Canadian campuses. "Non-traditional" students are typically defined by their age, patterns of participation, enrollment status, commuter status and interest in courses, certification or degrees (Bean & Metzner, 1987). In this study the focus was on "traditional" students. Profiles of case study participants presented in Chapter 4 illustrated that participants were generally between the ages of 18 and 24 and that they were enrolled full-time. In many other respects, however, this "traditional" group of

students was not very traditional. They were characterized by their involvement in off campus work and volunteer activities, stop-out patterns of participation, reduced course load (though still maintaining full-time status), and for the majority of participants, by their commuting patterns to and from campus. It is evident in this case study that there is considerable overlap in the definition of traditional and non-traditional. Given the characteristics of "traditional" students at this campus, it is suggested that redefining the meaning of "traditional" learners is an important aspect of understanding community for students at RIU. The use of the term "typical" to describe a specific cohort or group may be more appropriate.

The interview component of this study showed that attempts to have students articulate the meaning of community resulted in restricted conversations. When asked directly about what "community" meant to them in the context of their experience at RIU, students often found it difficult to articulate an answer. Although in part the difficulty was a consequence of the "open textured" nature of the concept, it was evident during interviews that thinking about their university experiences in terms of community involvement and membership was something new for RIU students. The language of community was not a part of their vocabulary. Kuh (1993) argues that each institution of higher education is distinguished by a particular "ethos" which he defined as an "institution-specific pattern of values and principles that invokes a sense of belonging and helps people distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior" (p. 22). Ethos is shaped by the core values manifested in the institution's mission and philosophy. The ethos of a university has a distinct impact on the attitudes, values and

247

understanding of expectations for community members and is translated to students through the socialization processes over the course of their tenure at the university. As the case study data showed, at RIU the culture and values translated to undergraduate students focused on independence, competition and isolation. One consequence of the dominant ethos at RIU was a general absence of the language of community in student-student and student-faculty discourse.

Approaching this study of community from three complementary perspectives (ideal/actual, constitutive and individualistic) revealed the dynamic, and often contradictory, aspects of community for undergraduate students at RIU. Multiple forces were found to both contribute to community involvement and feelings of belonging and to act as barriers to them.

The data in this study show that community boundaries were defined in a number of important ways. Exploring the experiences of community from a constitutive perspective demonstrated that initially, as new students, a process of "defining differences" (Cohen, 1987) in relation to institutional affiliation, disciplinary affiliation and program of study occurred. The academic major selection process further differentiated Psychology students from other students.

Other aspects of defining difference were apparent when students' participation in the disciplinary community through research was explored. Viewing the topic of research through the lens of the constitutive framework revealed that in first and second year, students were primarily "recipients" or "beneficiaries" of research in so far as the relationship between teaching and research was concerned. Interviewees were of the

248

view, looking back from their vantage point as third year students, that research presented in class or used as examples in class was less prevalent in the first two years because students were less capable of understanding it. It was necessary to first introduce new students to "basic" theories and "ways of knowing" in Psychology. Students had to meet appropriate criteria (Day & Murchoch, 1993) – establishing a knowledge base, for example, – before they were granted membership benefits (Atkinson & Cope, 1997) associated with greater participation in research.

Participating in research as "subjects" and earning credits was also a way of defining differences in so far as this activity was restricted to first and second year courses and in so far as the position of students as "subjects" in the first two years was in stark contrast to their location as "researchers" in third year. Looking at this aspect of Psychology students' experiences from the individualistic perspective showed that from students' point of view, the "contract" entered into was one of time-spent for credits-earned. Any larger educational value was secondary to the desire for improved grades.

Participating in research as the "experimenter" in a third year Psychology course was a powerful means of enhancing feelings of belonging and community membership for some and a strong mechanism of exclusion for others. Engaging in research as a "researcher" was not a part of the third year experience for all students. This type of community participation was built into required third year courses for Bachelor of Science students but was an option only for those Arts students who enrolled in the honours program or who took a research oriented directed studies

course. In addition, volunteer and work opportunities in the laboratories were limited, and those students who had taken the initiative to establish a personal relationship with faculty were most likely to secure positions in the labs.

A consequence of participation in research was the differential development of students' identities as community members. All third year Psychology students had the same nominal identity (Jenkins, 1996), but their "virtual" identities were formed by their actual experiences within the community. Those students who were able to participate in research as researchers, either through course work, paid employment or volunteering, had greater opportunity to form an "insider" identity compared with those who did not. "Researchers" considered themselves "insiders," part of a privileged group who were enjoying a qualitatively superior undergraduate experience compared with students who were not a part of that group.

The case study data showed that students' identities as participatory community members located them within particular social spaces (Howard & Hollander, 1997); students were "subjects" as well as "researchers" depending on the context and circumstances of the engagement. The identity of "researcher" was much more powerful for students and, as the individualistic perspective highlighted, yielded substantial benefits. The identity and activities associated with it contributed to feelings of "mattering" (Schlossberg, 1989) and enhanced students' sense of belonging.

When faculty expressed interest in one interviewee's well-being, it was a memorable and noteworthy event that was retold with animation. This aspect of community speaks to the importance of student-faculty relationships and the profound

250

impact faculty have on students and the relative "ease" in achieving such positive results. Evident in this study was the role faculty played in "letting students in" to the disciplinary community. Students prior to third year often felt as if they were "just a number" and that faculty were uninterested in them as community members. By third year students were beginning to experience a positive difference in the way they perceived faculty treated them. Students readily recognized their own maturation and development as they progressed through their courses, but they also recognized that faculty were "gatekeepers" who to a certain extent controlled access to involvement in the disciplinary community, whether through the presentation of stimulating and interesting lectures or access to laboratories as research assistants and researchers. The results of this study showed that the power of faculty to control students' involvement in the disciplinary community extended from the laboratory to the classroom and that how students participated in the disciplinary community was a reflection of the interest and expectations of faculty. This aspect of student-faculty interaction was particularly evident in the way in which students assessed their relationship with faculty before third year. Interviewees identified first year students in particular as generally not ready to engage with the community in terms of its academic content. A period of knowledge development was required to position them as competent community members.

The importance of place to case study participants' experience of community was introduced in Chapter 5 and was a theme that reemerged throughout. The ideal/actual articulation of community illustrated that there were two different dimensions of place that were important. One related to the actual physical existence of

spaces on campus for students to engage with others. Students identified the lack of "social" space as a significant factor of their experiences at RIU, that was exacerbated by the lack of undergraduate student oriented space at the Psychology Building. Students noted that those from other disciplines had their own lecture halls but that they had to "borrow" space because there was none in their own building. A key aspect of volunteering or being a "researcher" for case study participants was the access they were granted (by faculty) to space in the Psychology building. Some students would use the laboratory as a "place to go" when they were not in class. Other students were aware that some of their peers had different privileges and Arts Psychology students in particular identified a desire to participate in a research project under the supervision of a faculty member as a desired future activity. Place also took on symbolic significance. The physical buildings and landscape of the RIU campus contributed to students' identification with RIU as a "real" university that was differentiated by its physical characteristics from other institutions and other universities.

In addition to highlighting the importance of intellectual engagement with faculty, the ideal/actual discussion in Chapter 5 illustrated that one aspect of community that students valued as part of an ideal was intellectual engagement with peers. Survey data showed that this was not a part of students' actual experiences at RIU. When examining students' experiences of community from the constitutive perspective, it was apparent that friendship patterns, initially shaped by socialization patterns held over from high school, eventually disintegrated after students declared a major and as students became more involved in their disciplinary community. Relationships with

peers within classes and laboratories took on a quality of "associations of convenience" shaped by the necessity to obtain notes or "get help" if needed. Although identified as an aspect of the ideal university community, interviewees indicated that they were typically not interested in "heated debates" after class with friends. In addition, large lecture style classes did not encourage the development of meaningful friendships within class. Students noted that class size was a barrier to participation and the hour long lectures "broke-up" the day so that one would interact with a variety of different groups of students over the course of a week.

Significance of the Research

This study introduces two conceptual frameworks specifically concerned with the notion of community into the higher education literature at a time when concerns about the undergraduate student learning environment and the role of the university as a learning community is increasingly under scrutiny. The use of these perspectives for analyzing students experiences of community at a research-intensive university were valuable in highlighting aspects of community not apparent from one perspective but brought into focus from another. This study introduced a discussion of community into the higher education literature from the point of view of advanced year undergraduate students, and by focusing on community bounded by students' disciplinary affiliation, offered the potential to reconceptualize the meaning of community in the large, research-intensive university. This study offers a unique perspective on the meaning and experience of community that provides insight into community building strategies.

253

Whereas the literature indicates that much student focused higher education research ignores the perspective of undergraduate students (McKeown, MacDonell & Bowman, 1993; Silver & Silver, 1998), an important objective of this study was to understand the meaning of community from the point of view of third year undergraduates. The constitutive and individualistic community frameworks (Corlett, 1989; Sandell, 1998) were effective means for examining and understanding the tensions between student power and position with a particular community and the competing forces and motivations that shape membership status and involvement. Launching this study with in-depth semi-structured interviews provided a richly descriptive representation of students' perceptions of their status, roles and experiences within the university and their department. It provided students with the opportunity to reflect on their academic careers and highlighted the longitudinal process of membership, identity formation and the emergence of a sense of belonging. In addition, the interviews served to illustrate the similarities of experiences among students (e.g., the overall transition from a concern with social to academic aspects of their community engagement) and to draw attention to points of divergence caused by individual power, motivation or status (e.g., career aspirations, academic proficiency) or by structural differences embedded within the university and department (e.g., program requirements for Bachelor of Science versus Bachelor of Arts students). The use of interview data to guide the development of questionnaire items ensured that students' voices were embedded within the survey instrument rather than emerging from the perspective of the researcher.

254

The use of the individualistic and constitutive conceptualizations of community has added a unique dimension to the exploration of community for students in higher education. Increasingly students are being thought of as "consumers" of educational services (Smith & Webster, 1997) or as one of many of a university's "clients" (Berry, 1990). It is evident in this study that students see themselves as customers or investors and as such participate in the university communities in order to gain rewards. This notion of the purpose of the university and students' role within is at odds with traditional conceptualizations of the university as a community of scholars and may provide insight into why the language of community is absent from students' discourse.

Implications for Theory

Issues of access, retention and attrition have increasingly received attention in Canadian universities in recent years (Andres & Carpenter, 1997). Literature indicates that at the upper levels, academic integration is of greater importance to student success and retention than is social integration, which plays a more important role in the transition to university for first year students (e.g., Tinto, 1993, Ferguson, 1990; Terenzini, Theophilides, and Lorang, 1984). The dominant models of retention and attrition in Canada have been adapted from the work of researchers in the United States, in particular from the work of Tinto (1978, 1993). One of the key concepts informing the retention model put forth by Tinto involves the successful integration of students into the social and intellectual communities of the university. Tinto suggests that early voluntary withdrawal from university is the result of not becoming a

255

competent member of at least one community in the university. Researchers (*e.g.,* Bean, 1982; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) have shown that as students progress through their degree, the importance of integration into the disciplinary community gains in significance. This study has shown that "competent membership" in the disciplinary community is a longitudinal process that involves a number of steps. Students undergo a process of socialization and integration that involves a phase of competency development followed by the two parallel phases of developing a knowledge base and undergoing a transition from a focus on the social integration to one on academic integration. Once students become "repositioned" as "more serious students" within the disciplinary community, they are "invited in" to the community in a variety of ways. "Invitations" take the form of acknowledgment from faculty that they are knowledgeable and important members of the community.

Specific mechanisms are utilized as means of incorporating students into the community. In the context of Psychology at RIU, this took the form of greater involvement with research, more meaningful interaction with faculty, a feeling that faculty were "better," and confidence that students had important contributions to make to class discussions. The results of this study suggest that understanding the meaning of competent membership in the context of Tinto's (1993) model of retention and attrition entails determining the mechanisms that enhance and inhibit membership within a particular community.

The results of this study also suggest that other concepts that inform Tinto's (1993) model may be clarified. Student focused higher education literature has shown

256

that often the concept of academic integration frequently means little more than grade average or number of contacts with faculty outside of the classroom (Anderson, 1988; Stoeker, Pascarella & Wolfle, 1988). This study has shown that academic integration into the disciplinary community is a multidimensional phenomenon that involves a complicated process of negotiation and acceptance by other members of the community, most importantly by faculty. This study may inform the operationalization of the concept academic integration by recognizing that it encompasses a wide variety of student activities and relationships with faculty. Further, Tinto's (1993) persistence model proposes the importance of integration into at least one community of the university, but it does not operationalize the meaning of integration into a specific community and does not identify the mechanisms that facilitate that integration. The disciplinary focus of this study identifies an important community for third year undergraduate students and highlights the mechanisms specific to integration into it.

Implications for Policy and Practice

As noted above, a significant finding in this study was the absence of a discourse of community among undergraduate students. That is, students were unable to articulate what the academic and disciplinary communities consisted of and what their role within them was or could be. Students were also limited in their ability to discuss their experiences in terms of being members of a community. This finding suggests that if a goal of higher education is to promote participation within the communities of the

university, a starting point for that participation may be to encourage students to think of themselves as community members. This may be achieved through university recruitment and school liaison offices by incorporating a discussion of the meaning community membership and identity within recruitment literature and presentation material.

Promoting community membership and involvement implies obligation and responsibility both on the part of the student and the university. If students are to become full members of the academic and disciplinary communities, the institution must provide equal access and opportunity for that participation. The results of this study suggest that one way to meet this obligation from an institutional point of view is to restrict enrolment in the Arts Psychology program. Although initial access would be restricted, once enrolled, students would have greater access to resources within the program. The small size of the Biopsychology program allows it to provide research opportunities for all of its students. If Arts Psychology was to adapt a similar student research focus without expanding its teaching and research infrastructure (*e.g.*, number of faculty, laboratory space and equipment), it may have to introduce similar restrictions.

If RIU is to take seriously its recent policy document asserting the value of integrating undergraduate students more fully into the research functions of the university, in the case of Psychology at RIU, it is imperative that the provision for students to participate as researchers on a research project with a faculty member should be greatly expanded. This type of interaction between students and faculty has

258

proven to greatly enhance community involvement and belonging among students. Faculty reward structures should reflect the value of faculty interaction with undergraduate students, inside and outside of the classroom.

Increasing student involvement with faculty research has a number of implications for federal funding initiatives. For example, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grants programs are evaluated on criteria intended to reflect the objectives of a specific program. If one such objective was the enhancement of research and teaching through the involvement of undergraduate students in the research project, faculty would begin to begin to think of creative ways to include undergraduates. The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada has implemented an Undergraduate Students Research Awards program designed for students in the natural sciences and engineering. This is a model that could be instituted for students in other program areas.

The use of credit research as an educational tool should be enhanced. If such activities are to be included as core aspects of curriculum, students should be encouraged to be more engaged with the process rather than be relegated to the role of "subject." This could easily be achieved by providing students with a summary sheet of the purposes and procedures of the research project, and ensure that follow-up with results takes place once the project is completed. Credit research at RIU is associated with a particular Psychology class. Students should be encouraged to bring results, purposes, or procedures to the class to share with other students so that the "contract" between researchers (often graduate students), faculty (teachers of the class), and

259

"subjects" (Psychology students) becomes more of a learning experience and less of an exchange.

Consistent with other literature on the undergraduate student experience (Pawluch, Hornosty, Richardson & Shaffir, 1994), evidence from this study suggests that physical place and designated space promotes a sense of identity and belonging. In this study, the absence of space for Psychology students was an issue that should be addressed. Students identified space that "belonged" to other departments or programs but noted an absence of Psychology lecture halls or undergraduate psychology student lounges. The provision of useful space for student interaction is imperative and should be made available to promote community involvement. Further, the importance of student-faculty interaction to overall student development (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1993) and to identity formation (Bean & Kuh, 1984; Newman & Newman, 1978) has been well documented. To promote informal student-faculty interaction a lounge area where interaction is possible and encouraged should be provided. Assigning a large lecture hall or classroom to the Psychology Department for student and faculty use outside of class time could temporarily alleviate space shortages.

Given the powerful influence of research and student-faculty interaction on the promotion of community involvement and identity formation, the intersection of the two may usefully be enhanced. Student involvement in faculty research could take the form of participation in research colloquia or seminars in which faculty and student researchers present research ideas or work in progress to other members of the

260

disciplinary community. Kuh (1993) asserts higher education institutions are characterized by a distinct ethos which "carries messages about the relative importance of various educational functions" (p. 22) and influences student behavior, attitudes, values and learning. RIU is an institution "dedicated to academic and research excellence" (Policy document, 1999, p. 1) and as students in this study noted, is characterized by a culture of competition and isolation. For the research colloquia as suggested here to be successful in promoting student and faculty involvement and a willingness to publicly present innovative or nascent ideas, it may be necessary to cultivate a culture of collaboration and support rather than a culture of critique and competition.

An RIU policy document (1999) on research and teaching suggests the need for a "reassessment of our course credit and curricular requirements to ensure that undergraduates have opportunities to take research intensive, integrative capstone courses where there is increased credit for their increased effort" (p. 7). This idea of "increased credit for increased effort" may easily be extended to an overall community involvement credit system whereby students are allotted credits for participating in various ways in the academic and disciplinary communities of their university. The greater the level of physical and psychological involvement (Astin, 1984) the greater the reward may be in terms of points that may be accumulated and translated into academic credits. Not only may this type of activity, supported and encouraged by the institution, promote greater community ties, it may also enhance extracurricular

learning that has been show to contribute to overall student development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Some literature on teaching and learning argues that class size is an important factor contributing to or inhibiting student motivation and development (McKeachie, 1980). Recent research suggests that other factors such as course content, instructor ability and knowledge, and year of study (Feigenbaum & Friend, 1992; Gilbert, 1995) may be more important than class size. The data in this study showed that, as Gilbert (1995) suggests "learning is not a spectator sport, and active, personal inquiry can and does occur in large classes" (p. 4). However, this study also showed that highly competent teachers who love their subjects and respect their students contribute to an experience of "mattering" (Schlossberg, 1989; Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989). Students are often marginalized within the classroom "by virtue of their youth, their lack of a productive role, [and] their dependency on the academy for legitimation" (Palmer, 1990, p. 15). The notion of "hearing students into speech," establishing setting in which student voices are not marginalized but are valued as contributors to the disciplinary discourse (Palmer, 1990), may be achieved by allocating some portion of lecture time to small group discussions, question and answer sessions, or collaborative problem solving (Gilbert, 1995), by drawing students into classroom conversations and valuing their contributions (Palmer, 1990).

The provision during class time for student-student interaction should also be an integral aspect of undergraduate lecture classes. Providing ten minutes for informal discussion before class would contribute to students' sense of belonging and connection

262

with other students. This time should be structured to encourage intellectual discussion, and not merely socialization, thereby helping to create disciplinary based common ground.

Given that RIU is predominantly a commuter institution, means of encouraging community involvement among non-resident students should be undertaken. Commuter students are often thought to be older (older than 24 years) adults with spouses and/or children studying part-time and working full-time or part-time, and higher education is considered an "add-on" to already busy lives (Jacoby, 1992). However, the majority of commuters at RIU are "typical" undergraduate students in so far as they are attending university full-time, are traditional age and predominantly single. Traditional age commuter students comprise approximately 75% of the RIU undergraduate student body (RIU demographic survey data, 1997) and about 70% of the participants in this study. For this type of commuter, university education is a primary activity even though employment and other non-campus based pursuits ensure students live busy lives. These commuter students are distinguished from their residence peers primarily by the fact that they live at home with parents and transportation to and from university comprises a significant part of their daily routines.

Compared to this group of commuters, residence students have been identified as more fully engaged with the academic and social campus communities while attending university, including more frequent and varied contact with faculty and peers (Chickering, 1974; Chickering & Reiser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) resulting in greater likelihood of student development and increases in outcomes associated with

263

community involvement such as "cultural and aesthetic attitudes and values, in social, political, and religious tolerance, in self-awareness and independence, and in persistence to degree attainment" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 411).

This study has shown that commuter students are often reluctant to remain on campus beyond the time required to attend classes and complete lab work, including paid and volunteer work. The provision of space designated as belonging to a specific disciplinary community, as already mentioned, may encourage students to remain on campus beyond class time. Increasing availability of part-time employment opportunities, especially within the research laboratories, may also be considered as a way to encourage commuters to remain on campus.

Involvement in the disciplinary community through the use of information technology may also be a valuable means of enhancing students' sense of belong and membership. In particular for those students who are reluctant or unable to spend time on campus, the use of electronic mail or course specific discussion groups may be a viable alternative. Electronic mail may also provide opportunities for students to engage more directly with faculty and teaching assistants. However, at RIU, students are allocated five hours of free internet service per month, a woefully inadequate amount of time for students to access existing on-line resources (such as registration or department web site information). Additional free service would need to be provided if students were to be encouraged to engaged with their disciplinary community through the internet.

264

The development of strong ties to the university may have future benefits to both students and the institution. Alumni may be encouraged to support the institutional financially and through their continued involved with it. As parents they may encourage their children to attend their alma mater, may be willing to serve as community advisors or board members, and, in a political and social climate frequently critical of universities may contribute to a climate of support for the overall values and role of universities.

Further Research

The case study showed strong support for research as a mechanism for enhancing community membership and sense of belonging. A unique aspect of the Psychology department at RIU is the strong integration of research into the undergraduate curriculum within the classroom, through the use of "credit studies" and by building research opportunities into the curriculum for specific groups of students. Because this study focused on a single discipline, a question that arises is the extent to which research is a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion in other disciplines. If it is, what form does this research take? In what ways does it exclude and/or include specific groups of students? Are there disciplinary differences in the meaning and conduct of research that influence students' experiences of community? In addition to a specific disciplinary focus on research, what other aspects of disciplinary differences influence community? For example, what role do learning the language, values, and knowledge

265

assumptions specific to a particular discipline or field of study play in boundary definition and identity formation?

What institutional characteristics affect the experience of community? A cultural ethos of isolation and independence had an influence on students' competency development strategies in so far as they felt they had to "go it alone." The work of Attinasi (1989) suggests that alternative strategies may be employed depending on year level and Kuh & Witt (1986) and Tierney (1991) demonstrate that different types of universities and colleges in the US have dominant cultures and ideologies that define the institution and shape students' experiences within it. The results of this study suggest that further exploration of the influence of institutional ethos may reveal alternative strategies for negotiating the crucial step of competency development that, in this study, was shown to be a key prerequisite for enhanced membership status.

This study did not explore the influence of race or ethnicity and gender on the experiences of community. There were, however, some indications that a study specifically focused on these considerations would be valuable. The brief discussion about the importance of diversity on campus hinted at the possibility of ethnic influences on community involvement that were not explored in this study. In addition, two aspects of gender were not explored. First, the differences that women students compared to men students may experience within different types of disciplinary communities would contribute to an understanding of community for undergraduate students. For example, how do women students in traditionally male dominated programs, and male students in traditionally female dominated programs negotiate

266

membership status? How is their identity as "competent members" of the community formed? Second, how do intimate relationships between students influence campus based activities, major selection process and time spent on campus? Two students interviewed for this study were boyfriend and girlfriend, and although not a topic of conversation that either student appeared comfortable talking about, it was evident that some activities were influenced by this relationship. For example, sense of connection with the university and satisfaction were linked with positive feelings about each other. The single interview with informal follow-up design did not permit the development of a trusting relationship that may have permitted the exploration of these issues once a stronger trust had been established.

This study focused primarily on the time students spent on campus and did not consider to any large extent other "domains" of students' lives, such as family, work and off campus volunteer and other activities. Given that the competing demands facing students are many, extending this study to include off campus domains would be useful. In addition, this study was limited to traditional age, full time students. The meaning of community for other groups of students such as returning women, part time students or mature students was not explored. Further study of the impact of residence and commuting patterns would also be warranted. This study showed that there were differences between students who lived in residences and those who commuted. The significance of commuting should be followed up by focusing on those who commute from locations near campus and those who travel substantial distances to attend university.

267

Finally, subsequent study should examine the meaning of community for transfer students. The experiences of those students who transfer from a college would further our understanding of the phenomenon of community for a group which has not had the same opportunity to build relationships with peers and faculty as non-transfer students. It would be useful to examine whether transfer students' experiences at a college provide competency development opportunities similar to those of their non-transfer peers. Further, students from a college may articulate the meaning of an ideal and an actual community based on comparisons between their college and university experiences. This might provide insights into community building strategies at a university.

268

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APPENDICES

288

APPENDIX A. ENROLMENT NUMBERS

Table I. a.

Full-time university enrolments by sex and level, Canada, 1920 to 1997

	Undergraduate				Graduate			
	Female	Male	Total	% Female	Female	Male	Total	% Female
1920/21	3716	19075	22791	16	108	315	423	26
1925/26	5,272	19,580	24852	21	221	625	846	26
1930/31	7,428	24,148	31576	24	352	998	1,350	26
1935/36	7,494	26,028	33522	22	388	1,198	1,586	24
1940/41	8,107	26,710	34817	23	326	1,243	1,569	21
1945/46	12,870	48,991	61861	21	630	2,240	2,870	22
1950/51	13,866	50,170	64036	22	702	3,857	4,559	15
1955/56	14,765	54,545	69310	21	457	2,970	3,427	13
1960/61	26,629	80,582	107211	25	986	5,532	6,518	15
1965/66	61,190	125,859	187049	33	3,135	14,061	17,196	18
1970/71	101,352	174,945	276297	37	7,407	25,765	33,172	22
1975/76	140,258	190,696	330954	42	11,647	28,461	40,108	29
1980/81	155,554	182,398	337952	46	16,119	28,546	44,665	36
1985/86	210,586	195,720	406306	52	21,779	33,059	54,838	40
1990/91	246,417	221,879	468296	53	26,448	37,387	63,835	41
1995/96	273,772	224,417	498189	55	33,986	41,019	75,005	45
1996/97	274,950	223,086	498036	55	34,781	40,818	75,599	46
1997/98	-	-	501249		-	-	77,136	

Table I.b.

Part-time* university enrolments by sex and level, Canada, 1962 to 1997

	Undergraduate				Graduate			
	Female	Male	Total	% Female	Female	Male	Total	% Female
1962/63	15912	22727	38639	41	913	4438	5351	17
1965/66	26913	38386	65299	41	1532	6192	7724	20
1970/71	60323	81883	142206	42	3412	10958	14370	24
1975/76	86007	72287	158294	54	8072	18659	26731	30
1980/81	128020	85006	213026	60	16119	28546	44665	36
1985/86	152626	97010	249636	61	18920	33059	51979	36
1990/91	172042	96921	268963	64	20518	19717	40235	51
1995/96	145109	85818	230927	63	22256	19814	42070	53
1996/97	134194	80728	214922	62	22054	19157	41211	54
1997/98	-	-	202044		-	-	38190	

*Part-time enrolment data were not systematically collected before 1962

Note. Data in this table are from Statistics Canada, 1978, Historical compendium of educational statistics: From confederation to 1975. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services. (Catalogue No. 81-568); Statistics Canada, 1991, Education in Canada: A statistical review for 1990-91. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services. (Catalogue No. 81-229); Statistics Canada, 1999, Education in Canada: A statistical review for 1998. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services. (Catalogue No. 81-229).

APPENDIX B. IDEAL AND ACTUAL ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY

291

Table II.

T-Test Comparison between Ideal and Actual Aspects of Community

	Mean	St. Dev.	Std. Error	95% confidence interval Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig	Bonferonni Adj. Sig.
Meeting places on campus	0.81	0.83	0.10	0.62	1.00	8.34	72	.000	.000
Comfortable campus buildings	1.19	1.07	0.12	0.94	1.44	9.57	73	.000	.000
Attractive campus buildings	0.73	1.21	0.14	0.45	1.01	5.19	73	.000	.000
Attractive campus grounds	0.14	1.04	0.12	-0.11	0.38	1.12	73	.266	.224
Strong university spirit	1.39	1.02	0.12	1.16	1.63	11.76	73	.000	.000
Taking part in university ceremonies	0.95	1.03	0.12	0.71	1.18	7.87	72	.000	.000
Recognized university symbols and logos	0.21	1.07	0.12	-0.04	0.45	1.65	72	.104	.102
Active student government	1.14	1.01	0.12	0.90	1.37	9.66	73	.000	.000
Having goals in common with others on campus	0.62	0.82	0.10	0.43	0.81	6.50	73	.000	.000
Equal opportunities within the community	0.99	0.85	0.10	0.79	1.18	9.96	73	.000	.000
Being involved in campus activities	1.06	1.02	0.12	0.82	1.30	8.79	71	.000	.000
Knowing in general what's going on	1.08	0.82	0.10	0.89	1.27	11.29	73	.000	.000
Strong social networks	1.11	0.99	0.11	0.88	1.34	9.66	73	.000	.000
Reciprocity, giving to the community but also getting back from it	1.30	1.00	0.12	1.06	1.53	11.12	73	.000	.000
People on campus who care about you as an individual	1.26	0.95	0.11	1.04	1.48	11.36	73	.000	.000
Diversity of people on campus	0.18	0.85	0.10	-0.02	0.37	1.78	73	.080	.078
Shared intellectual ideas between students	0.74	0.86	0.10	0.54	0.94	7.43	73	.000	.000
Shared intellectual ideas between students and faculty	1.14	0.83	0.10	0.94	1.33	11.72	73	.000	.000
Contact between students and administration	1.41	1.02	0.12	1.17	1.64	11.86	73	.000	.000
Having input into university issues or concerns	1.63	2.32	0.27	1.09	2.17	5.99	72	.000	.000
Efficient student services	1.57	0.95	0.11	1.35	1.79	14.16	73	.000	.000
Effective student services	1.32	0.85	0.10	1.13	1.52	13.47	73	.000	.000

At $< .05$ level of significance

APPENDIX C. PERCEPTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY AND NON-PSYCHOLOGY

PROFESSORS

293

Table III.
T-test Comparison between Students' Perceptions of Psychology Professors and Non-Psychology Professors

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval Lower	95% Confidence Interval Upper	t	df	Sig.
Professors are competent lecturers.	-0.09	0.70	0.08	-0.25	0.07	-1.15	74	0.25
My professors show interest and excitement when teaching.	-0.13	0.76	0.09	-0.31	0.04	-1.52	74	0.13
My professors are friendly.	-0.20	0.66	0.08	-0.35	-0.05	-2.63	74	0.01
My professors are knowledgeable about their subjects.	-0.08	0.49	0.06	-0.19	0.03	-1.42	74	0.16
My professors are interested in my academic development.	-0.07	0.76	0.09	-0.24	0.11	-0.76	73	0.45
I received help from my professors outside of class when needed.	0.04	0.72	0.08	-0.13	0.21	0.49	72	0.63
I am encouraged to ask questions in class.	0.00	0.79	0.09	-0.18	0.18	0.00	74	1.00
Professors have greater respect for my ideas now that I'm in 3rd year.	-0.13	0.76	0.09	-0.31	0.04	-1.52	74	0.13
Professors encourage me to express opinions in class.	0.15	0.75	0.09	-0.03	0.32	1.70	74	0.09
Professors use current research as examples in their lectures.	-0.31	0.96	0.11	-0.53	-0.09	-2.77	74	0.01
I enjoy going to my classes.	-0.33	0.84	0.10	-0.53	-0.14	-3.42	74	0.00
Some or one of my professors have had a major influence on my academic career.	-0.33	1.21	0.14	-0.61	-0.05	-2.38	74	0.02
I am satisfied with the quality of teaching in my classes.	-0.01	0.77	0.09	-0.19	0.16	-0.15	73	0.88

At < .05 level of significance

294

APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW DATA COLLECTION

Institutional Permission A

RESEARCH INTENSIVE UNIVERSITY
Vice-President _____
<date>

Dear Dr. _____,

My purpose in writing to you is to request your permission to undertake a study of undergraduate students at <Research Intensive University>. For my doctoral thesis I am conducting a research project entitled "'Community' and the undergraduate student experience." I want to undertake a case study of one department at RIU and have chosen the Department of Psychology. The purpose of this study is to explore the meaning of "community" for undergraduate students in a large research intensive university such as RIU. Involvement with a scholarly community of learners has traditionally played an important role in shaping our ideas about the undergraduate student experience. However, seldom are students consulted about the nature of this community from their point of view.

The aims of this study are: (1) to understand how "community" is understood and experienced by undergraduate students; (2) to explore how students' perceptions contribute to their actions, beliefs, and attitudes in relation to the undergraduate student experience; and, (3) to examine policies and practices at the research site that encourage and/or discourage the realization of "community" as experienced by student participants.

The Department of Psychology is suitable for this study because it enrolls a large proportion of undergraduate students. In this study my aim is to understand the experiences and perceptions of "typical" undergraduates. Although the demographic face of universities across Canada has changed substantially over the last three decades, the majority of enrolments in <provincial> universities are traditional age non-residential, campus based students who attend full-time eight months of the year.

This study will entail interviews with approximately 20 third year students who have chosen Psychology as their program major. Students would be interviewed twice during the course of term two, once at the beginning and once near its end. I would also like to interview staff, faculty and administrative personnel who are directly involved with undergraduate education. These interviews will last approximately one hour. All interviews will be conducted on campus at locations suitable to participants.

If you give your permission, please sign the form below, and return a copy to me.

Sincerely,
Colleen Hawkey

....

I give my permission for Colleen Hawkey to undertake the above study at the <Research Intensive University>.

_____   _____
Dr. _____ Vice President _____   Date

296

Institutional Permission B

RESEARCH INTENSIVE UNIVERSITY
Vice-President _____
<date>

Dear M. _____,

My purpose in writing to you is to request your permission to extend a study of undergraduate students at <Research Intensive University>. In January of last year I began a case study of student life at a research-intensive university. Permission was received from Dr. _____, then Vice President _____ to undertake the study at RIU. I have completed the case study and now wish to extend the findings by developing and administering a questionnaire based on the findings. I am therefore seeking your permission to undertake a survey. Ethical approval has been granted by the RIU <Ethics Board>.

The project, for my doctoral thesis, sets out to: (1) understand how "community" is understood and experienced by undergraduate students; (2) explore how students' perceptions contribute to their actions, beliefs, and attitudes in relation to the undergraduate student experience; and, (3) examine policies and practices at the research site that encourage and/or discourage the realization of "community" as experienced by student participants. The second phase will determine the extent to which case study findings can be extended beyond the case study sample.

Third year students from the Department of Psychology were selected for the case study. Permission was sought and received from the Head of the Psychology Department and the Chair of the Psychology Subject Pool and Research Policy Committee. The survey would be administered to the population of current third year Psychology students.

I have attached a copy of the letter forwarded to Dr. _____ that provides more detail about the first phase of this study.

If you give your permission, please sign the form below, and return a copy to me.

Sincerely,

Colleen Hawkey

....

I give my permission for Colleen Hawkey to undertake the above study at the University of British Columbia.

_____   _____
M. _____ Acting Vice President _____   Date

297

Department Permission

<Date>

Dear <Dean/Department Head>

My purpose in writing to you is to request your permission to undertake a study of undergraduate students at <Research Intensive University> in the Department of Psychology. The purpose of this study is to explore the meaning of "community" for undergraduate students in a large research intensive university such as RIU. Involvement with a scholarly community of learners has traditionally played an important role in shaping our ideas about the undergraduate student experience. However, seldom are students consulted about the nature of this community from their point of view.

For my doctoral thesis I am conducting a research project entitled "'Community' and the undergraduate student experience." The aims of this study are: (1) to understand how "community" is understood and experienced by undergraduate students; (2) to explore how students' perceptions contribute to their actions, beliefs, and attitudes in relation to the undergraduate student experience; and, (3) to examine policies and practices at the research site that encourage and/or discourage the realization of "community" as experienced by student participants.

The Department of Psychology is suitable for this study because it enrolls a large proportion of undergraduate students. In this study my aim is to understand the experiences and perceptions of "typical" undergraduates. Although the demographic face of universities across Canada has changed substantially over the last three decades, the majority of enrolments in <provincial> universities are traditional age non-residential, campus based students who attend full-time eight months of the year.

This study will entail interviews with approximately 20 third year students who have chosen Psychology as their program major. Students would be interviewed twice during the course of term two, once at the beginning and once near its end. I would also like to interview staff, faculty and administrative personnel who are directly involved with undergraduate education. These interviews will last approximately one hour. All interviews will be conducted on campus at locations suitable to participants.

I am available to discuss further the details of this study. I will call your office in a few days' time to see if a meeting with you can be arranged.

Sincerely,

Colleen Hawkey

298

Invitation to Students

Dear RIU Student,

For my doctoral thesis I am conducting a research project entitled "'Community' and the undergraduate student experience." Involvement with a scholarly community of learners has traditionally played an important role in shaping our ideas about the undergraduate student experience. However, seldom are students consulted about the nature of this community from their point of view.

The aims of this study are: (1) to understand how "community" is understood and experienced by undergraduate students; (2) to explore how students' perceptions contribute to their actions, beliefs, and attitudes in relation to the undergraduate student experience; and, (3) to examine policies and practices at the research site that encourage and/or discourage the realization of "community" as experienced by student participants. This project is a case study of the Department of Psychology at the Research Intensive University

Only third year Psychology students who began their studies at RIU are being asked to volunteer for this study. If you meet this criteria and think you might like to participate in these interviews, I would greatly value your participation in this study.

Your participation would involve two face-to-face interviews with me that would last approximately one and a half hours each. The interview will be tape recorded and the tape recording transcribed. All the data will be treated in a confidential manner. That is, only I will have access to the tape recorded interviews and only I and members of my research committee will have access to the interview transcripts. You will not be identified by name on the tape recording or in any transcripts, reports or publications resulting from this study.

At any time during the interview you are entitled to receive answers to any questions you may have regarding this study. Also, you may choose not to answer any question during the interview or you may choose to withdraw at any time.

Please consider this letter as an invitation to participate in the research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are not under any obligation to participate; refusal to do so will in no way affect your standing at RIU.

The results of this study will be made available to all students who volunteer to be interviewed.

You may contact Dr. _____, Director of the RIU <Research Office> at <telephone> if you have any concerns about your rights or treatment as a participant in this study.

For more information, please contact me at any time.

299

Consent Form

<date>

I understand that the purpose of this project is to interview students about their perceptions and experiences at RIU in order to explore what students think the university community is, what they think it means to participate in such a community and the nature of their interaction with it. I am aware that participation in this project will involve two face-to-face meetings with Colleen Hawkey for the purpose of being interviewed by her. I am aware that each interview will be tape recorded and that they will last approximately ninety (90) minutes each. I now that Colleen Hawkey is a doctoral student and that this research is for her graduate thesis.

I have been assured that the data gathered during the interview will be treated in a confidential manner. That is, only Colleen Hawkey and members of her research committee will have access to the interview transcripts. Colleen Hawkey will do the transcriptions herself, and files will be safeguarded by password on her computer. I will not be identified by name on the tape recordings or in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

I understand that at any time during this project I am entitled to receive answers to any questions that I may have regarding this study. Also, I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time during this research project. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from this project will in no way affect my standing as a student at this institution. I know I may contact Dr. _____, Director of the RIU <Research Office> at <telephone> if I have any concerns about my rights or treatment as a participant in this study.

On the basis of the above, I consent to participate in this study and I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this agreement.

Signature: _____   Date:_____

300

APPENDIX E. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

301

University Community

Exploring the Undergraduate Student Experience
At Research Intensive University

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study of Community at a research-intensive university. Only a limited number of students have been sent questionnaires, so your response is very important.

This questionnaire should take 20 to 30 minutes to complete. Please read the instructions for each question. If a written response is required, please ensure your answer is easy to read.

This is a voluntary but important survey. All of the information that you provide in this questionnaire is strictly confidential. The envelope contains an identification number for survey administration purposes only. There are no identifying marks on the actual questionnaire and no individual will be identified from a completed questionnaire.

You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. It is assumed that completion of this questionnaire indicates that consent to participate has been given.

All of your responses will be anonymous so please <u>do not</u> put your name, signature or identification number on the questionnaire.

Please complete all relevant sections.

Colleen Hawkey
Doctoral Candidate
Department, Research Intensive University

Tel (604) 822-8967
tel (604) 527-0393
fax (604) 527-0405
email   clhawkey@ interchange.RIU.ca

302

A.	CURRENT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES This section will provide background information about you and your program of study. Please check each box or fill in the blank as necessary.

1. In what degree program are you currently enrolled at RIU?

        B.A. ....$\square_1$
        B.Sc................$\square_2$

2. Have you declared a major?

        Yes .... $\square_1$
        No .... $\square_2$

3. Is your major Psychology?

        Yes .... $\square_1$
        No .... $\square_2$ [If No, go to Question 30]

4. Are you currently registered in 3rd year?

        Yes .... $\square_1$
        No .... $\square_2$ [If No, go to Question 30]

5. So far in your bachelor program, have you changed program majors (or intended majors), for example from Commerce to Psychology?

        No .... $\square_1$
        Yes .... $\square_2$ If Yes, in what year of your program did you change? $1^{st}\square$ $2^{nd}\square$ $3^{rd}\square$

                                                                   (check one)
                What program did you change from?   _____
                What were the main reasons you changed?

                                                          _____

6. So far in your bachelor program, have you changed degree programs, for example from Science to Arts?

        No .... $\square_1$
        Yes .... $\square_2$ If Yes, in what year of your program did you change? $1^{st}\square$ $2^{nd}\square$ $3^{rd}\square$

                                                                     (check one)
                What program did you change from?   _____
                What were the main reasons you changed?

                                                          _____

7. **Did you transfer to RIU from another post-secondary institution (e.g., from a college, university college, vocational or technical institute)?**

        Yes .... $\square_1$ If Yes, in what year did you transfer?   19$\square\square$
        No .... $\square_2$

8. Are you currently registered as a full-time student?

        Yes .... $\square_1$
        No .... $\square_2$

303

9. In what year did you start your current program of study at RIU?

19☐☐

10. How many Psychology credits will you have completed at the end of 3rd year?

_____

(total number of Psychology credits)

11. **What is your current grade average at RIU?** (If some of your courses are a year long, please estimate your overall average grade to this point.) (Check one.)

90-100%..............................☐$_1$
85-89%................................☐$_2$
80-84%................................☐$_3$
76-79%................................☐$_4$
72-75%................................☐$_5$
68-71%................................☐$_6$
64-67%................................☐$_7$
60-63%................................☐$_8$
55-59%................................☐$_9$
50-54%................................☐$_{10}$
0-49%☐$_{11}$

12. **Please indicate how important each of the following reasons were in your decision to select Psychology as your major.** (Check one box for each line.)

Level of Importance

		Very important	Somewhat important	Somewhat unimportant	Not at all important
a.	I've always wanted to study Psychology	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
b.	I didn't know what else to study	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
c.	It suited my existing skills and abilities	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
d.	To train for a job or career in the field	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
e.	Because my friends also decided to major in Psychology	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
f.	Because I enjoyed the subject matter	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
g.	I took a Psychology course and really liked it	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
h.	Because of the good reputation of Psychology faculty at RIU	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
i.	To prepare for medical school	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
j.	To be able to help people after I graduate	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
k.	I thought it would be academically easy	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
l.	Because of the job prospects in the field	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
m.	To prepare for an academic career in Psychology	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
n.	Other reasons (Please specify)_____	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
o.	Other reasons (Please specify)_____	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$
p.	Other reasons (Please specify)_____	☐$_1$	☐$_2$	☐$_3$	☐$_4$

Please use the following space to explain or add to any of your answers in Item 12.

_____
_____
_____

304

13. Do you intend to continue your education in any formal way in the future? (check one)

Yes .... ☐₁
No .... ☐₂   [If No, go to Question 15]

14. What further education do you plan to pursue next? (check one)

a. Another bachelor's degree ....☐₁
b. Master's degree...☐₂
c. Doctoral degree...☐₃
d. Teacher training ....☐₄
e. Law degree ....☐₅
f. Medicine degree...☐₆
g. Dentistry degree ....☐₇
h. Community college diploma/certificate................................☐₈
i. Technical or vocational training ....☐₉
j. Other ....☐₁₀
k. Don't know...☐₁₁
l. None..☐₁₂

Please use the following space to explain or add to any of your answers in Item 14.

_____

_____

_____

B. EXPERIENCES AT RIU This section will explore your experiences as a Psychology student at the University of British Columbia. Clearly some experiences vary by class and by professor, but please give an indication of your experiences overall.

<u>FRIENDSHIP NETWORKS</u>

15. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about your friends and acquaintances at RIU.

Extent of Agreement

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a. I have friends at RIU I know I can turn to for help	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄
b. I have close friends in Psychology at RIU	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄
c. I spend time outside of class discussing course topics with friends	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄
d. I have less time to spend socializing with friends	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄
e. I see less of my high school friends who are also at RIU	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄
f. Most of my friends at RIU are not in Psychology	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄
g. Overall I have a good balance between social and academic aspects of my life	☐₁	☐₂	☐₃	☐₄

305

Please use the following space to explain or add to any of your answers in Item 15.

_____

_____

_____

BEING AT RIU

16. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about being at RIU.

Extent of Agreement

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
a. I am proud to be a RIU student	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
b. RIU is the right university for me	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
c. RIU was my university of first choice	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
d. I usually leave campus right after classes	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
e. I usually return to my campus residence right after classes	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
f. Outside of class, I spend little time on campus	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
g. I am greeted in a friendly manner when I see my professors at the Kenny building	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
h. I am comfortable visiting the Kenny building	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
i. I know my way around campus	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
j. I am familiar with most of the campus	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
k. It is difficult to meet people at RIU	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
l. I wish I had chosen a different university	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
m. I would like to be more involved in academic activities in my department	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
n. I would like to be more involved in social activities in my department	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
o. I would like to be more involved in academic activities at RIU	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
p. I would like to be more involved in social activities at RIU	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
q. I feel that RIU is my university	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
r. I am proud to be a Psychology student at RIU	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
s. Psychology is the right program for me	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$
t. I feel I belong in my department at RIU	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$	$\square_5$

Please use the following space to explain or add to any of your answers in Item 16.

_____

_____

_____

306

17. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about your course work and classes.

		Extent of Agreement		
		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a.	I have had academic discussions about topics or issues in Psychology with my Professors	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
b.	I enjoy going to my Psychology classes	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
c.	I feel academically competent to discuss Psychology topics/issues with my professors	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
d.	I have gained substantial knowledge in my field	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
e.	My Psychology lectures are interesting to me	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
f.	Upper level Psychology courses are more engaging than lower level courses	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
g.	The content of my Psychology lectures is intellectually stimulating	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
h.	Overall my classes are intellectually stimulating	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
i.	Overall university courses are interesting	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
j.	I am comfortable asking questions in class	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
k.	My interest in academic work has increased	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
l.	I have improved my study habits	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
m.	I make contributions to class discussions	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
n.	Interaction and discussion are encouraged in class	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
o.	Intellectually I have grown substantially	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$

Please use the following space to explain or add to any of your answers in Item 17.

_____

_____

_____

Grades

18. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about your grades at RIU.

		Extent of Agreement		
		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a.	Overall it is difficult for me to get good grades in upper level courses	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
b.	Overall my grades dropped compared with my high school grades	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
c.	Overall my grades improved after my first year at RIU	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
d.	It was easier for me to get good grades in upper level Psychology courses than in lower level Psychology courses	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
e.	Getting top marks is very important to me	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
f.	It is very clear what I need to do in order to get good grades in Psychology	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
g.	Overall I am satisfied with my grades	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$

Please use the following space to explain or add to any of your answers in Item 18.

_____

_____

_____

Research

19. I have participated in one or more Psychology research studies for credit.

No .... $\square_1$ [If No, go to Question 21]

Yes .... $\square_2$ [If Yes, go to Question 20]

20. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about your participation in research studies for credit.

Extent of Agreement

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a. The credit studies I participated in were a valuable part of my education at RIU	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
b. My primary motivation for participating in the credit studies was to improve my class mark	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
c. I usually received results from the credit studies in which I participated	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
d. I learned a great deal about my discipline by participating in these studies	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
e. I learned a great deal about research by participating in these studies	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$

Please use the following space to explain or add to any of your answers in Item 20.

_____

_____

_____

21. As a Psychology student, I have worked (or am working) under the supervision of a professor on a research project as part of my Psychology degree.

No .... $\square_1$ [If No, go to Question 25]

Yes .... $\square_2$ [If Yes, go to Question 22]

308

22. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about your participation in a research project under the supervision of a professor.

		Extent of Agreement		
		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a.	The study I participated in was a valuable part of my education at RIU	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
b.	I learned a great deal about my discipline by participating in the research project	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
c.	Participating in the research project made me feel more a part of the Psychology Department	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
d.	I made important or useful contributions to the overall research project	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
e.	My participation was a rewarding experience for me	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
f.	I would recommend participating in a research project to other Psychology students	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$

23. Please briefly describe this research project (*e.g.*, What was it about? What was your role? How did you become involved?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. In your opinion, what was the value, if any, of undertaking the above project to you as a student?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

25. I am working or have worked as a volunteer in a professor's Psychology lab.

No .... $\Box_1$
Yes .... $\Box_2$

26. I have or have had my own keys to a professor's Psychology lab.

No .... $\Box_1$
Yes .... $\Box_2$

27. I expect to work under the supervision of a professor in the future.

No .... $\Box_1$
Yes .... $\Box_2$

309

Professors and Teaching Assistants

28. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your Professors (or instructors) and Teaching Assistants at RIU.

28A. Please answer the following questions with reference to your <u>Psychology</u> professors (or instructors) and Teaching Assistants.

	Extent of Agreement:			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a. My Psychology professors are competent lecturers	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
b. My Psychology professors show interest and excitement when teaching	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
c. My professors in Psychology are friendly	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
d. My professors in Psychology are knowledgeable about their subjects	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
e. My Psychology professors are interested in my academic development	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
f. I received help from my Psychology professors outside of class when needed	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
g. I am encouraged to asked questions in my Psychology classes	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
h. Psychology professors have greater respect for my ideas now that I'm in 3rd year	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
i. Psychology professors encourage me to express opinions in class	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
j. Psychology professors use current research as examples in their lectures	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
k. I enjoy going to my Psychology classes	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
l. Teaching Assistants in Psychology are available when needed	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
m. Teaching Assistants in Psychology attend lectures	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
n. Teaching Assistants in Psychology are capable	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
o. Some or one of my Psychology professors have had a major influence on my academic career	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$
p. I am satisfied with the quality of teaching in my Psychology classes	$\square_1$	$\square_2$	$\square_3$	$\square_4$

Please use the following space to explain or add to any of your answers in Item 28A.

_____

_____

_____

310

28B. Please answer the following question with reference to your <u>other</u> professors (or instructors), that is your <u>non</u>-Psychology professors (instructors) and TAs.

		Extent of Agreement:			
		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a.	Professors are competent lecturers	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
b.	My professors show interest and excitement when teaching	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
c.	Professors are friendly	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
d.	Professors are knowledgeable about their subjects	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
e.	Professors are interested in my academic development	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
f.	I received help from my professors outside of class when needed	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
g.	I am encouraged to asked questions in my classes	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
h.	Professors have greater respect for my ideas now that I'm in 3rd year	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
i.	Professors encourage me to express opinions in class	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
j.	Professors use current research as examples in their lectures	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
k.	I enjoy going to classes	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
l.	Teaching Assistants are available when needed	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
m.	Teaching Assistants attend lectures	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
n.	Teaching Assistants are capable	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
o.	Some or one of my professors have had a major influence on my academic career	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$
p.	I am satisfied with the quality of teaching in my classes	$\Box_1$	$\Box_2$	$\Box_3$	$\Box_4$

Please use the following space to explain or add to any of your answers in Item 28B.

_____
_____
_____

311

THEN AND NOW

29. Compared with your experiences <u>before</u> 3rd year, on average how would you rate the following now that you are <u>in</u> 3rd year? (Circle the most appropriate number.)

	More interesting		About the same		Less interesting	
a. Academic work in general is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	More interesting		About the same		Less interesting	
b. Academic work in Psychology is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Much easier		About the same		Much harder	
c. Course work in general is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Much easier		About the same		Much harder	
d. Course work in Psychology is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Much lighter		About the same		Much heavier	
e. Overall workload is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	More focused		About the same		Less focused	
f. My academic goals are	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	More important		About the same		Less important	
g. Social activities on campus are	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	More important		About the same		Less important	
h. Academic interests are	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	More engaged		About the same		Less engaged	
i. Academically I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	More engaged		About the same		Less engaged	
j. Socially I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please use the following space to explain or add to any of your answers in Item 29.

_____

_____

_____

312

University Community

The purpose of this question is to explore your ideas about the notion of community in a university context. Community can mean different things to different people and is experienced in a variety of ways. Below is a list of ideas about community. Do you think they are important elements of an ideal university community? Have they been a part of your experiences at RIU? Please circle the appropriate number for each of the statements in Step 1 and in Step 2.

30. Please indicate:

Step 1 **How important you think each of the following are in an IDEAL university community.**

Step 2 **The extent to which each of the following is a part of your ACTUAL experience at RIU.**

	Step 1 In the <u>ideal</u> university community the following are: (circle one for each line)	Step 2 What part of your <u>actual</u> experiences at RIU are the following: (circle one for each line)
	Very important ... Not very important	Significant part ... Not at all part
a. Meeting places on campus	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
b. Strong university spirit	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
c. Taking part in university ceremonies	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
d. Active student government	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
e. Sharing intellectual ideas between students	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
f. Sharing intellectual ideas between students and faculty	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
g. Having input into university issues or concerns	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
h. Having goals in common with others on campus	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
i. Diversity of people on campus	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
j. People on campus who care about you as an individual	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
k. Being involved in campus activities	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
l. Reciprocity, giving to the community, but also getting back from it	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
m. Strong social networks	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
n. Knowing in general what's going on	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
o. Equality of opportunities to participate within the community	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
p. Attractive campus grounds	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
q. Attractive campus buildings	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
r. Comfortable campus buildings	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
s. Effective student services	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
t. Efficient student services	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
u. Contact between students and administration	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1
v. Recognized university symbols and logos	4 ...3 ....2 1	4.....3.....2 1

313

31. In your opinion, promoting an increased sense of community at RIU is (check one):
    a. Very important......................................□₁
    b. Somewhat important...............................□₂
    c. Somewhat unimportant ....□₃
    d. Very unimportant....................................□₄

C. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION .... This information will allow for comparisons between the experiences of students with different backgrounds, ages and responsibilities.

---

32. In what year were you born?
    19□□

33. Are you:
    Female ....□₁
    Male ....□₂

34. What is your current marital status?

    Single...□₁
    Married...□₂
    Living in a marriage-like relationship....................□₃
    Separated ....□₄
    Divorced..□₅
    Widowed ....□₆

35. What language did you first learn at home in childhood and still understand?
    English...□
    Other (please specify) _____

36. **How would you identify your ethnic or cultural background?** (Some examples are Scottish, Chinese, Italian, First Nations, Japanese, Hindu, Greek).

    _____
    _____
    _____

37. **Do you consider yourself to be a member of an Aboriginal group?**

    No ....□₁
    Yes ....□₂
    _____ If Yes, please specify

38. **Are you part of a visible minority group in Canada?** (Some examples of visible minorities are: East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean), Indo-Pakistani, Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian, West Asian.)

    No ....□₁
    Yes ....□₂
    _____ If Yes, please specify

314

39. Where are you currently living? (check one)

In rented home/apartment..$\square_1$
With parents/guardians/relatives...$\square_2$
In on-campus housing (residence hall, shared apartment, etc)..........................$\square_3$
In personally owned home...$\square_4$
Other (please specify) _____ $\square_5$

40. If you live off campus, how many days per week do you usually commute to RIU?

_____
(days per week)

41. If you live off campus, how much time do you spend commuting to RIU (round trip)?

Total minutes _____
(round trip)

42. Are you currently engaged in volunteer activities on campus?

No ....$\square_1$ [If No, go to Question 45]
Yes ....$\square_2$

43. If Yes, please briefly describe your volunteer activities:

_____
_____

44. If *Yes*, please indicate how many hours per week you usually engage in volunteer activities:

_____ volunteer hrs/week

45. Are you currently engaged in paid employment?

Yes ....$\square_1$
No ....$\square_2$ [If No, go to Question 50]

46. If *Yes*, please indicate how many hours per week you usually work:

_____ work hrs/week

47. Do you work on the RIU campus?
Yes ....$\square_1$
No ....$\square_2$

48. What kind of work do you do? (*e.g.*, research assistant, store clerk, librarian)

_____

49. What is the nature of the business or industry in which you work? (*e.g.*, psychology department, shoe store, Koerner library.)

_____

315

50. What language(s) do (or did if deceased) your parents usually speak at home?

Mother _____

Father _____

51. What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your parents (or legal guardians)?
(Check _one_ for each parent or guardian.)

		Mother	Father
a.	Elementary school, less than grade 8	$\square_1$	$\square_1$
b.	Some high school	$\square_2$	$\square_2$
c.	High school graduation (or equivalent)	$\square_3$	$\square_3$
d.	Apprenticeship, trade or vocational school	$\square_4$	$\square_4$
e.	Some community college, no diploma/certificate	$\square_5$	$\square_5$
f.	Community college diploma/certificate	$\square_6$	$\square_6$
g.	Some university, no degree	$\square_7$	$\square_7$
h.	Completed bachelor or professional degree	$\square_8$	$\square_8$
i.	Completed Masters degree	$\square_9$	$\square_9$
j.	Completed Doctoral degree	$\square_{10}$	$\square_{10}$
k.	Other (please specify) _____	$\square_{11}$ _____	$\square_{11}$

52. What is the current employment status of your parents (or legal guardians)? (You can check more than one.)

Mother		Father	
Employed	$\square_1$	Employed	$\square_1$
Self-employed	$\square_2$	Self-employed	$\square_2$
Not employed	$\square_3$	Not employed	$\square_3$
Homemaker	$\square_4$	Homemaker	$\square_4$
Retired	$\square_5$	Retired	$\square_5$
Deceased	$\square_6$	Deceased	$\square_6$

53. If employed, what is or was the occupation or kind of work your parents (or legal guardians) usually do (or did if now retired or deceased)? (_e.g._, office clerk, salesperson, electronic technician, registered nurse, lawyer, high school teacher.)

Mother _____   Father _____

_____   _____

54. What is or was the nature of the services provided or type of products produced by the business or industry in which they usually work(ed)? (_e.g._, utility company, appliance manufacturer, security firm, health clinic, private legal firm, public high school.)

Mother _____   Father _____

_____   _____

316

D. COMMENTS Please use the space provided to write additional comments. Attach a separate sheet if necessary.

55. What aspects of your experiences at RIU particularly helped to promote a sense of community for you at RIU?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

56. What do you think RIU could (should!) do to enhance students sense of community on campus? In your Department?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

57. What barriers do you think inhibit the development of a sense of community for students on campus? In your Department?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

58. Please use this space to provide any additional comments you wish to make.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you very much for your participation.

Results *of this study will be available on the web in the fall of 1999. Look for "Community at RIU" under "Surveys": http://www.budgetandplanning.riu.ca/*

Please return the questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope provided.

317